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EXCURSION TO THE OREGON.

THE continent of North America is about three thousand miles across, from the Atlantic on the east to the Pacific on the west; and, after an interval of three centuries since the discovery and settlement of the country, the civilised races, who are chiefly of English origin, have not generally penetrated with their possessions above a third of the entire breadth. The progress of encroachment in the western wilderness, however, is now exceedingly rapid. Since the deliverance of the New England and other states from British control, the Anglo-Americans have evinced a singularly energetic spirit of migration towards what was, seventy years ago, an almost unknown land. Crossing the Alleghany range of mountains, from the Atlantic or old settled states, they have taken possession of the valley of the Mississippi, a tract as large as all Europe; and approaching the head waters of the Missouri and other tributaries of the Mississippi, appear prepared to cross the Rocky Mountains—"the Great Backbone of America," as they have not unaptly been called—and take possession of the Oregon country, lying on the shores of the Pacific.

This extension of the boundaries of civilisation over a country hitherto abandoned to roaming tribes of Indians, and herds of wild animals, is at present one of the most remarkable facts in social history. Since the beginning of the present century, the population of the United States has increased from four millions to twenty millions; and following the same rate of increase, in less than a century hence the population will have increased to upwards of a hundred and fifty millions—all speaking the Eng-

lish language, and possessing institutions resembling our own. Yet, although the extension of the Anglo-American settlements be comparatively rapid, it is not effected without numerous difficulties. Those who first penetrate into the wilderness are usually parties of fur traders; and by these hardy pioneers, and the volunteer travellers who accompany them, the way may be said to be in some measure paved for the more formal visits of surveyors, and the new occupants of the country. The journeys of these pioneering parties are attended with many dangers. The setting out of an expedition resembles a caravan of pilgrims sallying forth across the African deserts; civilisation is for months, perhaps for years, left behind; no vestige of house or road is seen on the apparently interminable wastes; journeying is performed only on horseback during the day, while repose is enjoyed in tents pitched for the night; a constant outlook must be kept for prowling wild beasts, or the not less stealthy steps of the Pawnee Loup Indian: in short, all is wild nature, romantic enough perhaps to untamed minds, but as we can imagine altogether unendurable by persons accustomed to the quiet and orderly life of cities. Strange as it seems, however, there are highly cultivated individuals who, inspired by a love of science, or for the mere sake of sport, voluntarily make part of the fur-trading bands, and consent to remain for years from home, friends, and the world of refinement.

Believing that the account of one of these romantic expeditions cannot but be acceptable to our readers, we offer in the present sheet the history of an excursion performed a few years ago by Mr Townsend, an enthusiastic ornithologist, and his friend Professor Nuttall, of Howard university, an equally zealous botanist.* Being desirous of increasing the existing stock of knowledge in the departments of science to which they were respectively attached, these gentlemen agreed to accompany a body of traders, commanded by a Captain Wyeth, to the Columbia river and adjacent parts. The traders belonged to an association called the Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company, and on this occasion they designed to fix a permanent branch-establishment in the west.

On the evening of the 24th of March 1834, the two friends arrived in a steamboat at St Louis, on the Missouri, from Pittsburg. At St Louis, which is the last great town within the settlements, they furnished themselves with several pairs of leathern pantaloons, enormous overcoats, and white wool hats with round crowns, fitting tightly to the head, and almost hard enough to resist a musket ball. Leaving their baggage to come on with the steamer, about three hundred miles farther up the

* We draw the materials for our account from "An Excursion to the Rocky Mountains, by J. K. Townsend;" a work published at Philadelphia in 1839.

Missouri, Mr Townsend and his friend set off to amuse themselves by walking and hunting leisurely through that distance, which is composed chiefly of wide flat prairies, with few and remotely situated habitations of the frontier settlers.

One of the first indications of their approach to a wild country was the spectacle of a band of Indians of the Saque tribe, who were removing to new settlements. The men were fantastically painted, and the chief was distinguished by a profuse display of trinkets, and a huge necklace made of the claws of the grizzly bear. The decorations of one of the women amused the two travellers. She was an old squaw, to whom was presented a broken umbrella. The only use she made of this prize was to wrench the plated ends from the whalebones, string them on a piece of wire, take her knife from her belt, with which she deliberately cut a slit of an inch in length along the upper rim of her ear, and insert them in it. The sight was as shocking to the feelings as it was grotesque; for the cheeks of the vain being were covered with blood as she stood with fancied dignity in the midst of twenty others, who evidently envied her the possession of the worthless baubles.

While pushing forward on the borders of the wilderness, the travellers one day arrived at the house of a kind of gentleman-settler, who, with his three daughters, vied in showing kindness to their visitors. "The girls," says Mr Townsend, "were very superior to most that I had seen in Missouri, although somewhat touched with the awkward bashfulness and prudery which generally characterise the prairie maidens. They had lost their mother when young, and having no companions out of the domestic circle, and consequently no opportunity of aping the manners of the world, were perfect children of nature. Their father, however, had given them a good plain education, and they had made some proficiency in needlework, as was evinced by numerous neatly-worked samplers hanging in wooden frames round the room." Some little curiosity and astonishment was excited in the minds of the unsophisticated girls when they were informed that their two guests were undertaking a long and difficult journey across the prairies—one of them for the purpose of shooting and stuffing birds, the other for the purpose of obtaining plants to preserve between leaves of paper; but at last they began to perceive that probably there was some hidden utility in these seemingly idle pursuits; and the last words of the eldest Miss P—— to our ornithologist at parting were, "Do come again, and come in May or June, for then there are plenty of prairie-hens, and you can shoot as many as you want, and you must stay a long while with us, and we'll have nice times. Good-by; I'm so sorry you're going." Miss P——, in promising an abundance of prairie-hens, evidently did not perceive in what respect an ornithologist differed from a sportsman; but her invitation was kindly meant; and Mr

Townsend promised, that if ever he visited Missouri again, he would go a good many miles out of his way to see her and her sisters. The next resting-place which our traveller describes, was very different from Mr P——'s comfortable and cheerful house. It was a *hotel*, for which a pigsty would have been a more appropriate name. Everything and everybody were dirty, disobliging, and disagreeable; and after staying one night, the travellers refusing the landlord's invitation to *liquorise* with him, departed without waiting for breakfast.

In the case of our travellers, however, one of the last impressions left upon them before fairly entering the wilderness was of a more agreeable and suitable description. "In about an hour and a half," says Mr Townsend, "we arrived at Fulton, a pretty little town, and saw the villagers in their holiday clothes parading along to church. The bell at that moment sounded, and the peal gave rise to many reflections. It might be long ere I should hear the sound of the 'church-going bell' again. I was on my way to a far, far country, and I did not know that I should ever be permitted to revisit my own. I felt that I was leaving the scenes of my childhood—the spot which had witnessed all the happiness I ever knew, the home where all my affections were centered. I was entering a land of strangers, and would be compelled hereafter to mingle with those who might look upon me with indifference, or treat me with neglect."

The travellers, tired of their long journey on foot, waited at a small village on the Missouri till their companions and baggage should come up. The steamer arrived on the 9th of April, and the two pedestrians having gone on board, it was soon puffing up the river at the rate of seven miles an hour. In four days they reached the small town of Independence, the outermost Anglo-American post, and disembarking, they began to prepare for their long and venturesome journey. Mr Townsend here introduces a description of the company, about fifty in all.

There were amongst the men, to compose the caravan, a great variety of dispositions. Some, who had not been accustomed to the kind of life they were to lead, looked forward to it with eager delight, and talked of stirring incidents and hairbreadth escapes. Others, who were more experienced, seemed to be as easy and unconcerned about it as a citizen would be in contemplating a drive of a few miles into the country. Some were evidently reared in the shade, and not accustomed to hardships; many were almost as rough as the grizzly bear, and not a little proud of their feats, of which they were fond of boasting; but the majority were strong able-bodied men. During the day, the captain kept all his men employed in arranging and packing a vast variety of goods for carriage. In addition to the necessary clothing for the company, arms, ammunition, &c. there were thousands of trinkets of various kinds, beads, paint, bells, rings, and such like trumpery, intended as presents for the Indians, as well as objects

of trade with them. The bales were usually made to weigh about eighty pounds, of which a horse was to carry two. Captain Wyeth insured the good-will and obedience of the men by his affable but firm manner, and showed himself every way suitable for his very important mission. In the company there were also five missionaries, the principal of whom, Mr Jason Lee, was "a tall and powerful man, who looked as though he were well calculated to buffet difficulties in a wild country." Before setting out, they were joined also by Mr Milton Sublette, a trader and trapper of several years' standing, who intended to travel a part of the way with them. Mr Sublette brought with him about twenty trained hunters, "true as the steel of their tried blades," who had more than once gone over the very track which the caravan intended to pursue—a reinforcement which was very welcome to Captain Wyeth and his party.

THE CARAVAN SETS OUT.

On the 28th of April, at ten o'clock in the morning, all things being prepared, the caravan, consisting of seventy men and two hundred and fifty horses, began its march towards the west. All were in high spirits, and full of hope of adventure; uproarious bursts of merriment, and gay and lively songs, constantly echoed along the line of the cavalcade. The road lay over a vast rolling prairie, with occasional small spots of timber at the distance of several miles apart, and this was expected to be the complexion of the track for some weeks. For the first day and night the journey was agreeable, but on the second day a heavy rain fell, which made the ground wet and muddy, soaked the blanket bedding, and rendered camping at night anything but pleasant. The description given of a nightly camp is interesting:—"The party is divided into messes of eight men, and each mess is allowed a separate tent. The captain of a mess (who is generally an 'old hand') receives each morning rations of pork, flour, &c. for his people, and they choose one of their body as cook for the whole. Our camp now consists of nine messes, of which Captain Wyeth's forms one, although it contains only four persons besides the cook. When we arrive in the evening at a suitable spot for encampment, Captain Wyeth rides round a space which he considers large enough to accommodate it, and directs where each mess shall pitch its tent. The men immediately unload their horses, and place their bales of goods in the direction indicated, and in such manner as, in case of need, to form a sort of fortification and defence. When all the messes are arranged in this way, the camp forms a hollow square, in the centre of which the horses are placed and staked firmly to the ground. The guard consists of from six to eight men, is relieved three times each night, and so arranged that each gang may serve alternate nights. The captain of a guard (who is generally also the captain of a mess) collects his people at the

appointed hour, and posts them around outside the camp in such situations that they may command a view of the environs, and be ready to give the alarm in case of danger. The captain cries the hour regularly by a watch, and *all's well*, every fifteen minutes, and each man of the guard is required to repeat this call in rotation, which if any one should fail to do, it is fair to conclude that he is asleep, and he is then immediately visited and stirred up. In case of defection of this kind, our laws adjudge to the delinquent the hard sentence of walking three days. As yet, none of our poor fellows have incurred this penalty, and the probability is, that it would not at this time be enforced, as we are yet in a country where little molestation is to be apprehended; but in the course of another week's travel, when thieving and ill-designing Indians will be out, lying on our trail, it will be necessary that the strictest watch be kept; and for the preservation of our persons and property, that our laws shall be rigidly enforced."

For about a fortnight the caravan proceeded without any very remarkable incident occurring. The cook of the mess to which Mr Townsend belonged decamped one night, having no doubt become tired of the expedition, and determined to go back to the settlements. The man himself was little missed; but he had taken a rifle, powder-horn, and shot-pouch along with him, and these articles were precious. In a few days after, three other men deserted, likewise carrying rifles with them. In the course of the fortnight the caravan passed through several villages of the Kaw Indians, with whom they traded a little, giving bacon and tobacco in exchange for hides. These Indians do not appear, on the whole, to have been very favourable specimens of the American aborigines. The men had many of them fine countenances, but the women were very homely. The following is a description of one of their chiefs:—"In the evening the principal Kanzas chief paid us a visit in our tent. He is a young man about twenty-five years of age, straight as a poplar, and with a noble countenance and bearing, but he appeared to me to be marvellously deficient in most of the requisites which go to make the character of a *real* Indian chief, at least of such Indian chiefs as we read of in our popular books. I begin to suspect, in truth, that these lofty and dignified attributes are more apt to exist in the fertile brain of the novelist than in reality. Be this as it may, *our* chief is a very lively, laughing, and rather playful personage; perhaps he may put on his dignity, like a glove, when it suits his convenience."

On the 8th of May the party had a misfortune in the loss of Mr Milton Sublette, who, owing to a fungus in one of his legs, was obliged to return to the settlements. On the afternoon of next day, the party crossed a broad Indian trail, bearing northerly, supposed to be about five days old, and to have been made by a war-party of Pawnees. Hoping to escape these for-

midable enemies of the white man, the party pushed on, but not without occasional mishaps; at one time the horses ran away, and had to be chased for a whole night, and even when the labour of the chase was over, three were irrecoverably lost; at another time half of the party were drenched crossing a wide creek full of black mud, which the men had to flounder through on horseback. The weather, too, was becoming intolerably warm. They had frequently been favoured with fresh breezes, which made it very agreeable; but the moment these failed, they were almost suffocated with intense heat. Their rate of travelling was about twenty miles per day, which in this warm weather, and with heavily burdened horses, was as much as could be accomplished with comfort to the travellers and their animals.

The general aspect, however, of the country through which they were travelling, was exceedingly beautiful. "The little streams are fringed with a thick growth of pretty trees and bushes, and the buds are now swelling, and the leaves expanding, to 'welcome back the spring.' The birds, too, sing joyously amongst them—grosbeaks, thrushes, and buntings—a merry and musical band. I am particularly fond of sallying out early in the morning, and strolling around the camp. The light breeze just bends the tall tops of the grass on the boundless prairie, the birds are commencing their matin carollings, and all nature looks fresh and beautiful. The horses of the camp are lying comfortably on their sides, and seem, by the glances which they give me in passing, to know that their hour of toil is approaching, and the patient kine are ruminating in happy unconsciousness."

One morning the scouts came in with the intelligence that they had found a large trail of white men bearing north-west. Captain Wyeth and his party concluded that this was another caravan belonging to a rival trading company, and that it had passed them noiselessly in the course of the night, in order to be beforehand with them in traffic with the Indian tribes through which they were passing. The party grumbled a little at the unfriendly conduct of the rival caravan in stealing a march upon them; but consoled themselves by making the reflection, that competition is the soul of commerce, and that, in the same circumstances, they would in all probability have acted in the same way. While discussing the affair at breakfast, three Indians, of a tribe called the Ottos, made their appearance. These visitors were suspected of being concerned in the loss of the three horses mentioned above; but as the crime could not be brought home to them by any kind of evidence, they were received in a friendly manner; and, as usual, the pipe of peace was smoked with them.

"While these people," says Mr Townsend, "were smoking the pipe of peace with us after breakfast, I observed that Richardson, our chief hunter (an experienced man in this country, of a tall and iron frame, and almost child-like simplicity of character, in fact, an exact counterpart of Hawk-eye in his younger

days), stood aloof, and refused to sit in the circle, in which it was always the custom of the *old hands* to join.

Feeling some curiosity to ascertain the cause of this unusual diffidence, I occasionally allowed my eyes to wander to the spot where our sturdy hunter stood looking moodily upon us, as the calamet passed from hand to hand around the circle, and I thought I perceived him now and then cast a furtive glance at one of the Indians who sat opposite to me, and sometimes his countenance would assume an expression almost demoniacal, as though the most fierce and deadly passions were raging in his bosom. I felt certain that hereby hung a tale, and I watched for a corresponding expression, or at least a look of consciousness, in the face of my opposite neighbour; but expression there was none. His large features were settled in a tranquillity which nothing could disturb, and as he puffed the smoke in huge volumes from his mouth, and the fragrant vapour wreathed and curled around his head, he seemed the embodied spirit of meekness and taciturnity.

The camp moved soon after, and I lost no time in overhauling Richardson, and asking an explanation of his singular conduct. 'Why,' said he, 'that *Injen* that sat opposite to you is my bitterest enemy. I was once going down alone from the rendezvous with letters for St Louis, and when I arrived on the lower part of the Platte river—just a short distance beyond us here—I fell in with about a dozen Ottos. They were known to be a friendly tribe, and I therefore felt no fear of them. I dismounted from my horse, and sat with them upon the ground. It was in the depth of winter; the ground was covered with snow, and the river was frozen solid. While I was thinking of nothing but my dinner, which I was then about preparing, four or five of the cowards jumped on me, mastered my rifle, and held my arms fast, while they took from me my knife and tomahawk, my flint and steel, and all my ammunition. They then loosed me, and told me to be off. I begged them, for the love of God, to give me my rifle and a few loads of ammunition, or I should starve before I could reach the settlements. No; I should have nothing; and if I did not start off immediately, they would throw me under the ice of the river. And,' continued the excited hunter, while he ground his teeth with bitter and uncontrollable rage, 'that man that sat opposite to you was the chief of them. He recognised me, and knew very well the reason why I would not smoke with him. I tell you, sir, if ever I meet that man in any other situation than that in which I saw him this morning, I'll shoot him with as little hesitation as I would shoot a deer. Several years have passed since the perpetration of this outrage, but it is still as fresh in my memory as ever; and I again declare, that if ever an opportunity offers, I will kill that man.' 'But, Richardson, did they take your horse also?' 'To be sure they did, and my blankets, and everything I had, except my clothes.' 'But how did

you subsist until you reached the settlements? You had a long journey before you.' 'Why, set to trappin' prairie squirrels with little nooses made out of the hairs of my head.' I should remark that his hair was so long that it fell in heavy masses on his shoulders. 'But squirrels in winter, Richardson! I never heard of squirrels in winter.' 'Well, but there was plenty of them, though; little white ones, that lived among the snow.'" Such is a trait of human nature in these far western regions.

On the 18th of May the party reached the Platte river, one of the streams which pour their waters into the Missouri. Wolves and antelopes were abundant in the neighbourhood of the river, and herons and long-billed curlews were stalking about in the shallows, searching for food. The prairie is here as level as a race-course, not the slightest undulation appearing throughout the whole extent of vision in a northerly and westerly direction; but to the eastward of the river, and about eight miles from it, was seen a range of high bluffs, or sand-banks, stretching away to the south-east till lost in the far distance. The travellers were not less struck with the solemn grandeur of the apparently boundless prairie, than with the sight of its surface, which was in many places encrusted with an impure salt, seemingly a combination of the sulphate and muriate of soda: there were also seen a number of little pools, of only a few inches in depth, scattered over the plain, the water of which was so bitter and pungent, that it seemed to penetrate into the tongue, and almost to take the skin from the mouth. Next morning the party were alarmed with the appearance of two men on horseback, hovering on their path at a great distance. On looking at them with a telescope, they were discovered to be Indians, and on their approach it was found they belonged to a large band of the Grand Pawnee tribe, who were on a war-excursion, and encamped at about thirty miles' distance. Having got rid of these suspicious visitors, the party moved rapidly forward in an altered direction, and did not slacken their pace till twelve o'clock at night. After a brief rest, they again went on, travelling steadily the whole day, and so got quite clear of the Grand Pawnees.

The travellers were now proceeding across one of the large central prairies of North America, and were, as they reckoned, within three days' journey of the buffalo region; that is, the region haunted by herds of buffalo. The uninitiated of the party, who for a good many days past had been listening to the spirit-stirring accounts given by the old hunters of their sport in the buffalo region, began to grow impatient for the first sight of this animal, the tenant of the prairies. At length, on the afternoon of the 20th, they came in sight of a large gang of the long-coveted buffalo. They were grazing on the opposite side of the Platte, as quietly as domestic cattle; but as they neared them, the foremost *winded* the travellers, and started back, and the whole herd followed in the wildest confusion, and were soon out of

sight. There must have been many thousands of them. Towards evening a large band of elk came on at full gallop, and passed very near the party. The appearance of these animals produced a singular effect upon the horses, all of which became restive, and about half of the loose ones broke away, and scoured over the plain in full chase after the elk. Captain Wyeth and several of his men went immediately in pursuit of them, and returned late at night, bringing the greater number. Two had, however, been lost irrecoverably. By an observation, the latitude was found to be 40 degrees 31 minutes north, and the computed distance from the Missouri settlements about 360 miles.

The day following, the party saw several small herds of buffalo on their side of the river. Two of the hunters started out after a huge bull that had separated himself from his companions, and gave him chase on fleet horses. Away went the buffalo, and away went the men, as hard as they could dash; now the hunters gained upon him, and pressed him hard; again the enormous creature had the advantage, plunging with all his might, his terrific horns often ploughing up the earth as he spurned it under him. Sometimes he would double, and rush so near the horses as almost to gore them with his horns, and in an instant would be off in a tangent, and throw his pursuers from the track. At length the poor animal came to bay, and made some unequivocal demonstrations of combat, raising and tossing his head furiously, and tearing up the ground with his feet. At this moment a shot was fired. The victim trembled like an aspen leaf, and fell on his knees, but recovering himself in an instant, started again as fast as before. Again the determined hunters dashed after him, but the poor bull was nearly exhausted: he proceeded but a short distance, and stopped again. The hunters approached, rode slowly by him, and shot two balls through his body with the most perfect coolness and precision. During the race—the whole of which occurred in full view of the party—the men seemed wild with the excitement which it occasioned: and when the animal fell, a shout rent the air which startled the antelopes by dozens from the bluffs, and sent the wolves howling from their lairs.

This is the most common mode of killing the buffalo, and is practised very generally by the travelling hunters: many are also destroyed by approaching them on foot, when, if the bushes are sufficiently dense, or the grass high enough to afford concealment, the hunter, by keeping carefully to leeward of his game, may sometimes approach so near as almost to touch the animal. If on a plain without grass or bushes, it is necessary to be very circumspect; to approach so slowly as not to excite alarm, and when observed by the animal, to imitate dexterously the clumsy motions of a young bear, or assume the sneaking prowling attitude of a wolf, in order to lull suspicion. The Indians resort to another stratagem, which is perhaps even more successful. The skin of a calf is properly dressed, with the head and legs left at-

tached to it. The Indian envelopes himself in this, and with his short bow and a brace of arrows ambles off into the very midst of a herd. When he has selected such an animal as suits his fancy, he comes close alongside of it, and without noise passes an arrow through its heart. One arrow is always sufficient, and it is generally delivered with such force, that at least half the shaft appears through the opposite side. The creature totters, and is about to fall, when the Indian glides around, and draws the arrow from the wound lest it should be broken. A single Indian is said to kill a great number of buffaloes in this way before any alarm is communicated to the herd.

Towards evening, on ascending a hill, the party were suddenly greeted by a sight which seemed to astonish even the oldest amongst them. The whole plain, as far as the eye could discern, was covered by one enormous mass of buffalo. The scene, at the very least computation, would certainly extend ten miles, and in the whole of this great space, including about eight miles in width from the bluffs to the river bank, there was apparently no vista in the incalculable multitude. It was truly a sight that would have excited even the dullest mind to enthusiasm. The party rode up to within a few hundred yards of the edge of the herd before any alarm was communicated; then the bulls, which are always stationed around as sentinels, began pawing the ground and throwing the earth over their heads; in a few moments they started in a slow clumsy canter, but as the hunters neared them they quickened their pace to an astonishingly rapid gallop, and in a few minutes were entirely beyond the reach of their guns, but were still so near that their enormous horns and long shaggy beards were very distinctly seen. Shortly after encamping, the hunters brought in the choice parts of five that they had killed.

Of the animals belonging to those vast herds which the hunters kill, only a small portion is usually taken for food. Mr Townsend and two of his associates having killed a bull buffalo, they proceeded to cut it up in the following approved manner:—The animal was first raised from his side where he had lain, and supported upon his knees, with his hoofs turned under him; a longitudinal incision was then made from the nape or anterior base of the hump, and continued backward to the loins, and a large portion of the skin from each side removed; these pieces of skin were placed upon the ground, with the under surface uppermost, and the fleeces, or masses of meat taken from along the back, were laid upon them. These fleeces, from a large animal, will weigh perhaps a hundred pounds each, and comprise the whole of the hump on each side of the vertical processes (commonly called the hump ribs), which are attached to the vertebræ. The fleeces are considered the choice parts of the buffalo, and here, where the game is so abundant, nothing else is taken, if we except the tongue and an occasional marrow-bone. This, it must

be confessed, appears like a useless and unwarrantable waste of the goods of Providence; but when are men economical, unless compelled to be so by necessity? The food of the hunters consists for months of nothing but this kind of buffalo meat, roasted, and cold water—no bread of any kind. On this rude fare they enjoyed the best health, clear heads, and high spirits.

One night shortly after their first encounter with the buffalo, Mr Townsend entering his tent about eleven o'clock, after having served as a supernumerary watch for several hours, was stooping to lay his gun in its usual place at the head of his couch, when he was startled by seeing a pair of eyes, wild and bright as those of a tiger, gleaming from a dark corner of the lodge, and evidently directed upon him. "My first impression," he says, "was that a wolf had been lurking around the camp, and had entered the tent in the prospect of finding meat. My gun was at my shoulder instinctively, my aim was directed between the eyes, and my finger pressed the trigger. At that moment a tall Indian sprang before me with a loud *wah!* seized the gun, and elevated the muzzle above my head; in another instant a second Indian was by my side, and I saw his keen knife glitter as it left the scabbard. I had not time for thought, and was struggling with all my might with the first savage for the recovery of my weapon, when Captain Wyeth and the other inmates of the tent were aroused, and the whole matter was explained, and set at rest in a moment. The Indians were chiefs of the tribe of Pawnee Loups, who had come with their young men to shoot buffalo: they had paid an evening visit to the captain, and as an act of courtesy, had been invited to sleep in the tent. I had not known of their arrival, nor did I even suspect that Indians were in our neighbourhood, so could not control the alarm which their sudden appearance occasioned me. These Indians," continues Mr Townsend, "were the finest looking of any I had seen. Their persons were tall, straight, and finely formed; their noses slightly aquiline, and the whole countenance expressive of high and daring intrepidity. The face of the taller one was particularly admirable, and Gall or Spurzheim, at a single glance at his magnificent head, would have invested him with all the noblest qualities of the species. I know not what a physiognomist would have said of his eyes, but they were certainly the most wonderful I ever looked into; glittering and scintillating constantly, like the mirror-glasses in a lamp frame, and rolling and dancing in their orbits as though possessed of abstract volition."

APPROACH TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

As the party, leaving the Pawnees and the buffalo behind, began to approach the mountain district, the country altered its appearance greatly for the worse. They were now on a great sandy waste, forming a kind of upper table-land of North

America—a region without a single green thing to vary and enliven the scene, and abounding in swarms of ferocious little black gnats, which assail the eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth of the unhappy traveller. It is necessary, however, to pursue a route in this direction, in order to find accessible passes through the Rocky Mountains, which are impenetrable more to the north-west. Making the best of their way over the inhospitable desert, and fortunately escaping any roving bands of unfriendly Indians, the cavalcade struck through a range of stony mountains, called the Black Hills, and in a few days afterwards came in sight of the Wind River Mountains, which form the loftiest land in the northern continent, and are at all times covered with snow of dazzling whiteness. From the great height above the level of the sea which the party had attained, the climate was found to be cold, even although in summer; the plains were covered only by the scantiest herbage; and frequently there was great difficulty in obtaining a supply of water for the camp. The painfulness of the journey, therefore, was now extreme, both for man and beast.

Occasionally, however, a green spot did occur, where the jaded horses were allowed to halt, to roam about without their riders, and to tumble joyfully on the verdant sward; and as these *oases* always abounded in birds and plants, our two naturalists were loath to leave them. Nor was their journey through the inhospitable region of the hills devoid of incidents to vary the monotony of the way, and provoke hearty laughs from the whole party. One afternoon, one of the men had a somewhat perilous adventure with a grizzly bear. He saw the animal crouching his huge frame among some willows which skirted the river, and, approaching on horseback to within twenty yards, fired upon him. The bear was only slightly wounded by the shot, and, with a fierce growl of angry malignity, rushed from his cover, and gave chase. The horse happened to be a slow one, and for the distance of half a mile the race was severely contested—the bear frequently approaching so near the terrified animal as to snap at his heels, while the equally terrified rider, who had lost his hat at the start, used whip and spur with the most frantic diligence, frequently looking behind, from an influence which he could not resist, at his rugged and determined foe, and shrieking in an agony of fear, 'Shoot him! shoot him!' The man, who was a young hunter, happened to be about a mile behind the main body, either from the indolence of his horse or his own carelessness; but as he approached the party in his desperate flight, and his pitiable cries reached the ears of the men in front, about a dozen of them rode to his assistance, and soon succeeded in diverting the attention of his pertinacious foe. After the bear had received the contents of all the guns, he fell, and was soon despatched. The man rode in among his fellows, pale and haggard from overwrought feelings, and was

probably effectually cured of a propensity for meddling with grizzly bears.

On the 19th of June, the party arrived on the Green river, or Colorado of the west, which they forded, and encamped upon a spot which was to form a rendezvous for all the mountain companies who left the states in spring, and also the trappers who come from various parts with furs collected by them during the previous year.

Our traveller relates a misfortune which happened to him here. Having sallied forth with his gun, and wandered about for several hours shooting birds, he found on returning to the camp that his party had quitted the spot. In pursuing their track, he had to swim his horse across a deep and swift stream. After coming up with the party, he was congratulating himself on his escape from being drowned, when he found that he had lost his coat. "I had felt," he says, "uncomfortably warm when I mounted, and had removed the coat and attached it carelessly to the saddle; the rapidity of the current had disengaged it, and it was lost for ever. The coat itself was not of much consequence after the hard service it had seen, but it contained the second volume of my journal, a pocket compass, and other articles of essential value to me. I would gladly have relinquished everything the garment held, if I could but have recovered the book; and although I returned to the river, and searched assiduously until night, and offered large rewards to the men, it could not be found."

The loss of his journal, however, was not the only bad consequence of his river adventure. The ducking he had received brought on a fever which confined him to his tent for several days. It was well for him that they had now arrived at the rendezvous where the caravans always make some stay before proceeding on the remainder of their journey. Still, according to Mr Townsend's account of the encampment, it was scarcely the best hospital for an invalid. As there were several other encampments stationed on the spot—among others that of the party of rival traders which had passed Captain Wyeth's party on the road—the encampment was constantly crowded with a heterogeneous assemblage of visitors. "The principal of these are Indians of the Nez Percé, Banneck, and Shoshoné tribes, who come with the furs and peltries which they have been collecting at the risk of their lives during the past winter and spring, to trade for ammunition, trinkets, and fire-water. There is, in addition to these, a great variety of personages amongst us; most of them calling themselves white men, French-Canadians, half-breeds, &c., their colour nearly as dark, and their manners wholly as wild, as the Indians with whom they constantly associate. These people, with their obstreperous mirth, their whooping, and howling, and quarrelling, added to the mounted Indians, who are constantly dashing into and

through our camp, yelling like fiends, the barking and baying of savage wolf-dogs, and the incessant cracking of rifles and carbines, render our camp a perfect bedlam. A more unpleasant situation for an invalid could scarcely be conceived. I am confined closely to the tent with illness, and am compelled all day to listen to the hiccoughing jargon of drunken traders, and the swearing and screaming of our own men, who are scarcely less savage than the rest, being heated by the detestable liquor which circulates freely among them. It is very much to be regretted that at times like the present there should be a positive necessity to allow the men as much rum as they can drink; but this course has been sanctioned and practised by all the leaders of parties who have hitherto visited these regions, and reform cannot be thought of now. The principal liquor in use is alcohol diluted with water. It is sold to the men at *three dollars* the pint! Tobacco, of very inferior quality, such as could be purchased in Philadelphia at about ten cents per pound, here fetches two dollars! and everything else in proportion. There is no coin in circulation, and these articles are therefore paid for by the independent mountain-men in beaver skins, buffalo robes, &c.; and those who are hired to the companies, have them charged against their wages. I was somewhat amused by observing one of our newly-hired men enter the tent and order, with the air of a man who knew he would not be refused, twenty dollars worth of rum and ten dollars worth of sugar, to treat two of his companions who were about leaving the rendezvous."

At the rendezvous a number of men belonging to Captain Wyeth's party left it to join returning parties; but the diminution of numbers thus occasioned was made up for by the accession of about thirty Indians—Flatheads, Nez Percés, and others, with their wives, children, and dogs. These Indians joined the party in order to enjoy the benefit of its convoy through the tract of country infested by the Blackfeet Indians—a fierce and warlike race, the terror both of Indians and whites. Here also the party was joined by two English gentlemen roaming the prairies for amusement. At length, on the 2d of July, the party bade adieu to the rendezvous, packed up their moveables, and journeyed along the bank of the river. The horses were much recruited by the long rest and good pasture, and, like their masters, were in excellent spirits for renewing the route across the wilderness.

They had now reached the confines of the Rocky Mountains, from which originate the upper tributaries of the Missouri on the one side, and those of the Columbia on the other. The plains in this high region are more rugged and barren than in the lower territories, and occasionally present evidences of volcanic action, being thickly covered with masses of lava and high basaltic crags. The principal vegetation on the hills consists of small cedars, while on the plains nothing flourishes but the shrubby wormwood or sage. Mr Townsend had an opportunity, in these

melancholy wastes, of becoming acquainted with a variety of animals, particularly birds. He met with flocks of a beautiful bird, called the cock of the plain (*Tetrao urophasianus*), which was so very tame, or rather so little accustomed to evil treatment, as to mingle familiarly with the cavalcade, and to suffer itself to be knocked down by whips.

On the 10th of July, the party encamped near the Blackfeet river, a small sluggish stagnant stream which empties itself into the Bear river. Here they had a rather stirring adventure with a grizzly bear. "As we approached our encampment," says Mr Townsend, "near a small grove of willows on the margin of the river, a tremendous grizzly bear rushed out upon us. Our horses ran wildly in every direction, snorting with terror, and became nearly unmanageable. Several balls were instantly fired into him, but they only seemed to increase his fury. After spending a moment in rending each wound (their invariable practice), he selected the person who happened to be nearest, and darted after him; but before he proceeded far, he was sure to be stopped again by a ball from another quarter. In this way he was driven about amongst us for perhaps fifteen minutes, at times so near some of the horses, that he received several severe kicks from them. One of the pack-horses was fairly fastened upon by the fearful claws of the brute, and in the terrified animal's efforts to escape the dreaded gripe, the pack and saddle were broken to pieces and disengaged. One of our mules also lent him a kick in the head while pursuing it up an adjacent hill, which sent him rolling to the bottom. Here he was finally brought to a stand. The poor animal was so completely surrounded by enemies that he became bewildered; he raised himself upon his hind feet, standing almost erect, his mouth partly open, and from his protruding tongue the blood fell fast in drops. While in this position he received about six more balls, each of which made him reel. At last, as in complete desperation, he dashed into the water and swam several yards with astonishing strength and agility, the guns cracking at him constantly. But he was not to proceed far; for just then Richardson, who had been absent, rode up, and fixing his deadly aim upon him, fired a ball into the back of his head, which killed him instantly. The strength of four men was required to drag the ferocious brute from the water, and upon examining his body, he was found completely riddled; there did not appear to be four inches of his shaggy person, from the hips upward, that had not received a ball; there must have been at least thirty shots fired at him, and probably few missed; yet such was his tenacity of life, that I have no doubt he would have succeeded in crossing the river but for the last shot in the brain. He would probably weigh at the least six hundred pounds, and was about the height of an ordinary steer. The spread of the foot laterally was ten inches, and the claws measured seven inches in length. This animal

was remarkably lean: when in good condition he would doubtless much exceed in weight the estimate I have given. Richardson and two other hunters in company killed two in the course of the afternoon, and saw several others."

Although it was known that parties of Blackfeet were hanging in the route of the caravan, our travellers fortunately escaped being attacked by these dreaded Indians; and on the 14th, having reached the banks of the fine large Shoshoné or Snake, also called Lewis river, they came to a halt for the purpose of erecting a fort, according to their instructions, and also of enjoying a rest of a fortnight or three weeks before renewing their journey. Nearly four months had now elapsed since they had commenced their expedition, and there were various evidences that they were approaching its close. The Snake river, on the banks of which they were encamped, pours its waters directly into the Columbia, and as they tried to form some idea of the great Oregon river from the size of its tributary, it became evident that they were approaching the western shore of the vast North American continent.

Food, however, was becoming scarce, the stock of dried buffalo meat being nearly exhausted; and therefore, while the majority of the party should remain to build a fort on the banks of the Snake river, it was resolved that a hunting party of twelve persons should start on the back track to shoot buffalo, and return to the fort in eight or nine days with the fruits of their diligence. To this party Mr Townsend attached himself. The hunters were successful in procuring buffalo, on which they now entirely fed, besides bringing a quantity in a dried state to the camp. Exposed constantly to the pure air, and having abundant exercise, the appetites of the party were most ravenous. Rising in the morning with the sun, they kindled a fire and roasted their breakfast, which consisted of from one to two pounds of meat. At ten o'clock they lunched on meat; at two they dined on meat; at five they supped on meat; at eight they had a second supper of meat; and during the night, when they awoke, they took a snatch at any meat within reach. Their food was thus entirely meat, without bread or any other article except water, which was their sole beverage. On this plain and substantial fare they enjoyed robust health.

Having heard that a ball in the middle of the forehead was never known to kill a buffalo, Mr Townsend determined to try the experiment. Accordingly one evening, seeing a large bull close at hand, he sallied forth with the utmost caution in the direction of his victim. "The unwieldy brute," he says, "was quietly and unsuspiciously cropping the herbage, and I had arrived to within ten feet of him, when a sudden flashing of the eye, and an impatient motion, told me that I was observed. He raised his enormous head and looked around him, and so truly terrible and grand did he appear, that I must confess I felt awed, almost frightened, at the task I had undertaken. But

I had gone too far to retreat; so, raising my gun, I took deliberate aim at the bushy centre of the forehead, and fired. The monster shook his head, pawed up the earth with his hoofs, and making a sudden spring, accompanied by a terrific roar, turned to make his escape. At that instant the ball from the second barrel penetrated his vitals, and he measured his huge length upon the ground. In a few seconds he was dead. Upon examining the head, and cutting away the enormous mass of matted hair and skin which enveloped the skull, my large bullet of twenty to the pound was found completely flattened against the bone, having carried with it, through the interposing integument, a considerable portion of the coarse hair, but without producing the smallest fracture. I was satisfied; and taking the tongue—the hunter's perquisite—I returned to my companions."

Some of the party had seen Blackfeet Indians skulking about, and the effect was to put the hunters more on their guard. They were now certain that their worst enemies, the Blackfeet, were around them, and that they only waited for a favourable opportunity of making an attack. It was felt that these savage wanderers were not there for nothing, and that the greatest care was necessary to prevent a surprise.

The Blackfeet is a sworn and determined foe to all white men, and he has often been heard to declare that he would rather hang the scalp of a pale-face to his girdle, than kill a buffalo to prevent his starving. The hostility of this dreaded tribe is, and has for years been, proverbial. They are, perhaps, the only Indians who do not fear the power, and who refuse to acknowledge the superiority of the white man; and though so often beaten in conflicts with them, even by their own mode of warfare, and generally with numbers vastly inferior, their indomitable courage and perseverance still urges them on to renewed attempts; and if a single scalp is taken, it is considered equal to a great victory, and is hailed as a presage of future and more extensive triumphs.

It must be acknowledged, however, that this determined hostility does not originate solely in savage malignity, or an abstract thirst for the blood of white men; it is fomented and kept alive from year to year by incessant provocatives on the part of white hunters, trappers, and traders, who are at best but intruders on the rightful domain of the red man of the wilderness. "Many a night," adds our traveller, "have I sat at the camp fire and listened to the recital of bloody and ferocious scenes, in which the narrators were the actors, and the poor Indians the victims, and I have felt my blood tingle with shame, and boil with indignation, to hear the diabolical acts applauded by those for whose amusement they were related. Many a precious villain and merciless marauder was made by these midnight tales of rapine, murder, and robbery; many a stripling, in whose tender mind the seeds of virtue and honesty had never germinated, burned

for an opportunity of loading his pack-horse with the beaver skins of some solitary Blackfeet trapper, who was to be murdered and despoiled of the property he had acquired by weeks and perhaps months of toil and danger."

The proximity of the Blackfeet caused the old hunters to recollect their former adventures in the same neighbourhood; and one evening, as the party sat around the camp fire, wrapped in their warm blankets, these old hunters became talkative, and related their individual adventures for the general amusement. The best story was one told by Richardson, of a meeting he once had with three Blackfeet Indians. He had been out alone hunting buffalo, and towards the end of the day was returning to the camp with his meat, when he heard the clattering of hoofs in the rear, and upon looking back, observed three Indians in hot pursuit of him. To lighten his horse, he immediately threw off the meat he carried, and then urged the animal to his utmost speed, in an attempt to distance his pursuers. He soon discovered, however, that the enemy was rapidly gaining upon him, and that in a few minutes more he would be completely at their mercy, when he hit upon an expedient as singular as it was bold and courageous. Drawing his long scalping-knife from the sheath at his side, he plunged the keen weapon through his horse's neck, and severed the spine. The animal dropped instantly dead, and the determined hunter, throwing himself behind the fallen carcass, waited calmly the approach of his sanguinary pursuers. In a few moments one Indian was within range of the fatal rifle, and at its report his horse galloped riderless over the plain. The remaining two then thought to take him at advantage by approaching simultaneously on both sides of his rampart; but one of them happening to venture too near in order to be sure of his aim, was shot to the heart by the long pistol of the white man at the very instant that the ball from the Indian's gun whistled harmlessly by. The third savage, being wearied of the dangerous game, applied the whip vigorously to the flanks of his horse, and was soon out of sight, while Richardson set about collecting the trophies of his singular victory. He caught the two Indians' horses, mounted one, and loaded the other with the meat which he had discarded, and returned to his camp with two spare rifles, and a good stock of ammunition.

Having now procured a sufficient quantity of buffalo meat, the hunting party set out on its return to the fort, and arrived there on the 25th, after nine days' absence. Their return had been anxiously expected, and "I could well perceive," says Mr Townsend, "many a longing and eager gaze cast upon the well-filled bales of buffalo meat as our mules swung their little bodies through the camp. My companion, Mr Nuttall, had become so exceedingly thin that I could scarcely have known him; and upon my expressing surprise at the great change in his appearance, he heaved a sigh of inanity, and remarked that I 'would have been as

thin as he, if I had lived on old bear for two weeks, and short allowance of that.' I found, in truth, that the whole camp had been subsisting during our absence on little else than two or three grizzly bears which had been killed in the neighbourhood; and with a complacent glance at my own rotund and cow-fed person, I wished my poor friend better luck for the future."

Another travelling company had encamped on the banks of the Snake river during the absence of the hunting party. It consisted of thirty men, thirteen of them Indians, Nez Percés, Chinooks, and Kayouse, the remainder French-Canadians and half-breeds. Mr M'Kay, the leader of this company, was the son of Mr Alexander M'Kay, one of the early adventurers across the prairies, the tragical story of whose massacre by the Indians on the north-west coast is told by Washington Irving in his "Astoria." Mr Townsend gives an interesting description of this company and its captain. "On the evening of the 26th," he says, "Captain Wyeth, Mr Nuttall, and myself, supped with Mr M'Kay in his lodge. I am much pleased with this gentleman; he unites the free, frank, and open manners of the mountain man, with the grace and affability of the Frenchman. But above all, I admire the order, decorum, and strict subordination which exists among his men; so different from what I have been accustomed to see in parties composed of Americans. Mr M'Kay assures me that he had considerable difficulty in bringing his men to the state in which they now are. The free and fearless Indian was particularly difficult to subdue; but steady determined perseverance and bold measures, aided by a rigid self-example, made them as clay in his hand, and has finally reduced them to their present admirable condition. If they misbehave, a commensurate punishment is sure to follow. In extreme cases flagellation is resorted to, but it is inflicted only by the hand of the captain; were any other appointed to perform this office on an Indian, the indignity would be deemed so great that nothing less than the blood of the individual could appease the wounded feelings of the savage. After supper was concluded, we sat down on a buffalo robe at the entrance of the lodge to see the Indians at their devotions. The whole thirteen were soon collected at the call of one whom they had chosen for their chief, and seated with sober sedate countenances around a large fire. After remaining in perfect silence for perhaps fifteen minutes, the chief commenced a harangue in a solemn and impressive tone, reminding them of the object for which they were thus assembled—that of worshipping the 'Great Spirit who made the light and the darkness, the fire and the water,' and assured them that if they offered up their prayers to him with but 'one tongue,' they would certainly be accepted. He then rose from his squatting position to his knees, and his example was followed by all the others. In this situation he commenced a prayer, consisting of short sentences, uttered rapidly but with great apparent fervour,

his hands clasped upon his breast, and his eyes cast upwards with a beseeching look towards heaven. At the conclusion of each sentence, a choral response of a few words was made, accompanied frequently by low moaning. The prayer lasted about twenty minutes.

After its conclusion, the chief, still maintaining the same position of his body and hands, but with his head bent to his breast, commenced a kind of psalm or sacred song, in which the whole company presently joined. The song was a simple expression of a few sounds, no intelligible words being uttered. It resembled the words *Ho-ha-ho-ha-ho-ha-ha-a*, commencing in a low tone, and gradually swelling to a full, round, and beautifully modulated chorus. During the song the clasped hands of the worshippers were moved rapidly across the breast, and their bodies swung with great energy to the time of the music. The chief ended the song by a kind of swelling groan, which was echoed in chorus. It was then taken up by another, and the same routine was gone through. The whole ceremony occupied perhaps an hour and a half; a short silence then succeeded, after which each Indian rose from the ground, and disappeared in the darkness with a step noiseless as that of a spectre. I think I never was more gratified by any exhibition in my life. The humble, subdued, and beseeching looks of the poor untutored beings who were calling upon their heavenly father to forgive their sins, and continue his mercies to them, and the evident and heartfelt sincerity which characterised the whole scene, was truly affecting and very impressive.

The next day being the Sabbath, our good missionary, Mr Jason Lee, was requested to hold a meeting, with which he obligingly complied. A convenient shady spot was selected in the forest adjacent, and the greater part of our men, as well as the whole of Mr M'Kay's company, including the Indians, attended. The usual forms of the Methodist service, to which Mr Lee is attached, were gone through, and were followed by a brief but excellent and appropriate exhortation by that gentleman. The people were remarkably quiet and attentive, and the Indians sat upon the ground like statues. Although not one of them could understand a word that was said, they nevertheless maintained the most strict and decorous silence, kneeling when the preacher kneeled, and rising when he rose, evidently with a view of paying him and us a suitable respect, however much their own notions as to the proper and most acceptable forms of worship might have been opposed to ours. A meeting for worship in the Rocky Mountains is almost as unusual as the appearance of a herd of buffalo in the settlements. A sermon was perhaps never preached here before, but for myself I really enjoyed the whole scene: it possessed the charm of novelty, to say nothing of the salutary effect which I sincerely hope it may produce."

After having completed the fort, and raised the American flag upon it, the party on the 6th of August recommenced their journey westward, leaving some men in charge of the building. The company consisted now but of thirty men, several Indian women, and one hundred and sixteen horses. Having left most of the fresh buffalo meat brought in by the hunting party in the fort for the subsistence of the small garrison, they had to be contented with the old dry meat they had carried for many weeks in their hampers, varied with the flesh of a grizzly bear, or any such animal which good fortune might send across their path. Nor was this the worst, for on the very day after leaving the fort, having travelled from sunrise over an arid plain covered with jagged masses of lava and twisted wormwood bushes, and where not a drop of water was to be seen, they began to suffer dreadfully from thirst. Every man kept a bullet or smooth stone in his mouth, mumbling it to provoke the saliva. At last one of the men, a mulatto, "cast himself resolutely from his horse to the ground, and declared that he would lie there till he died; 'there was no water in this horrid country, and he might as well die here as go farther.' Some of us tried to infuse a little courage into him, but it proved of no avail, and each was too much occupied with his own particular grief to use his tongue much in persuasion; so we left him to his fate.

Soon after nightfall, some signs of water were seen in a small valley to our left, and upon ascending it, the foremost of the party found a delightful little cold spring; but they soon exhausted it, and then commenced, with axes and knives, to dig it out and enlarge it. By the time that Mr Nuttall and myself arrived, they had excavated a large space, which was filled to overflowing with muddy water. We did not wait for it to settle, however, but throwing ourselves flat upon the ground, drank until we were ready to burst. The tales which I had read of suffering travellers in the Arabian deserts then recurred with some force to my recollection, and I thought I could, though in a very small measure, appreciate their sufferings by deprivation, and their unmingled delight and satisfaction in the opportunity of assuaging them.

Poor Jim, the mulatto man, was found by one of the people who went back in search of him lying where he had first fallen, and, either in a real or pretended swoon, still obstinate about dying, and scarcely heeding the assurances of the other that water was within a mile of him. He was, however, at length dragged and carried into camp, and soused head foremost into the mud puddle, where he drank until his eyes seemed ready to burst from his head, and he was lifted out and laid dripping and flaccid upon the ground."

The ground over which the party was travelling, was becoming more and more rugged and rocky. They entered a defile between the mountains, about five hundred yards wide, covered

like the surrounding country with pines; and as they proceeded, the timber grew so closely, added to a thick undergrowth of bushes, that it appeared almost impossible to proceed with their horses. The farther they advanced the more their difficulties seemed to increase; obstacles of various kinds impeded their progress—fallen trees, their branches tangled and matted together; large rocks and deep ravines; holes in the ground, into which their animals would be precipitated without the possibility of avoiding them; and a hundred other difficulties.

After travelling for six miles through this defile, two of the party, Captain Wyeth and the experienced hunter Richardson, set out to explore the foreground, and look for a pass through the mountains. They returned next morning with the mortifying intelligence that no pass could be found. They had climbed to the very summit of the highest peaks above the snow and the reach of vegetation, and the only prospect they had was a confused mass of huge angular rocks, over which a wild goat could scarcely make his way. The captain also had a narrow escape from being dashed to pieces during the excursion. He was walking on a ridge which sloped from the top at an angle of about forty degrees, and terminated at its lower part in a perpendicular precipice of a thousand or twelve hundred feet. He was moving along in the snow cautiously, near the lower edge, in order to attain a more level spot beyond, when his feet slipped and he fell. Before he could attempt to fix himself firmly, he slid down the declivity till within a few feet of the frightful precipice. At the instant of his fall, he had the presence of mind to plant the rifle which he held in one hand, and his knife which he drew from the scabbard with the other, into the snow, and as he almost tottered on the verge, he succeeded in checking himself, and holding his body perfectly still. He then gradually moved, first the rifle and then the knife, backward up the slanting hill behind him, and fixing them firmly, drew up his body parallel to them. In this way he moved slowly and surely until he had gained his former position, when, without further difficulty, he succeeded in reaching the more level land.

Disappointed in finding a pass through the mountains at this point, the party altered the bearing of their route, and at last they came upon the remains of a recent encampment of Indians. Following the trail of these Indians, they entered a valley similar to that which they had just explored, and terminating in a path over the mountains. Mr Townsend thus describes their toilsome march across these heights. "The commencement of the Alpine path was, however, far better than we had expected, and we entertained the hope that the passage could be made without difficulty or much toil; but the farther we progressed, the more laborious the travelling became. Sometimes we mounted steep banks of intermingled flinty rock and friable slate, where our horses could scarcely obtain a footing, frequently sliding down

several feet on the loose broken stones. Again we passed along the extreme verge of tremendous precipices at a giddy height, where at almost every step the stones and earth would roll from under our horses' feet, and we could hear them strike with a dull leaden sound on the craggy rocks below. The whole journey to-day, from the time we arrived at the heights until we had crossed the mountain, has been a most fearful one. For myself, I might have diminished the danger very considerably by adopting the plan pursued by the rest of the company, that of walking and leading my horse over the most dangerous places; but I have been suffering for several days with a lame foot, and am wholly incapable of such exertion. I soon discovered that an attempt to guide my horse over the most rugged and steepest ranges was worse than useless, so I dropped the rein upon the animal's neck, and allowed him to take his own course, closing my eyes and keeping as quiet as possible in the saddle. But I could not forbear starting occasionally when the feet of my horse would slip on a stone and one side of him would slide rapidly towards the edge of the precipice; but I always recovered myself by a desperate effort, and it was fortunate for me that I did so."

The party continued its march for several days through this rugged and inhospitable region, coming into occasional contact with parties of the Snake Indians, and subsisting on the kamas, a kind of root resembling the potato, which is found in the prairie; on cherries, berries, and small fruit, which they found growing on bushes; and also on an occasional chance prize of animal food. "At about daylight on the morning of the 20th," says Mr Townsend, "having charge of the last guard of the night, I observed a beautiful sleek little colt, of about four months old, trot into the camp, winnying with great apparent pleasure, and dancing and curvetting gaily amongst our sober and sedate band. I had no doubt that he had strayed from Indians, who were probably in the neighbourhood; but as here every animal that comes near us is fair game, and as we were hungry, not having eaten anything of consequence since yesterday morning, I thought the little stranger would make a good breakfast for us. Concluding, however, that it would be best to act advisedly in the matter, I put my head into Captain Wyeth's tent, and telling him the news, made the proposition which had occurred to me. The captain's reply was encouraging enough—'Down with him, if you please, Mr Townsend; and let us have him for breakfast.' Accordingly, in five minutes afterwards a bullet sealed the fate of the unfortunate visitor, and my men were set to work, making fires and rummaging out the long-neglected stew-pans, while I engaged myself in flaying the little animal, and cutting up his body in readiness for the pots.

When the camp was aroused about an hour after, the savoury steam of the cookery was rising and saluting the nostrils of our

hungry people with its fragrance, who, rubbing their hands with delight, sat themselves down upon the ground, waiting with what patience they might for the unexpected repast which was preparing for them. It was to me almost equal to a good breakfast to witness the pleasure and satisfaction which I had been the means of diffusing through the camp. The repast was ready at length, and we did full justice to it; every man ate until he was filled, and all pronounced it one of the most delicious meals they had ever assisted in demolishing. When our breakfast was concluded, but little of the colt remained; that little was, however, carefully packed up and deposited on one of the horses, to furnish at least a portion of another meal."

In the afternoon of the same day, after a long march, they procured three small salmon from some Indians who were fishing on the Mallade river; and these, cooked along with a grouse, a beaver, and the remains of the pony, made a very savoury mess. "While we were eating, we were visited by a Snake chief, a large and powerful man, of a peculiarly dignified aspect and manner. He was naked, with the exception of a small blanket which covered his shoulders, and descended to the middle of the back, being fastened around the neck with a silver skewer. As it was pudding time with us, our visitor was of course invited to sit down and eat; and he, nothing loath, deposited himself at once upon the ground, and made a remarkably vigorous assault upon the mixed contents of the dish. He had not eaten long, however, before we perceived a sudden and inexplicable change in his countenance, which was instantly followed by a violent ejectment of a huge mouthful of our luxurious fare. The man rose slowly and with great dignity to his feet, and pronouncing the single word *shekum* (horse), in a tone of mingled anger and disgust, stalked rapidly out of the camp, not even wishing us a good evening. It struck me as a singular instance of accuracy and discrimination in the organs of taste. We had been eating of the multifarious compound without being able to recognise by the taste a single ingredient which it contained; a stranger came amongst us, who did not know, when he commenced eating, that the dish was formed of more than one item, and yet in less than five minutes he discovered one of the very least of its component parts."

The neighbourhood of these Snake Indians was not very agreeable to our travellers for many reasons. Mr Townsend paid a visit to their camp, and the description he gives of it does not lead one to conceive a high idea of savage life. "Early in the morning," he says, "I strolled into the Snake camp. It consists of about thirty lodges or wigwams, formed generally of branches of trees tied together in a conic summit, and covered with buffalo, deer, or elk skins. Men and little children were lolling about the ground all around the wigwams, together with a heterogeneous assemblage of dogs, cats, some tamed prairie wolves, and other *varmints*. The dogs growled and snapped

when I approached, the wolves cowered and looked cross, and the cats ran away and hid themselves in dark corners. They had not been accustomed to the face of a white man, and all the quadrupeds seemed to regard me as some monstrous production, more to be feared than loved or courted. This dislike, however, did not appear to extend to the bipeds, for many of every age and sex gathered around me, and seemed to be examining me critically in all directions. The men looked complacently at me, the women, the dear creatures, smiled upon me, and the little naked pot-bellied children crawled around my feet, examining the fashion of my hard shoes, and playing with the long fringes of my leathern inexpressibles. But I scarcely know how to commence a description of the camp, or to frame a sentence which will give an adequate idea of the extreme filth and horrific nastiness of the whole vicinity.

Immediately as I entered the village, my olfactories were assailed by the most vile and mephitic odours, which I found to proceed chiefly from great piles of salmon entrails and garbage, which were lying festering and rotting in the sun around the very doors of the habitations. Fish, recent and half-dried, were scattered all over the ground under the feet of the dogs, wolves, and children; and others which had been split, were hanging on rude platforms erected within the precincts of the camp. Some of the women were making their breakfast of the great red salmon eggs as large as peas, and using a wooden spoon to convey them to their mouths. Occasionally, also, by way of varying the repast, they would take a huge pinch of a drying fish which was lying on the ground near them. Many of the children were similarly employed, and the little imps would also have hard contests with the dogs for a favourite morsel, the former roaring and blubbering, the latter yelping and snarling, and both rolling over and over together upon the savoury soil. The whole economy of the lodges, and the inside and outside appearance, was of a piece with everything else about them—filthy beyond description; the very skins which covered the wigwams were black and stiff with rancid salmon fat, and the dresses (if dresses they may be called) of the women were of the same colour and consistence from the same cause. These dresses are little square pieces of deer-skin, fastened with a thong around the loins, and reaching about half way to the knees; the rest of the person is entirely naked. Some of the women had little children clinging like bullfrogs to their backs, without being fastened, and in that situation extracting their lactiferous sustenance from the breast, which was thrown over the shoulders. It is almost needless to say that I did not remain long in the Snake camp; for although I had been a considerable time estranged from the abodes of luxury, and had become somewhat accustomed to at least a partial assimilation to a state of nature, yet I was not prepared for what I saw here. I never had fancied anything so

utterly abominable, and was glad to escape to a purer and more wholesome atmosphere."

The party again toiled on, every day's march bringing them sensibly nearer the end of their journey. On the 2d of September they reached the Utalla river, and here Captain Wyeth and two men left them to go on to the Walla Walla fort, a little way distant. Now that our travellers were to enter once more into civilised society, they began to feel a little anxiety about their toilet; and Mr Townsend's description of the preparations they made on the occasion is rather amusing. "As we were approaching so near the abode of those in whose eyes we wished to appear like fellow Christians, we concluded that there would be a propriety in attempting to remove at least one of the heathenish badges which we had worn throughout the journey; so Mr Nuttall's razor was fished out from its hiding-place in the bottom of his trunk, and in a few minutes our encumbered chins lost their long-cherished ornaments; we performed our ablutions in the river, arrayed ourselves in clean linen, trimmed our long hair, and then arranged our toilet before a mirror with great self-complacence and satisfaction. I admired my own appearance considerably (and this is probably an acknowledgment that few would make), but I could not refrain from laughing at the strange party-coloured appearance of my physiognomy, the lower portion being fair like a woman's, and the upper brown and swarthy as an Indian."

ARRIVAL AT THE COLUMBIA.

"About noon of the 3d of September," continues our traveller, "we struck the Walla Walla river, a pretty stream of fifty or sixty yards in width, fringed with tall willows, and containing a number of salmon, which we can see frequently leaping from the water. The pasture here being good, we allowed our horses an hour's rest to feed, and then travelled over the plain until near dark, when, on ascending a sandy hill, the noble Columbia burst upon our view. I could scarcely repress a loud exclamation of delight and pleasure as I gazed upon the magnificent river flowing silently and majestically on, and reflected that I had actually crossed the vast American continent, and now stood upon a stream that poured its waters directly into the Pacific. This then was the great Oregon, the first appearance of which gave Lewis and Clark so many emotions of joy and pleasure, and on this stream our indefatigable countrymen wintered after the toils and privations of a long and protracted journey through the wilderness. My reverie was suddenly interrupted by one of the men exclaiming from his position in advance, 'There is the fort.' We had in truth approached very near without being conscious of it. There stood the fort on the bank of the river; horses and horned cattle were roaming about the vicinity, and on the borders of the little Walla Walla we recognised the white tent of our long lost mis-

sionaries. These we soon joined, and were met and received by them like brethren. Mr Nuttall and myself were invited to sup with them upon a dish of stewed hares which they had just prepared, and it is almost needless to say that we did full justice to the good men's cookery. They told us that they had travelled comfortably from Fort Hall without any unusual fatigue, and like ourselves had no particularly stirring adventures. Their route, although somewhat longer, was a much less toilsome and difficult one, and they suffered but little for want of food, being well provided with dried buffalo meat, which had been prepared near Fort Hall."

At Walla Walla, the party broke up into sections, some intending to reach Fort Vancouver in one way, some in another. The missionaries had engaged a large barge to convey them from Walla Walla directly to Vancouver, down the Columbia river, and Mr Townsend and Mr Nuttall were anxious to go along with them; but as the barge could not contain so many, they were obliged to travel on horseback to a point about eighty miles farther down the river, where Captain Wyeth engaged to wait for them and procure canoes to convey them to Vancouver. In the course of their land journey down the banks of the river, they passed a village of the Walla Walla Indians, a tribe so remarkable for their honesty and moral deportment, that their conduct and habits amidst great privations shine in comparison with those of Christian communities. The river in this part is described as about three quarters of a mile wide—a clear, deep, and rapid stream.

Having reached the appointed spot on the 10th of September, the travellers found the captain waiting with three canoes, each provided with an Indian helmsman, and on the 11th they embarked and commenced their voyage down stream. They had hardly set sail, however, when the wind "rose to a heavy gale, and the waves ran to a prodigious height. At one moment our frail bark danced upon the crest of a wave, and at the next fell with a surge into the trough of the sea; and as we looked at the swell before us, it seemed that in an instant we must inevitably be engulfed. At such times the canoe ahead of us was entirely hidden from view, but she was observed to rise again like the seagull, and hurry on into the same danger. The Indian in my canoe soon became completely frightened: he frequently hid his face with his hands, and sang in a low melancholy voice a prayer which we had often heard from his people while at their evening devotions. As our dangers were every moment increasing, the man became at length absolutely childish, and with all our persuasion and threats we could not induce him to lay his paddle into the water. We were all soon compelled to put in shore, which we did without sustaining any damage; the boats were hauled up high and dry, and we concluded to remain in our quarters until to-morrow, or until there was a cessation of the wind. In about an

hour it lulled a little, and Captain Wyeth ordered the boats to be again launched, in the hope of being able to weather a point about five miles below before the gale again commenced, where we could lie by until it should be safe to proceed. The calm proved, as some of us had suspected, a treacherous one: in a very few minutes after we got under way, we were contending with the same difficulties as before, and again our cowardly helmsman laid by his paddle and began mumbling his prayer. It was too irritating to be borne. Our canoe had swung round broadside to the surge, and was shipping gallons of water at every dash.

At this time it was absolutely necessary that every man on board should exert himself to the utmost to head up the canoe and make the shore as soon as possible. Our Indian, however, still sat with his eyes covered, the most abject and contemptible looking thing I ever saw. We took him by the shoulders and threatened to throw him overboard if he did not immediately lend his assistance: we might as well have spoken to a stone. He was finally aroused, however, by our presenting a loaded gun at his breast. He dashed the muzzle away, seized his paddle again, and worked with a kind of desperate and wild energy until he sank back in the canoe completely exhausted. In the meantime the boat had become half-full of water, shipping a part of every surf that struck her; and as we gained the shallows, every man sprang overboard, breast deep, and began hauling the canoe to shore. This was even a more difficult task than that of propelling her with the oars; the water still broke over her, and the bottom was a deep kind of quicksand, in which we sank almost to the knees at every step, the surf at the same time dashing against us with such violence as to throw us repeatedly upon our faces. We at length reached the shore, and hauled the canoe up out of reach of the breakers. She was then unloaded as soon as possible, and turned bottom upwards. The goods had suffered considerably by the wetting; they were all unbaled, and dried by a large fire which we built on the shore."

For two or three days they were tossed about on the river, now attempting to make way, now forced to land again, and always drenched to the skin. The missionaries and their party, too, who had set out in the barge from Walla Walla, were in no better plight. On the 14th the three canoes were again loaded, and again made the attempt to proceed; but in a short while one of them was stove, and another greatly damaged, so that they had to be unloaded and drawn out of the water. An effort was now made to procure one or two canoes with a pilot from an Indian village five miles below. This proved a hazardous and fatiguing journey; but was rewarded by getting one canoe and several Indians to assist in the navigation. With this reinforcement, and with the boats mended, the party again attempted the descent of the river. The voyage this time was more fortunate,

and next day they all arrived at the fort, which was the end of their journey across the wilderness. The time occupied in this dangerous expedition had been six months and three days. Unharmed by fatigue or accident, with a constitution strengthened by healthful exercise, and a mind buoyant with the novelty of the scenes they had passed through, the travellers felt sincerely thankful to that kind and overruling Providence which had watched over and protected them.

At Fort Vancouver, Mr Townsend left the trading part of the expedition, and procured a passage on board an American vessel, which carried him to the Sandwich Islands, and there he passed the winter months. He afterwards returned to the Columbia and its environs among the Rocky Mountains, to pursue his scientific researches; and his purpose being at length fulfilled, he returned by sea, touching at Valparaiso on the South American coast, and reached home after an absence of three years.

It is gratifying to learn, that the researches of the two naturalists were eminently successful. Besides procuring specimens of many rare animals, Mr Townsend discovered in the course of his expedition about fifty-four new species, sixteen of which were quadrupeds, and twenty-eight birds. Mr Nuttall also made many important additions to botanical science.

THE OREGON TERRITORY.

The large district of country on the Pacific, receiving the name of Oregon, which can only be reached from the eastern settlements, as we have seen, by an incalculable degree of labour, is of uncertain dimensions, but is generally considered to extend from the 42d to the 54th degree of north latitude, and from the Rocky Mountains westward to the Pacific. From the mountains, the country presents a comparatively abrupt slope, consisting of immense belts or terraces, disposed one below the other to the sea, but here and there interrupted by hilly ridges. The higher regions are rocky, wild, and covered with forests of huge pines and other trees; in the lower grounds, the land is open and fertile, furnishing grasses and edible roots in great profusion.

Towards the south, where the country borders on Mexico, the climate is mild, but afflicted with a rainy season, which, commencing in October, does not end till April. The tempests of wind and rain which occasionally occur are terrible. Near the northern limit, the extremes of heat and cold are greater, the winters being intensely severe. The principal animals found in the territory are bears, wild horses, small deer, wolves, and foxes; otters and beavers are plentiful on the banks of the rivers, whose waters abound with the finest salmon and seals. The Indian races are thinly scattered over this extensive region, and are not supposed to number more than 170,000 individuals.

Little, however, is distinctly known of the Oregon. Few have

explored it except hunters. The attention of travellers has been chiefly confined to the river Columbia or Oregon, the latter name having been communicated to the country. This river, politically and commercially, is the great point of attraction; for from it is expected a means of descending to the Pacific from the interior. The upper part of the river is formed by two main branches, winding their way amidst the valleys of the Rocky Mountains; and the more southerly of these tributaries is said to reach to within 200 miles of the head waters of the Missouri. Formed by these and many smaller streams, the Oregon flows in a westerly direction to the Pacific, pretty nearly dividing the country into two equal parts. In a direct line, the space over which it runs is 650 miles in breadth; but as it winds considerably, the entire length of the river is probably as much as 1000 miles.

According to the accounts of Townsend, Lewis and Clark, Washington Irving in his "Astoria," and others, the Oregon, though a large river, is exceedingly difficult of navigation, being very various in breadth and force of current, impeded by rocks, islands, cascades, and rapids, and exposed to furious gusts of wind, against which no skill can afford protection. In some places the banks are flat and marshy, covered with trees and bushes which flourish only in swamps, and in others they are high and precipitous, hemming in the waters which dash to and fro at their base. The bar or estuary is infested with breakers, which render the ingress and egress always hazardous; the tide rises about eight and a half feet at the mouth, and ascends the stream about 160 miles. Vessels of 300 tons may reach the Multnomah branch, about sixty miles below the great falls, and sloops of small burden go up nearly to the rapids. Beyond this point all is difficulty and danger, and the smallest craft have to be taken from the stream, and carried over the numerous rocky impediments.

The greatest of the falls is at about 180 miles above the mouth of the river. The first is a perpendicular cascade of twenty feet, after which there is a swift descent for a mile, between islands of hard black rock, to another pitch of eight feet divided by two rocks. About two and a half miles below this the river expands into a wide basin, seemingly dammed up by a perpendicular edge of black rock. A current, however, sets diagonally to the left of this rocky barrier, where there is a chasm forty-five yards in width. Through this the whole body of the waters roars along, swelling, and whirling, and boiling for some distance in the wildest confusion. Through this tremendous channel the first explorers of the river, Lewis and Clark, passed adventurously in their boats; the danger not being from the rocks but from the great surges and whirlpools. At the distance of a mile and a half from the foot of this narrow channel is a rapid formed by two rocky islands; and two miles beyond is a second great fall over a ledge of rocks twenty feet

high, extending nearly from shore to shore. The river is again compressed into a channel from fifty to a hundred feet wide, worn through a rough bed of hard black rock, along which it boils and roars with great fury for the distance of three miles. This is called the Long Narrows. Such are a few of the features of the Columbia or Oregon, as mentioned by Irving and other American writers; the impression left on our minds, from all we have read on the subject, being that it is a river in its present condition of little commercial value; and how many millions of pounds sterling would be required to provide its navigation with artificial side-locks and channels, it would be presumptuous for us to say.

The only establishments of the whites are the Hudson Bay Company's posts and settlements, and the missionary stations of the American Board of Foreign Missions, the country generally being still in possession of the native tribes. Fort Vancouver, the company's principal depôt, stands on the north side of the river, 100 miles from its mouth, in the midst of fertile and beautiful prairies. The fort is merely a stockade, inclosing the company's buildings, surrounded by about fifty huts, occupied by the mechanics and labourers, with their Indian wives and slaves, who number in all about 800 persons. The stations of the American mission board are Astoria and Clatsop, both situated near the mouth of the river—the former on the north and the latter on the southern shore. Besides these there are various posts scattered over the interior; latterly the territory has received a number of Anglo-American settlers from the states; and from the enterprising character of that people, it seems not unlikely that in a few years, in spite of every obstacle, it will be extensively settled upon by them.

As is generally known, the United States prefer a claim to the greater part, if not the whole of the Oregon territory, while Great Britain disputes this title, and asserts a claim to at least joint occupancy, a right of navigating the Columbia, and of forming settlements and trading posts in the country. To the British, with their feeble and cumbrous colonial policy, this far distant territory can never be anything but an engine of trouble and expense; or at best, the mere resort of hunters and fur-traders, from whose feats the nation at large can derive little economical advantage. Even did it present an average field for emigration —which is rendered more than dubious by the character both of the soil and climate—still, considering that it is between two and three thousand miles distant from the farthest verge of Western Canada, and of very tedious and dangerous access by sea, it can by no means form an acquisition of peculiar value to a country whose accessible possessions are already so extensive. Viewed in whatever light, it is exceedingly desirable that the conflicting claims of the British and United States governments respecting the Oregon were amicably and speedily adjusted.