

## Narrative of the Adventures of Zenas Leonard

A Native of Clearfield County, Pa. Who Spent Five  
Years Trapping for Furs, Trading with  
the Indians, &c., &c., of the  
Rocky Mountains:

Written by Himself

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Of the adventures of a company of 70 men, who left St. Louis in the Spring of 1831, on an expedition to the Rocky Mountains, for the purpose of trapping for Furs, and trading with the Indians, by one of the company, Mr. ZENAS LEONARD, of Clearfield county, Pa. — comprising a minute description of the incidents of the adventure, and a valuable history of this immense territory — not from maps and charts, but from personal observation.

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The Company under the command of Capt's. Gant and Blackwell, left St. Louis on the 24th of April, 1831. Each man was furnished with the necessary equipments for the expedition — such as traps, guns, &c.; also horses and goods of various descriptions, to trade with the Indians for furs and Buffaloe robes. We continued our journey in a western direction, in the state of Missouri, on the south side of the Missouri river, through a country thinly inhabited by the whites and friendly Indians, until we arrived at Fort Osage the extreme point of the white settlement. Here we remained several days and purchased and packed up a sufficiency of provision, as we then thought, for our subsistence through the wilderness to what is called the Buffaloe country; a distance of about 200 miles. From thence we proceeded up the Missouri until we arrived at the mouth of the Kansas river, where we again tarried two or three days, for the purpose of trading some goods to the Kansas Indians for corn, moccasins, &c.

This tribe of Indians live in small huts, built of poles, covered with straw & dirt, and in shape are similar to a potatoe hole. They cultivate the soil quite extensively, and raise very good corn, pumpkins, beans and other vegetables. The principal chief is called "White Ploom." — The nation is supposed to contain 800 warriors.

From thence we proceeded on our journey up the river. We found the country here beautiful indeed — abounding with the most delightful prairies, with here & there a small brook, winding its way to the river, the margins of which are adorned with the lofty Pine and Cedar tree. These prairies were completely covered with fine low grass, and decorated with beautiful flowers of various colors; and some of them are so extensive and clear of timber and brush that the eye might search in vain for an object to rest upon. I have seen beautiful and enchanting sceneries depicted by the artist, but never any thing to equal the work of rude nature in those prairies. In the spring of the year when the grass is green and the blossoms fresh, they present an appearance, which for beauty and charms, is beyond the art of man to depict.

We continued on our journey westward, up the republican fork of Kansas river — passing through these prairies, till the 20th of June, when we happened on another tribe of Indians, called the Otoes, from whom we obtained a quantity of sweet corn and some wild turnips; we also understood from this tribe that it was much farther to the Buffaloe country than we had before anticipated, and that game in that direction, was very scarce. From thence we proceeded in a N. W. direction, up the Republican Branch — finding but very little game; and on the 21st of June we killed our last beef, which was equally divided to each mess. Here we began to feel somewhat alarmed — starvation began to stare us in the face, and some of the

company became refractory and were for turning back. Stimulated, however, by the hope of reaching game in a few days, we continued in the direction of the Buffalo country. Hunters were sent out daily in quest of game, but as often returned without any. We still continued to travel — subsisting chiefly on muscles and small fish which we caught in the river — finally the Captain ordered two of the best horses to be killed, to keep the company from starving, which was immediately done, and the carcasses equally distributed to each mess. We proceeded on our journey slowly — sending out hunters as usual, but without success; game appeared to become scarcer and scarcer, and in a few days our provision (if I may call it such) again exhausted. Finding it impossible, owing to the scarcity of game, to continue any further up the Republican, we concluded to leave it and steer for the head waters of the Missouri. Accordingly we changed our direction as well as our manner of travelling. Instead of travelling in a close mass as heretofore, we now scattered over a considerable range of country for the purpose of hunting, leaving ten or twelve men only to bring on the pack-mules, and at night we would collect together with our game, which generally consisted of wolves, wild cats, muscles, and some times an Antelope. In this way we continued our journey slowly, some of the company being half starved to death, for eight or ten days, eating at night what little game we caught through the day; at last we collected one evening, I think about the middle of July, in a barren prairie where we could not get wood enough to make a fire, much less any thing to cook on it — not a mouthfull of game was returned that evening. This was a trying time indeed — despondency & horror was depicted in the countenance of every man, and the enquiry, "what shall we do," was passing from every lip. In this condition, without fire or food, we spent the night. In the morning we held a consultation to decide whether to continue in that direction or turn. We finally agreed to proceed straight ahead & by night we arrived on the banks of the river Platte, a distance of about ten miles from where we had encamped the night before, where we pitched our tents for the night. Most of our hunters had collected without game, and pronounced it very scarce, and we were about to kill another of our horses when we saw one of our hunters approaching us with unusual rapidity, without his gun or hat and his countenance indicating great excitement. I never wish to feel more pleasure than I did as he rushed into the tent exclaiming, "I have killed two big Buck Elk!" Early the next morning — refreshed with what meat we had obtained and animated and encouraged with the hope of obtaining plenty more, we set out with unusual fine spirits. We continued to travel up the river Platte for several days - passing through extensive barren prairies, the soil being too poor even to produce grass; and game exceedingly scarce. Some of us again became alarmed, and one morning when the roll was called it was discovered that two of the company had stolen two of the best horses and started back to the state of Missouri. This had a bad effect — it impaired that full confidence which had heretofore existed between the members of the company, but we continued up the river and in a few days arrived at the Buffalo country. After encamping, on a pleasant evening, in the latter part of July, some of the company discovered two Buffalo bulls feeding in the prairie, about half a mile from camp. Four or five of us immediately mounted our horses and started to take them; but returned in a short time without success — one of the men having got his arm broken, by falling from his horse. But the next day we happened on a large drove of these animals, and killed six or seven of them. The flesh of the Buffalo is the wholesomest and most palatable of meat kind. The male of these animals are much the largest — weighing from 1000 to 1500 pounds, and may be seen in droves of hundreds feeding in the plains. We remained here several days feasting upon Buffalo meat. From thence proceeded up the river; finding an abundance of game, such as Buffalo, Elk, Deer and Antelope and killing more or less every day. On the first day of August we arrived at the forks of the river Platte; and by means of boats made of buffalo skins, crossed the south Fork and continued our journey up the valley. Here the soil appeared to be very poor, producing but little grass; and in some places for three or four miles we would travel over sand plains where there was scarcely a spear of grass to be seen. Immediately on the water courses the soil is better and produces good grass. As we travelled up the river, we occasionally came in contact with cliffs of rocks and hard clay, from two to three hundred feet above the

level of the plain. One of these cliffs is very peculiar in its appearance, and is known among the whites as "Chimney cliff," and among the natives as "Elk Peak." It is only about 150 yards in circumference at its basis, and about 25 at the summit; and projects into the air to the height of 300 feet. Its towering summit may be seen at the distance of 15 or 20 miles - presenting the appearance of some huge fabric that had been constructed by the art of man.

We continued to travel in a western direction — found game plenty — met with no difficulty in getting along; and on the 27th of August we arrived at the junction of the Laramies river with the river Platte — about 12 or 1300 miles from the United States, and two or three hundred from the top of the Rocky Mountains. Here we stopped for the purpose of reconnoitering. Several scouting parties were sent out in search of Beaver signs, who returned in a few days and reported that they had found Beaver signs, &c. Capt. Gant then gave orders to make preparations for trapping. Accordingly the company was divided into parties of from 15 to 20 men in each party, with their respective captains placed over them — and directed by Captain Gant in what direction to go. Captain Washburn ascended the Timber Fork; Capt. Stephens the Laramies; Capt. Gant the Sweet Water — all of which empty into the river Platte near the same place. Each of these companies were directed to ascend these rivers until they found Beaver sufficiently plenty for trapping, or till the snow and cold weather compelled them to stop; at which event they were to return to the mouth of the Laramies river, to pass the winter together. While at this place, engaged in secreting our merchandize, which we did by digging a hole in the ground, sufficiently large to contain them, and covering them over so that the Indians might not discover them — four men (three whites and one Indian) came to our tent. This astonished us not a little, for a white man was the last of living beings that we expected to visit us in this vast wilderness - where nothing was heard from dark to day light but the fierce and terrifying growls of wild beasts, and the more shrill cries of the merciless savages. The principal of these men was a Mr. Fitzpatrick, who had been engaged in trapping along the Columbia river, on the west side of the Rocky mountains, & was then on his way to St. Louis. He was an old hand at the business and we expected to obtain some useful information from him, but we were disappointed. The selfishness of man is often disgraceful to human nature; and I never saw more striking evidence of this fact, than was presented in the conduct of this man Fitzpatrick. Notwithstanding we had treated him with great friendship and hospitality, merely because we were to engage in the same business with him, which he knew we never could exhaust or even impair — he refused to give us any information whatever, and appeared disposed to treat us as intruders. On the 3d of September, Captain Blackwell, with two others, joined Fitzpatrick, and started back to the state of Missouri, for an additional supply of merchandise, and were to return in the summer of 1832.

I was one of 21 that composed the company under the command of Capt. A. K. Stephens, a man well calculated to pilot or manage in case of difficulty with the Indians. He received a portion of the profits arising from the merchandize, say \$2 per pound for Coffee, and the same for Tea, Sugar, Lead, Powder, Tobacco, Allspice, Pepper, &c., and for every yard of coarse cloth \$10, and for fine cloth \$20; this, however, is governed entirely by their value with the Indians. For twenty or thirty loads of powder you can generally get from eight to twelve dollars worth of fur.

On the 4th of September, having every thing in readiness, after shaking hands all round, we separated, each party to meander the rivers that had been respectively allotted to them, with the intention, if nothing happened them, of re-assembling in the latter part of December, to spend the winter together.

Mr. Stephen's party commenced their tour up the Laramies river and continued several days without any important occurrence. Found the prairies or plains in this direction very extensive — unobstructed with timber or brush — handsomely situated, with here and there a small creek passing through them, and in

some places literally covered with game, such as Buffaloe, White and Black tailed Deer, Grizzly, Red, and White Bear, Elk, Prairie Dog, wild Goat, Big horned mountain Sheep, Antelope, &c.

On the 20th of Sept. we stopped on the bank of a small creek, to let our horses graze, at the junction of which we seen signs of beaver. Two hunters were sent up this stream with their traps and guns on search of beaver, who, if they should be successful in finding game, were not to return till the next day — the main body of the company to move on slowly. After travelling several miles, & hearing nothing of our hunters, we deemed it advisable to encamp for the night, which we did. About midnight we were alarmed by the report of two rifles. Supposing it to be hostile Indians, we put ourselves in an attitude of defence, as soon as possible by throwing up a fort of logs and brush, and keeping up sentinels until morning. On the next morning, about sun rise the two hunters came in, and informed us that it was the report of their guns that had alarmed us, as they had fired them off near the spot where they had expected to find the camp, with the hope of receiving some signal. They had meandered the creek till they came to beaver dams, where they set their traps and turned their horses out to pasture; and were busily engaged in constructing a camp to pass the night in, when they discovered, at a short distance off, a tremendous large Grizzly Bear, rushing upon them at a furious rate. They immediately sprang to their rifles which were standing against a tree hard-by, one of which was single and the other double triggered; unfortunately in the hurry, the one that was accustomed to the single trigger, caught up the double triggered gun, and when the bear came upon him, not having set the trigger, he could not get his gun off; and the animal approaching within a few feet of him, he was obliged to commence beating it over the head with his gun. Bruin, thinking this rather rough usage, turned his attention to the man with the single triggered gun, who, in trying to set the trigger (supposing he had the double triggered gun) had fired it off, and was also obliged to fall to beating the ferocious animal with his gun; finally, it left them without doing much injury, except tearing the sleeve off one of their coats and biting him through the hand. Four men were immediately despatched for the traps, who returned in the evening with seven or eight beaver. The Grizzly Bear is the most ferocious animal that inhabits these prairies, and are very numerous. They no sooner see you than they will make at you with open mouth. If you stand still, they will come within two or three yards of you, and stand upon their hind feet, and look you in the face, if you have fortitude enough to face them, they will turn and run off; but if you turn they will most assuredly tear you to pieces; furnishing strong proof of the fact, that no wild beast, however daring and ferocious, unless wounded, will attack the face of man.

On the morning of the 22d Sept. we again renewed our tour, travelling at the rate of 8 or 10 miles a day; catching a few Beaver, as we passed along - nothing strange occurring until the 30th, when we arrived at the foot of a great mountain, through which the river Laramies passes. We attempted to follow the river through the mountain, but we soon found this to be impossible, as the bluffs of huge rocks projecting several hundred feet high, closed in to the very current. We then turned down the side of the mountain, on search of a place to cross it. On the 1st day of Oct. we came to a Buffaloe trail crossing the mountain, and after ascending to near the summit, we encamped for the night. About midnight it commenced snowing, and continued to fall so fast that we were obliged to remain there until the morning of the 4th, when we again renewed our journey, and in the evening we arrived in the valley on the North or West side of the mountain. Here, finding no snow & Beaver signs plenty, we deemed it advisable to remain a few days for the purpose of trapping, and the first night we caught 20 Beaver. We remained here until the 12th, when we proceeded eight or ten miles further up the South fork of the river, and again encamped for the purpose of trapping. On the 18th, finding Beaver getting rather scarce, we proceeded a few miles further up the valley, and encamped again. This valley is supposed to be 70 or 80 miles long, and from 10 to 15 miles wide; and is enclosed on the one side by the main chain of the Rocky Mountains, and on the other by great Piney Hills, running out from the main body of the mountain, with the river Laramies passing through the

centre of it, the banks of which are covered with timber, from 1/4 to 1/2 a mile wide. Out side of this timber, the plain is completely smooth; and on a clear morning, by taking a view with a spyglass, you can see the different kinds of game that inhabit these plains, such as Buffaloe, Bear, Deer, Elk, Antelope, Bighorn, Wolves, &c. These plains are poor, sandy and level - the grass thin and short.

Oct. 22d. The nights getting somewhat cold, and snow falling more or less every day, we began to make preparations to return to our winter quarters, at the mouth of Laramies river; and on the 25th commenced our tour down the river. On the 28th we arrived at the mountain, that we crossed going up, but found it impossible, owing to the enormous depth of the snow to pass over it. On the morning of the 30th we started a number of men up and down the valley, on search of a place to cross the mountain, who returned the next day and reported that they had found no passing place over the mountain; when under these circumstances a majority of the company decided in favor of encamping in this valley for the winter, and when the ice melted out of the river, in the spring, commence trapping until such times as the snow melted off the mountain; when we would return to the mouth of the river, where we had secreted our goods.

On the 1st day of November we commenced travelling up the valley, on search of a suitable place to pass the winter, and on the evening of the 4th, we arrived at a large grove of Cottonwood timber, which we deemed suitable for encamping in. - Several weeks were spent in building houses, stables, &c. necessary for ourselves, and horses during the winter season. - This being done, we commenced killing Buffaloe, and hanging up the choice pieces to dry, so that if they should leave the valley we would have a sufficient quantity of meat to last us until spring. We also killed Deer, Bighorn Sheep, Elk, Antelope, &c., and dressed the hides to make moccasins.

About the 1st of December finding our horses getting very poor, we thought it necessary to commence feeding them on Cottonwood bark; for which purpose each man turned out and peeled and collected a quantity of this bark, from the grove in which we were encamped for his horses; but to our utter surprise and discomfiture, on presenting it to them they would not eat it, and upon examining it by tasting, we found it to be the bitter, instead of the sweet Cottonwood. Immediately upon finding we were deceived, men were despatched up and down the valley, on search of Sweet Cottonwood, but returned without success. Several weeks were spent in fruitless exertion to obtain feed for our horses; finally we were compelled to give it up, and agreed that our horses must all starve to death. The great depth of the snow, and the extreme coldness of the weather soon prevented our horses from getting any thing to subsist upon, & they commenced dying. It seldom happened during all our difficulties, that my sympathies were more sensibly touched, than on viewing these starving creatures. I would willingly have divided my provision with my horses, if they would have eat it.

On new-years day, notwithstanding our horses were nearly all dead, as being fully satisfied that the few that were yet living must die soon, we concluded to have a feast in our best style; for which purpose we made preparation by sending out four of our best hunters, to get a choice piece of meat for the occasion. These men killed ten Buffaloe, from which they selected one of the fattest humps they could find and brought in, and after roasting it handsomely before the fire, we all seated ourselves upon the ground, encircling, what we there called a splendid repast to dine upon. Feasting sumptuously, cracking a few jokes, taking a few rounds with our rifles, and wishing heartily for some liquor, having none at that place we spent the day. The glorious 8th arrived, the recollection of the achievements of which, are calculated to gladden the hearts of the American people; but it was not so glorious to us. We found our horses on that day, like Pakenham's forces, well nigh defunct. Here we were in this valley, surrounded on either side by insurmountable barriers of snow, with all our merchandize and nothing to pack it upon, but two mules — all the rest of our horses being dead. For ourselves we had plenty to eat, and were growing fat and uneasy;

— but how we were to extricate ourselves from this perilous situation, was a question of deep and absorbing interest to each individual. About the 10th we held a consultation, to decide what measures should be taken for our relief. Mr. Stephens, our pilot, having been at Santafee, in New Mexico, some 8 or 10 years previous, informed the company that horses in that place, were very cheap; and that he was of the opinion he could take them to it, if they saw proper to follow him. It was finally agreed upon by the company, that a part of them should start for Santafee; but not, however, without a good deal of confusion; as many were of the opinion that the snow on the mountain in the direction of Santafee, would be found to be as insurmountable, as in the direction of their merchandize, and also that the distance was too great to attempt to travel on foot, at that season of the year. It appearing from the maps to be little short of 800 miles. On the morning of the 14th, finding every thing in readiness for our Santafee trip, we set out, each man with his bedding, rifle and nine Beaver skins, packed upon his back; leaving four men only to take care of our merchandize, and the two mules. The beaver skins we took for the purpose of trading to the inhabitants of Santafee for horses, mules, &c. We appointed from the middle of April till the middle of may, as our time for return- ing; and if we did not return within that time, our four men were to wait no longer, but return to the mouth of the Laramies river, to meet the rest of the company. We continued in the direction of Santafee, without any extraordinary occurrence, for several days — found game plenty and but little snow, until we arrived at the foot of a great mountain, which appeared to be totally covered with snow. Here we thought it advisable to kill and jirk some buffaloe meat, to eat while crossing this mountain, after which we continued our course; finding much difficulty in travelling, owing to the stormy weather & deep snow — so much so indeed, that had it not been for a path made by the buffaloe bulls it would have been impossible to travel.

The channel of the river where it passes through these mountains is quite narrow in places and the banks very steep. In such places the beaver build their dams from bank to bank; and when they become old the beaver leave them, and they break and overflow the ground, which then produces a kind of flag grass. In the fall of the year, the Buffaloe collect in such places to eat this grass, and when the snow falls too deep they retreat to the plains; and it was in these trails that we ascended the mountain.

We still continued our course along this buffaloe path, which led us to the top of the mountain; nothing occurring more than it continued to snow day and night. On the 25th we arrived on the top of the mountain, and wishing to take a view of the country, if it should cease snowing. In the morning it still continued to snow so rapidly that we were obliged to remain in camp all day, and about the middle of the day, we eat the last of our jirk, and that evening we were obliged to go to bed supperless.

On the 29th it still continued to snow, and having nothing to eat, we thought it high time to be making some move, for our preservation, or we must perish in this lonely wilderness. The question then arose, shall we return to the valley from whence we came, or continue in the direction of Santafee. This question caused considerable disturbance. Those who were in favor of going ahead, argued that it was too far back to game — that it would be impossible to return before starving to death; while those who were for returning contended that it was the highth of imprudence, to proceed in the direction of Santafee. Accordingly we made preparations, and started. We travelled across the summit of the mountain, where we found a plain about a mile wide, which with great difficulty, owing to the fierceness of the wind, we succeeded in crossing; but when we attempted to go into the timber, on the opposite side from the mountain, we found it impossible, in consequence of the depth of the snow, and were obliged to turn back and recross the plain. As we returned by the fire we had made going over the plain the first time, we halted for the purpose of mutually deciding what to do; when it was determined by the company, that we would, if possible, return to our four men & two mules. We then started on search of the buffaloe path which we had followed to the top of the mountain; but owing to the strong wind, that had blown for several days,

and the increased depth of the snow, it was invisible. We then attempted to travel in the snow without the path, but we found this equally as impossible, as in the direction of Santafee.

Here we were, in a desolate wilderness, uninhabited (at that season of the year) by even the hardy savage or wild beast — surrounded on either side by huge mountains of snow, without one mouthful to eat, save a few beaver skins — our eyes almost destroyed by the piercing wind, and our bodies at times almost buried by the flakes of snow which were driven before it. Oh! how heartily I wished myself at home; but wishing, in such a case appeared useless — action alone could save us. We had not even leather to make snow shoes, but as good fortune would have it, some of the men had the front part of their pantaloons lined with deer skin, and others had great coats of different kinds of skin, which we collected together to make snow shoes of. This appeared to present to us the only means of escape from starvation and death. After gathering up every thing of leather kind that could be found, we got to making snow shoes, and by morning each man was furnished with a pair. But what were we to subsist upon while crossing the mountain, was a painful question that agitated every bosom, and employed every tongue in company. Provision, we had none, of any description; having eaten every thing we had that could be eat with the exception of a few beaver skins, and, after having fasted several days, to attempt to travel the distance of the valley, without any thing to eat, appeared almost worse than useless. Thinking, however, that we might as well perish one place as another, and that it was the best to make an exertion to save ourselves; and after each man had selected two of the best beaver skins to eat as he travelled along, we hung the remainder upon a tree, and started to try our fortune with the snow shoes. Owing to the softness of the snow, and the poor construction of our snow shoes, we soon found this to be a difficult and laborious mode of travelling. The first day after we started with our snow shoes we travelled but three or four miles and encamped for the night, which, for want of a good fire, we passed in the most distressing manner. Wood was plenty but we were unable to get it, and it kept one or two of the men busy to keep what little fire we had from going out as it melted the snow and sunk down. On the morning (30th Jan.) after roasting and eating some of our beaver skins, we continued our journey through the snow. In this way we continued to travel until the first day of February, in the afternoon, when we came to where the crust on the snow was sufficiently strong to carry us. Here we could travel somewhat faster, but at the best not much faster than a man could crawl on his hands and feet, as some of the men from hunger and cold were almost insensible of their situation, and so weak that they could scarcely stand on their feet, much less walk at speed. As we approached the foot of the mountain the snow became softer and would not carry us. This caused the most resolute despair, as it was obviously impossible, owing to extreme weakness, for us to wade much further through the snow. As we moved down the mountain plunging and falling through the snow, we approached a large spruce or cedar tree, the drooping branches of which had prevented the snow from falling to the ground about its trunk - here we halted to rest. While collected under the sheltering boughs of this tree, viewing, with horrified feelings, the way-worn, and despairing countenances of each other, a Mr. Carter, a Virginian, who was probably the nighest exhausted of any of the company, burst into tears and said, "here I must die." This made a great impression upon the remainder of the company, and they all, with the exception of a Mr. Hockday and myself, despaired of going any further. Mr. Hockday, however, after some persuasion, telling them that if they had strength to follow us we would break the road as far as possible, if not out to the valley, succeeded in getting them started once more. — Mr. Hockday was a large muscular man, as hardy as a mule and as resolute as a lion; yet kind and affectionate. He was then decidedly the stoutest man in the company, and myself, probably, the next stoutest. As for our Captain, Mr. Stephens, he was amongst the weakest of the company.

We resumed our journey, and continued to crawl along through the deep snow slowly till the evening of the fourth, when we arrived in the plain at the foot of the mountain. Here we found the snow so shallow

that we could dispense with the use of our snow shoes; and while in the act of taking them off some of the men discovered, at the distance of 70 or 80 yards; two animals feeding in the brush, which they supposed to be buffaloe, but from blindness, caused by weakness and pine smoke, could not be positive. Mr. Hockday and I were selected to approach and kill one of the animals without regard to what they might prove to be, while the remainder of the company were to go to a neighboring grove of timber and kindle a fire. Having used our guns as walking canes in the snow, we found them much out of order, and were obliged to draw out the old loads and put in new ones, before attempting to shoot. After taking every precaution we deemed necessary to insure success, we started and crawled along on our hands and knees, until we approached within ten or fifteen steps of the animals, when Mr. Hockday prepared to shoot; but upon finding that he could not see the sight of the gun or hold it at arms length, forbore, and proposed to me to shoot. I accordingly fixed myself and pulled trigger. My gun missed fire! I never was so wrecked with agitation as at that moment. "There," said I, "our game is gone, and we are not able to follow it much further;" but as good fortune had it, the Buffaloe, (for such we had discovered them to be), did not see nor smell us, and after raising their heads out of the snow, and looking around for a few moments for the cause of the noise, again commenced feeding. I then picked the flint of my gun, fired and broke the back of one of the Buffaloe, my ball not taking effect within 18 inches of where I thought I aimed. — The men in the grove of timber, on hearing the report of my rifle came staggering forth to learn the result, and when they received the heart-cheering intelligence of success they raised a shout of joy. It was amusing to witness the conduct of some of the men on this occasion. Before we had caught the buffaloe they appeared scarcely able to speak — but a moment after that, were able to hollow like Indians at war. I will not describe the scene that followed here — the reader may imagine it — an account of it would be repulsive and offensive rather than agreeable. This was the ninth day since we had eaten any thing but dried beaver skins. We remained at this place four days feasting upon the carcass of this Buffaloe, during which time we recruited considerably in strength and spirits, and on the 8th we resumed our journey down the river in search of our four men and two mules, and soon landed in the valley where game was plenty, and but little snow to obstruct our march. We continued our journey, killing plenty of game and living well, without any strange occurrence until the 14th, when we halted within a short distance of our old camp, and sent two or three of our worst looking men ahead to see whether they would be recognized by the four men. They were not known immediately on arriving at the camp, but no sooner engaged in conversation than they were recognized by the four men, and heartily welcomed back.

Here we remained at our old station until the 14th of March, during which period, having plenty of good buffaloe meat to eat, we regained our usual health and appearance. Anxious to be doing something, eight of us made preparations to start again to Santefee for horses. We were to travel south, along the foot of the mountain till we came to a certain river which heads in the mountain near where we had hung the beaver skins on the pine tree; after finding this river we were to commence trapping, and also to endeavor to get the beaver fur off the mountain into the valley. The balance of the company, 13 in number, were to remain at the camp and secrete the merchandize, and then follow us to this river, where we were to meet; and if we had succeeded in getting the beaver skins off the mountain, we were to join together and proceed in the direction of Santefee. With this understanding we started, and pursued our course slowly along the base of the mountain — found game plenty — met with no obstacle to impede our march, and on the 20th we arrived on the bank of the river. After remaining here a few days the ice melted out of the creeks and we commenced and continued to trap for beaver until the 28th during which time we caught a fine quantity of fur, and built ourselves a wigwam after the Indian fashion. The weather continuing warm and pleasant, and having a large quantity of dried meat on hand we concluded to hide our traps, beaver skins, baggage, &c., in our wigwam and pack a portion of the jirked meat on our backs and make an effort to get the beaver skins off the pine tree where we had left them in January. We started, and after travelling up the

river along the slide of the mountain for two or three days, we came in contact with huge mountains of snow and insurmountable icebergs, and were compelled to abandon our course & return back again to the plain. When we had arrived within a short distance of our wigwam, on our return, we discovered several trails of moccasin tracks in the snow. Some of the company became somewhat alarmed at these signs, supposing them to be the trails of hostile Indians — others appeared rejoiced, and said it was the remainder of our company. - The dispute was soon decided, for on arriving at our wigwam, we found it completely robbed of every thing we had left in it — traps, blankets, beaver skins and other utensils were all gone — nothing remained but the naked frame of the little hut. — We had now nothing left to sleep on save one old blanket for each man which we had with us on the mountain, and had lost nearly all our traps. Under these highly aggravating circumstances some of the men became desperate, declared they would retake their property or die in the attempt. For my part, I viewed the matter calmly and seriously and determined to abide the dictates of prudence only. Seeing from the trail of the Indians that they were not very numerous, and had a number of horses with them, we determined, after some controversy, to rob them of their horses, or other property commensurate to our loss. Accordingly we made preparations for our perilous adventure — we eat supper, prepared our fire arms, and a little after dark set out on search of the enemy - the night was calm and clear. We traversed the valley up and down for several hours without making any discoveries; we then ascended an adjacent hill, from the summit of which we discovered at a considerable distance a number of dim fires. A controversy here arose amongst the men as to the expediency of attacking the Indians. It was finally decided, however, by a majority of the company, that we should attack them at all hazards. We started in the direction of the fires, and after travelling some distance, and having lost sight of the fires, some of the men again became discouraged, and strongly urged the propriety of abandoning the project; but on calling a vote a majority again decided in favor of attacking the Indians and in a few minutes after we arrived on the top of a hill, within 50 or 60 yards of the enemy's camp. Here we halted for the purpose of reconnoitering. At this time the moon was just rising above the summit of the mountain, and casting its glimmering rays o'er the valley beneath, but did not shine on the Indian camp. — There were five fires, and the Indians appearing more numerous than we had expected to find them, we thought it advisable to be as careful and judicious about attacking them as possible. At the foot of this hill, near a large rock, we left our hats, coats and every thing that was unnecessary in action — we also designated this as a point of meeting, in case we should get separated in the skirmish; and had an understanding that but two should fire at a time, and that Capt. Stephens was to command. Mr. Hockday and I were selected to shoot first. We then started & crawled silently along on our hands and knees until we got within eight or ten steps of one of the fires, where we laid down in the brush, with our heads close together to consult as to the most proper mode of surprising the savages, whose dusky forms were then extended in sleep around the dying embers. While in this position, some eager for the conflict, others trembling with fear, a large dog rose from one of the fires and commenced growling and barking in the most terrifying manner. The spell of silence was now broken, and an immediate and final skirmish with our enemy rendered unavoidable. Thinking ourselves rather too much exposed to the fire of the Indians we retreated fifteen or twenty steps down the bank. Some of the Indians then came to the top of the bank and commenced shooting arrows at us, and yelling at the extent of their lungs. At this moment Mr. Stephens was heard to say in a firm tone "now is the time my boys, we must fight or die;" upon this Mr. Hockday and I fired; one of the Indians on the bank was seen to fall, and the remainder ran back to the camp. On hearing the report of our rifles the Indians, to the number of two or three hundred, rose out of the bushes and literally covered the plain, while their terrific war whoop - mingled with an occasional crack of a rifle, rendered the aspect of things more threatening than the most timid had before anticipated. We ran to our appointed place to meet, but before we had time to gather our baggage, we found ourselves completely surrounded and hemmed in on every side by the savages. Finding that we could not escape by flight, but must fight, we ran to the top of the hill, and having sheltered ourselves as

well as we could amongst the rocks, commenced yelling and firing in turn, (yelling is a very essential point in Indian warfare.) This scene was kept up for near an hour without any damage to our company, and as we supposed, but little injury to the Indians. The savages seeing we were determined to defend ourselves to the last gave way on the opposite side of the hill from their camp, and we made our escape out of their circle, and were glad to get away with our lives, without any of our property or that of the Indians. The scenes of this night will ever be indelibly impressed upon my memory.

After travelling five or six miles we came to a deep ravine or hollow — we carefully descended the precipice to the flat below, where we encamped for the night; but from fright, fatigue, cold and hunger, I could not sleep, and lay contemplating on the striking contrast between a night in the villages of Pennsylvania and one on the Rocky Mountains. In the latter, the plough-boy's whistle, the gambols of the children on the green, the lowing of the herds, and the deep tones of the evening bell, are unheard; not a sound strikes upon the ear, except perchance the distant howling of some wild beast, or war-whoop of the uncultivated savage — all was silent on this occasion save the muttering of a small brook as it wound its way through the deep cavities of the gulph down the mountain, and the gentle whispering of the breeze, as it crept through the dark pine or cedar forest, and sighed in melancholy accents; nor is it the retiring of the "god of day" to his couch in the western horizon that brings on this desolate scene - his rising in the east does not change the gloomy aspect - night and day are nearly the same in this respect.

About midnight we were alarmed by a shrill whistle on the rocks above, & supposing it to be the Indians on pursuit of us we seized our guns and ran a few rods from our fires. After waiting for some time, without hearing any more noise, one of the men ascended the precipice, and discovered that the object of our fears was a large drove of Elk. In the morning we continued to travel down this ravine, — and I was struck with the rough and picturesque appearance of the adjacent hills. On our right and left, arose like two perpendicular ramparts, to the height of near two hundred feet, two chains of mountains. Not a blade of grass, bush or plant was to be seen on these hard slopes, — huge rocks detached from the main body, supported by the recumbent weight of other unseen rocks appeared in the act of falling, and presented a frightful appearance — nothing met the eye but an inexhaustible avalanch of rocks - sombre, gray or black rocks. If Dante had designed to picture in one of his circles, the Hell of Stones, he might have taken this scene for his model. — This is one scenery in the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains; and perhaps an hour's travel would present another of a very different character — one that the artist who designed to depict a beautiful and enchanting landscape would select for a model. After travelling some fifteen or twenty miles, we came to the trail where the main body of the Indians with whom we had the skirmish the evening before, had passed along. It was near half a mile wide, and the snow was literally trodden into the earth. I have since understood from whites who had been in the habit of trading with this nation, prior to their declaration of hostilities against the whites, that they numbered from seven to eight hundred warriors. Alarmed at this formidable appearance of the hostile Indians, we mutually declined the idea of going to Santa Fee, and turned and travelled in the direction of the main body of our company. We continued to travel day after day, with all possible speed — occasionally killing a buffaloe, a goat, or a bighorn, as we passed over the plains and prairies which were literally covered with these animals; and on the morning of the 9th of April, we arrived safe at our old camp, & were gratified to find our thirteen men and two mules in the enjoyment of good health, with plenty to eat and drink. After exchanging civilities all around, by a hearty shake of the hand, and taking some refreshment, which was immediately prepared for us, I related to the company the dismal tidings of the near approach of the hostile Indians, and the circumstances of being robbed by them, and being defeated in the attempt to retake our property. — All were now satisfied of the imprudence of attempting to go to Santa Fee by this route, as well as of the necessity of devising some other method of saving our merchandise. We finally concluded to conceal our merchandise,

baggage, fur, and every thing that we could not pack on our backs or on the two mules, and return to our appointed winter quarters, at the mouth of the Laramies River, with the expectation of meeting Capt. Gant, and obtaining some assistance from him. On the morning of the 20th of April, having made every necessary preparation, we set out on our journey for the mouth of the Laramies river. After two days travel, we came to the foot of the mountain which we had endeavored in vain to cross in November. The snow was still deep on the top of it; but by aid of the buffaloe trails, we were enabled to scale it without much difficulty, except that our mules suffered with hunger, having had nothing to eat but pine brush. At the foot of the mountain we found abundance of sweet cottonwood, and our mules being very fond of it, we detained two or three days to let them recruit from their suffering in crossing the mountains. This mountain and the one we left our fur on, are covered with the most splendid timber of different kinds such as fir, cedar, white pine, &c. On the margin of the rivers and creeks in the plains, the only timber is cottonwood, undergrowth, willow and rose bushes; out in the middle of the plains there is none of any description. In the month of June, a person by taking a view of the country east of this mountain with a spy glass, could see nothing but a level plain extending from the foot of the mountain as far as the eye can penetrate, covered with green grass, and beautiful flowers of various descriptions; and by turning to the northwest, the eye meets nothing but a rough and dismal looking mountain, covered with snow, and presenting all the appearance of dreary winter. These plains extend to the state of Missouri, with scarce a hill or a grove of timber to interrupt the sight, and literally covered with game of almost every kind.

On the 25th we again resumed our journey down the river, and continued ahead without any difficulty — passing over nearly the same ground that we had travelled over going up the fall before; killing plenty of game — buffaloe, deer, bear, bighorn, antelope, &c., and on the 20th May we landed at the mouth of the Laramies; but to our utter astonishment and discomfiture we discovered that not one of the parties had returned according to agreement.

After remaining here until the 29th, our commander, Mr. Stephens, and another man took the two mules, which by this time had greatly recovered from their famished state, and started in search of the other parties. In vain they travelled up and down the La Platte and its tributaries, but no traces of the lost companions could be discovered, and on the 6th of June they returned, much fatigued and disheartened. During their travels they had discovered, on some of the creeks, 60 or 70 miles from our encampment, many signs of beaver — encountered several Grizzly bears, and several times narrowly escaped the Indians; Mr. Stephens having had several balls shot through his clothes. In this situation we remained for five or six days, when Mr. Stephens proposed that each man should go on foot, with a trap or two on his back, his blankets, together with what we could pack upon the two mules, and commence trapping on these creeks. This proposition was objected to by some of the company who were in favour of securing some of Capt. Gant's merchandise, find the Indians and purchase horses of them. So many different propositions were here made, that nothing definite could be agreed upon. — Mr. Smith, Mr. Fully and myself agreed to repair to the trapping ground and commence operations, with the understanding that Capt. S should receive a certain share of the profits, as a recompense for the discovery he had made. Accordingly having every thing arranged, on the 11th we started, leaving the remainder of the company to pursue their own course.

Mr. Stephens having a part of the men indebted to him for clothing, &c., and knowing that if they remained at camp he would not be able to collect it, told them that if they would go and bring the beaver fur off the mountain, where we had left it in January last, he would ensure them an equal share of the proceeds of our trapping expedition — and they, with this understanding set out. This contract was made without any consultation having been had with us; and the men, not aware of any thing but fairness on the part of Stephens in making this bargain, marched for the fur, and succeeded in getting it off the mountain

into the plain, without much difficulty, packed it on their mules, together with what we had left in our winter cabins, and brought the whole to the mouth of the Laramies river. In the meantime, Smith, Fully, and myself were busily engaged in trapping on the tributary streams of the river Platte. We encountered much difficulty and danger in this excursion, from wild beasts and hostile Indians. - One circumstance with a bear I must relate: — On a pleasant summer evening, when nothing seemed disposed to disturb the tranquility of our forest home, we built a fire under the cliff of a large rock, on the bank of a small creek, to roast some buffaloe meat. After having cooked and eat our evening repast, I was standing close to the rock, apart from the other men ten or twelve feet, — all at once one of them jumped up and ran off, exclaiming "the bear," "the bear!" I instantly cast my eyes to the top of the precipice, where they encountered this hideous monster seated on the rock with his mouth wide open, and his eyes sparkling like fire. My whole frame shook with agitation. I knew that to attempt to run would be certain death. My gun was standing against a tree within my reach, and after calling for the aid of my companions, I raised my rifle to my face and taking deliberate aim at the most fatal spot, fired — which brought sir Bruin to the ground. — In the meantime Smith and Fully came to my assistance, and also discharged the contents of their rifles into his head.

In a few days afterwards we were joined by the rest of the company, who, having secreted the fur, &c., at the mouth of the Laramies river, had come on search of us. We now, for the first time, got a knowledge of the conduct of Stephens relative to our fur. The men informed us of the contract between them and Stephens. We answered that we could agree to no such contract — that the fur belonged to us, and that we intended to keep it. They then devised other means to secure their share of 150 beaver skins, (the whole number we had caught.) Stephens then told the men that he would not be accountable for any of the fur, and the only way to obtain any of it, was to take it by force. Seeing the folly of further resistance — 18 against 3 — we were obliged to surrender our earnings, which they took and divided equally among themselves.

The next day we left this company at whose hands we had received such ill-treatment, and returned to the mouth of the Laramies, with the expectation of meeting Capt. Gant — but we were sadly mistaken — on our arrival there no traces of Capt. G's company could be discovered. Next day Mr. Stephens & his party also returned. After remaining here 3 days together, hunting, fishing, and indulging in other amusements, Mr. Fitzpatrick and a company of 115 men, came to our camp. He was on his way to join his company on the west side of the mountains, on the Columbia river, and to supply them with merchandize, ammunition, horses, &c. This company informed us that the firm of Gant & Blackwell had become insolvent. At this news we all became discouraged; and finally Mr. Stephens and the whole company agreed to join in with Fitzpatrick and go with him to his rendezvous, where we were to make arrangements as to hiring, purchasing equipments, &c. Mr. Stephens took 120 beaver skins, which belonged to Captain Gant, and sold them to Fitzpatrick, which he secreted in the ground, with the intention of raising them when on his return to Missouri — in consideration of which, he was to furnish him with horses and such other equipments as he might want.

July 1st. Having made this arrangement with Mr. F., our camp was all confusion at an early hour this morning, preparing to depart for the Columbia river. Mr. F., took one of the fleetest and most hardy horses in his train, and set out in advance of the main body, in order to discover the disposition of the various Indian tribes through whose dominions we were to travel, and to meet us at a designated point on the head of the Columbia river. After packing up all our moveable property, we started in the course which he had taken, with a force of near 150 strong, many of whom were afraid of nothing, & anxious to meet any danger. We this day, travelled about twenty miles and encamped for the night. The weather was serene and warm, and the men all in high spirits, as we had plenty of fresh meat.

July 2d. Early in the morning we resumed our journey - stopped in the heat of the day to rest our horses — country quite beautiful — soil rather poor, abounding with sand plains. Travelled about 15 or 20 miles and encamped for the night.

July 3d. This day we made but little progress in travelling in consequence of a heavy fall of rain — came in contact with a large drove of buffaloe, out of which our hunters succeeded in killing ten — one of the men received a bite from a snake, but as it was not of a very poisonous species, the wound soon healed, and the victim was more scared than hurt — but little variation in the scenery of the country.

July 5, 6 & 7. The weather was fair — travelled at the rate of 25 miles per day - nothing of interest occurred. The country through which we passed is rather rough, abounding with game of every description, and is remarkable for the plentitude of wild goats. I have seen the plains literally covered with them. Occasionally the men would fall to and kill them by hundreds. We also fell in with a party of Indians, but on their seeing our forces, fled, without attempting to injure us. We were unable to ascertain the name of the tribe to which they belonged.

July 8th. Early in the morning we resumed our journey, but had not proceeded far until we found ourselves in the midst of a bed of quicksand. So deep was the sand in some places that several of our horses were completely swamped in it, & it was with great difficulty that we succeeded in getting round this swamp, as it were, to continue our journey. Having surmounted this difficulty, one of our men, a Mr. White, who wandered from the company, came well nigh falling a victim to the fury of a grizzly bear — having in the encounter, had one of his arms literally torn from his body, and had it not been for the timely assistance rendered by some of his companions, who afterwards killed the bear, his death would have been the inevitable consequence. This night we selected a high piece of ground for our encampment, where the wind continued to assail us most violently during the whole night. The next day we travelled about twenty miles, without meeting with any thing of consequence.

July 10th. Finding that we were making but little headway in our travelling, we resolved to increase our speed, & accordingly the whole company was on the move at an early hour this morning. We found our route beginning to grow still more obstructed by rocky cliffs, which are dispersed over this section of the mountain region for many miles, and present an appearance to the beholder similar to a meadow covered with hay-cocks. As the country continued to grow rough, game became scarce, and we began to kill such meat as we could, and not such as we chose; indeed we thought ourselves very fortunate when one of our hunters would succeed in killing a goat or an antelope — species of meat which we would not look at, when in the vicinity of deer and buffaloe. This part of the mountain is covered with beautiful timber of the best quality, such as fir, pine, cedar, &c. We only travelled about ten miles this day. On the following morning we resumed our journey, and continued to travel day after day, when, after a long and toilsome voyage, we arrived at the point on the Columbia river, designated to meet Mr. Fitzpatrick. Judge of our surprise, when on arriving here no traces of him could be discovered. In vain we searched for some clue to this, to us, melancholy circumstance. What can detain him? was the question asked by each of us. Disappointment is heart-sickening under any circumstance, but to be disappointed under such circumstances, and in such a place, was perplexing in the extreme. — One scouting party after another were despatched to gather some tidings of the lost Fitzpatrick, but all to no purpose. Had he been destroyed by the savages? The former brilliant success of the man's intercourse with the Indians would not warrant such a belief, as he had many times previously passed over these mountains with no other companion than his trusty steed. The most natural conclusion at which to arrive, was, that the dull and cloudy weather had caused him to lose his course, and that he had become bewildered, and was yet wandering through the wilderness. After a fruitless search of several days, we concluded to descend the

river and search for the company which Mr. Fitzpatrick had left there the summer before, — where we had a faint hope that we might find Mr. F., in safety. The first day we travelled about 20 miles and encamped for the night on the bank of the river. Although we knew that we were in the vicinity of the savage Blackfeet Indians, yet but few traces of them had been discovered through the day, and we therefore retired to rest in our encampment without taking the necessary precautions for defence, in case of an attack. But it was not long before we were enabled to appreciate the consequence of our negligence, or fancied security. About midnight we were awoke from our slumbers by a furious attack by a large party of Blackfeet. They fired into our tents before we were aware of their approach. Immediately each man was on his feet, and on the look out. After a small skirmish of random shooting, which lasted an hour or so, the Indians, finding the strength of our forces, thought it best to retire from the field, with the loss of three killed, and as we supposed, 8 or 10 wounded. The loss on our side was one man wounded in the leg, 5 horses killed, 3 wounded, and 14 stolen. The Blackfeet are a powerful nation, and are better supplied with implements of war, than almost any other tribe of this region. They have always retained a most inveterate hostility to the Flatheads, against whom they wage a continual warfare, having at one time greatly reduced their strength, and on several occasions came well nigh exterminating the entire tribe. Of late years the Flatheads have been better prepared for war, and have bravely held their own. This undying hostility appears to be owing to the Blackfeet refusing to let the Flatheads hunt buffaloe on the east side of the mountain.

The following morning we took up our march and continued down the river. As we travelled along we saw many fresh signs of Indians, and apprehended much danger from them, which caused us to labour under the most intense fear, lest we should fall into an ambush of this crafty tribe. We killed several fat deer, goats, and an antelope, and encamped on a high hill, from which we had a beautiful view of the surrounding country; where we could see the different kinds of game traversing the plains at leisure, contented, and undisturbed, save when aroused from their lair by the sudden onset of the Indian hunter. This night we very prudently stationed a strong guard round our encampment, and were permitted to pass the night in peace, which was quite warm and pleasant. In the morning we resumed our journey, and about the middle of the day found ourselves in the vicinity of another tribe of Indians. We sent a flag to their camp, which was received in the most friendly manner. This proved to be the Flathead tribe. These Indians are more pacific and pleasing in their manners than any tribe we had yet encountered, and reside mostly on the river of that name. I will here quote the description of this tribe as given by Mr. Cox, a gentleman well acquainted with the Indian character, which fully embraces my own views: — "The Flatheads have fewer failings than any tribe I ever met with. They are honest in their dealings — brave in the field — quiet and amiable to their chiefs — fond of cleanliness, and are decided enemies to false hood of every description. — The women are excellent wives and mothers, and their character for fidelity is so well established that we never heard of one single instance of one proving unfaithful to her husband. They are remarkably well made — rather tall — slender, and never corpulent." The Flatheads are well accustomed to the manners and customs of the white race, and in many respects appear ambitious to follow their example. — Some years ago, they were in the habit of using a process to flatten the heads of their children, which they deemed a very essential addition to their appearance; but since they have had intercourse with the whites they have abandoned this abominable practice. The process of flattening the head is this: — Soon after the birth of the infant, it is placed in a kind of trough and a piece of bark fastened by means of strings through the trough, and pressed hard upon the forepart of the head, which causes it to grow flat. In this painful position they are kept a year, and in some instances over a year. They are very hospitable to strangers, and are tried friends of the white people. On coming to their village a white person always receives the best to eat, drink and smoke, and are always ready to pilot the traveller through their country. In the summer season this tribe live in the buffaloe country on the head of the

Columbia river, where they never fail to come in contact with their cold hearted enemies, the Blackfeet, who are the most ferocious and unsparing enemy of the white men, because the Flatheads have been supplied by the whites with munitions of war. In the fall the Flatheads again return to the plains, and in the winter subsist on Salmon, roots and small game. They are always well supplied with horses, and when provision becomes scarce in one section, they pack all they have upon the backs of their horses, and remove to another. Their houses are made of slim pine poles from 20 to 30 feet long, 12 or 15 feet apart at the bottom, and joined together at the top, forming a structure in the shape of the roof of a common dwelling house. These are covered with dressed buffaloe skins sewed together. A fire is built in the middle of the cabin, and its shape forms a kind of flue or draft for the smoke — rendering this simple structure quite a comfortable habitation at the most inclement season of the year. No storm can affect them, nor no cold can reach their inmates. When moving camp these poles are taken down & one end fastened to the sides of the mule or horse and the other end dragging on the ground forming a sort of dray. The infants are put into a sack or bag, made of leather, which closes on one side by strings; this is fastened to a board near three feet long & one wide, where they are kept constantly, with the exception of an occasional dressing, &c., until a year old. To the back of this board they have a cord attached, by which they hang the sack to the saddle, whilst travelling. After remaining here two days to observe their manners, customs, and mode of living, and getting all the information we desired, we resumed our journey, taking one of the Indians to pilot us to the station of Mr. Fitzpatrick's company. — After several days tedious and toilsome travelling, and no extraordinary occurrence, we joined the company on the 2nd of August. It was with feelings of peculiar delight that we here beheld the visages of white men, who were no less pleased to give us a welcome reception. But a melancholy gloom was visible in every countenance, when we discovered that Fitzpatrick had not arrived. Great excitement prevailed, and vigorous measures were immediately taken to rescue him, if he had not before this, as many supposed, fallen a victim to the enraged fury of the merciless savage, or the ravenous appetite of some ferocious beast of prey. Small companies were despatched in various directions on the tributary streams of the Columbia. Diligent search was kept up for some time without success, and our search was about to be abandoned as fruitless; and indeed some of the parties had given up in despair, and returned to camp, when, a party, who had wandered into the vicinity of the Blackfeet Indians, were reconnoitering their movements in a valley from a high bluff, saw, and immediately recognized, Fitzpatrick's horse, with which the Indians were running races. — Was this calculated to inspire hope? or was it not rather an omen that our employer was destroyed by these Indians. Vigilant search was made to make further discoveries; and, to the great joy of every man, he was at length found on the banks of the Pieres river, which forms a junction with the Columbia, near the rendezvous of Fitzpatrick's company. When found he was completely exhausted, and so much wasted in flesh, and deformed in dress, that, under other circumstances, he would not have been recognized. The poor man was reduced to a skeleton, and was almost senseless. When his deliverers spoke of taking him to camp, he scarcely seemed to comprehend their meaning. After eating some dried buffaloe meat, and a little maize, he grew better, and placing him on a horse, he was safely conveyed to camp. A general rejoicing ensued, for his appearance among us again, was like that of one risen from the dead. Although I was not much attached to the man, for I could not banish from my mind the craftiness evinced by him when we first met with him on the east side of the mountains, yet I can scarcely describe my feelings of joy on beholding him safely returned. After resting a few days, and being nourished by the provender our camp would afford, he became able to relate the misfortunes which befel him in crossing the mountain, which I will give in his own words, as follows:

ADVENTURES OF FITZPATRICK "For three or four days after I left the company I travelled without any difficulty, and at great speed, but the fourth and fifth, the weather being dull and cloudy, I got strayed from my course, and soon found myself in the midst of a rough hilly country, abounding with large loose

rocks which some places almost prevented me from passing at all, and covered with various kinds of timber of the most magnificent description. In passing the nights in these solitudes my rest was constantly disturbed by the dismal howl of the wolf and the fierce growl of the bear - which animals were very numerous and would frequently approach within a few steps and threaten to devour me. One day after a toilsome ride, I dismounted, turned my horse loose to graze and seated myself on a rock, with the little remaining provision I had, to refresh myself. While thus seated resting my wearied limbs, and satisfying the gnawings of hunger, I was suddenly startled by a scrambling on the rocks immediately in my rear. I turned round and beheld a huge bear approaching me in double quick time. I instantly sprang to my feet, for I was well acquainted with his mode of warfare. I turned and faced his lordship, when he approached within about six feet of me, rose on his hind feet and most impudently stared me right in the face, for more than a minute. After discovering that I was no ways bashful, he bowed, turned and run — I did the same, and made for my horse. Bruin was not so easy fooled; he seen my retreat & gave chase. I thought I could reach my horse and mount before the bear could reach me, but the approach of the bear frightened my beast, and just as I was going to mount he sprang loose and threw me on the broad of my back. The bear was at my heels, and I thought that all chance of escape was now gone. Instantly I was again on my feet, — and, as it were, in a fit of desperation, rushed towards the bear, which, fearing, as they do, the face of man, again turned and run. — Sir Bruin stopped to secure the little morsel I had been eating, and retired a few paces to devour it. While the bear was thus employed, I crept to my gun, keeping the rock between him and me, having reached it, took deliberate aim and killed him dead on the spot. Having secured my horse, I fell to work at the carcase of my vanquished foe, and, after cooking and eating a choice piece of his flesh, left the rest to feed his kindred. It being now near night, I travelled two or three miles further, and encamped for the night. The next morning appeared more favourable over head, and I made an early start. Being on the banks of a small creek, I concluded to follow it a while. After winding my way through the rocks and trees, till near the middle of the day, I came to a valley which seemed to be hemmed in on every side by huge towering hills. I had not travelled far in this valley before I found myself ushered into the presence of a hostile tribe of Indians. I halted to devise some means to effect a return without being discovered; but I soon found that it was too late. Immediately in my rear was a choice set of young warriors — in front, and on both sides by high and craggy mountains. My noble steed, than him, I would defy the whole Indian world to produce a stouter, swifter, or better, was now brought to the test. He started with the velocity of the rein deer, — bounding over ditches, stones, logs, and brush. — Soon I began to ascend the mountain, but found it much too steep and rough. The Indians dismounted and followed on foot. I applied the whip, but in vain. My horse was compelled to yield to exhausted nature — and I dismounted, and left my much prized animal to fall a prey to the savages. I ran up the mountain with all possible speed, but finding that I must eventually be overtaken, I secreted myself in a hole among the rocks, and closed the mouth of it with leaves and sticks. After remaining a few minutes in this subterraneous cavern, I heard the ferocious yells of triumph of my pursuers, as they captured my lamented horse. The victory was not yet complete, although the horse was the principal prize. Some of them followed on and came close to my hiding place, passed and repassed within reach without discovering me. What a moment of intense anxiety was this! All chance of escape cut off. No prospect of mercy if taken! Hope began to die — and death inevitable seemed to be the very next incident that would occur. They continued their search until near sunset, for they knew that I had not reached the summit of the mountain. As they retired down the mountain, squads of four or five would frequently halt and hold a busy consultation — then suddenly return to complete their search, as if they feared that some hollow tree or rocky cavern might escape unexplored. Finally, they gave me up in despair, and retired into the valley, with my horse.

"Now that I had escaped this scrutinizing search, I began to breathe more free and easy; but I was yet far from being out of danger. I was conscious that I had lost the course to the Columbia river, and could not tell how to regain it, even if I should succeed in escaping from my present perilous situation. I remained secreted in the rocks till long after dark, when I crawled out, and surveyed the country as well as the darkness of the night would permit, and finally started in the direction which I thought I would have the least chance of meeting the Indians. I had not travelled far, however, until I was again doomed to be disappointed, for I was on the very borders of their encampment. Happily the camp was all quiet, and I returned quietly to my hiding place on the mountain, hoping that on the morrow I would be able to make some new discovery by which to extricate myself from these savages - which I judged to be the merciless Blackfeet. Early in the morning of the next day the hunt was resumed with increased vigilance; but again returned with disappointment. After the sound of their voices no longer reached me, I crawled to the mouth of the hole from which I presently beheld them running races with the horse they had taken from me. In this sport they spent the day. This village did not appear to be their permanent residence, but was handsomely situated on the banks of a small creek, and I suppose they had come here on a sporting expedition. The second night I made another effort to save myself, and gradually descended the mountain, to the creek some distance below the camp. — This I followed, until daylight again compelled me to hide myself, which I did by crawling into the brush close to the creek, where I secreted myself till darkness again give me an opportunity to resume my journey. During the day I seen a number of the Indians pass and re-pass up and down the valley, whom I supposed to be hunters. This day I again had a view of my horse under the saddle of the chief of the tribe, as I supposed; but did not attempt to rescue him. The following night I travelled a short distance down the creek when I came to where it empties into the Pieres river. Here I came to my reckoning of the country and thought that if I could escape from hunger and beasts of prey, I could manage to elude the Indians. Supposing that the Indians were not so numerous on the opposite side of the river, I resolved to cross over — for which purpose I built a raft of old logs, laid my shot-pouch, gun, blanket, &c. on it, and pushed for the opposite shore. After getting nearly across, the current became very rapid, and I began to descend the river at a rapid rate until I struck a rock which tore my frail craft to pieces — committing myself, gun, blanket and all to the watery element. Being weak from hunger and exertion, it was with great difficulty that I succeeded in reaching the land, with the loss of my only companion, and my only hope in this wilderness of dangers - my gun. I stood on the bank in the midst of despair. I had no other weapon than a butcher knife to fight my way through a country swarming with savages and equally dangerous wild beasts. On my knife depended all hope of preventing starvation. The loss of my blanket was also severe, as the weather was sometimes quite cold, and I had no other clothing than a shirt and vest — having thrown the rest away when pursued by the Indians on the mountain. I followed the banks of this river for two days, subsisting upon buds, roots, weeds, &c. On the second evening whilst digging for a sweet kind of root, in a swamp, I was alarmed by the growl of wolves, which were descending the hill to the river, about fifty yards distant. The only chance of escape now, was to climb a tree, which I did immediately. Here I was compelled to roost until daylight, in the most painful agitation. The wolves tearing up the ground and gnawing at the tree so that I sometimes feared they would cut it through. The third day I travelled with great speed, not even stopping for any thing to eat. On the fourth I happened where the wolves had killed a buffaloe. — Here I satisfied my appetite by collecting all the meat that was left on the bones, made a fire by rubbing two sticks together, and cooked it. From the gluttenous fill which I took of this meat, I was enabled to travel three or four days, without any particular occurrence; but I found that the further I descended the river, the scarcer became the roots, buds, &c., on which I must depend for subsistence, and I was finally obliged to turn my attention to get something to eat, without traveling any further. For several days I loitered about from place to place, but could find no nourishment. My body began to grow weaker and weaker, until I was no longer able to walk. Still my mind held its sway, and I was well aware how desperate was my situation. Finally losing all prospect of

getting any thing more to eat, & no hope of being found by my companions or friendly Indians, I thought of preparing myself for death, and committed my soul to the Almighty. I have no recollection of any thing that occurred after this, until I found myself in the hands of my deliverers."

The story of Fitzpatrick created much excitement in our camp. Some were determined on immediately chastising the Indians, and retaking his horse. Others, who were not friendly disposed towards Mr. F., would not credit his story. For my part I thought the man had related nothing more than the truth as to his sufferings, for nothing less could have reduced him to the condition in which he was found. In a few days all was restored to order and tranquility, and we commenced making arrangements for trapping, &c. The Columbia is a strong, clear and beautiful river at this point, (the junction of the Lewis river,) and is about 1000 yards wide. The Wallah Wallah empties into it about 14 miles lower down - which is rather muddy, and a very rapid stream. There was at this rendezvous at this time, about 400 white people, who lived in constant intercourse with the Flatheads and "Nez Perces," or Pierced Nose tribe, which latter consists of 1000 warriors, besides women and children, and live in the closest friendship with their neighbors, the Flatheads. They are said to act honorable in all their dealings, nor do they now practice treachery and stealing so extensively as most of the tribes below this; although, when first discovered by the whites, a brave was esteemed according to his success in stealing. They have now reformed and a white man can at all times find a trusty friend in a Nez Perces. Among the discoveries of importance which we made here was nine of Captain Gant's men, who had left us at the mouth of the Laramies. In crossing the mountain they had several encounters with the Indians, and finally lost their horses and 3 of their men. After travelling about for a number of days, under the direction of a Mr. Saunders, their leader, they came across a party belonging to this rendezvous, whom they followed, and had arrived at camp a few days before us. No important arrangement was made among the men with regard to trapping, &c., until the people gathered in from the different parts of the mountain. In the meantime 15 of us joined together, each man furnishing an equal quantity of merchandize, horses, &c., and to receive an equal share of the proceeds.

August 25th. Every thing necessary for our expedition being ready this morning, we started in a southern direction, but did not go far until we encamped for the night — thinking that if we had neglected any thing which we would stand in need of, we would thus discover it. The next morning finding all things in order, we continued travelling down what is called Pieres hole, or valley. This valley is situated on the river of the same name, and is from 70 to 80 miles in length, with a high mountain on the east and west — each so high that it is impossible to pass over them, and is from eight to ten miles wide. The river runs immediately through the centre, with a beautiful grove of timber along either bank; from this timber to the mountain, a distance of four or five miles, there is nothing but a smooth plain. This meadow or prairie is so perfectly level that a person may look up or down as far as the eye will reach without meeting any thing to obstruct the sight, until the earth and sky appear to meet. After travelling a few miles this morning, some of the men, in taking a view of the country before us, discovered something like people upon horses, who appeared to be coming towards us. After continuing in the same direction for some time we came in view with the naked eye, when we halted. — They advanced towards us displaying a British flag. This we could not comprehend; but on coming closer discovered them to be hostile Indians. We immediately despatched a messenger back to the rendezvous for reinforcements and prepared ourselves for defence. The Indians commenced building a fort in the timber on the bank of the river; but at the time we were not aware of what they were doing. After waiting here a few hours we were reinforced by 200 whites, 200 Flatheads, and 300 Nez Perces Indians. The Indians with the British flag, on seeing such a number of people galloping down the plain at full speed, immediately retreated within their fort, whither they were hotly pursued. The friendly indians soon discovered them to belong to the Blackfeet tribe, who are decidedly the most numerous and warlike tribe in the mountains, and for this reason are not disposed to

have any friendly intercourse with any other nation of an inferior number, unless they are good warriors and well armed with guns, &c. We thought we could rush right on them and drive them out of the brush into the plain and have a decisive battle at once. We advanced with all possible speed, and a full determination of success, until we discovered their fort by receiving a most destructive fire from the enclosure. This threwed our ranks into complete confusion, & we all retreated into the plain, with the loss of 5 whites, 8 Flatheads and 10 Nez Perces Indians killed, besides a large number of whites and Indians wounded. The formation of their fort astonished all hands. We had been within a few hundred yards of them all day and did not discover that they were building it. It was large enough to contain 500 warriors; and built strong enough to resist almost any attempt we might make to force it. After dressing the wounded, and having reconnoitered their fort, our forces were divided into several detachments, and sent in different directions with the intention of surrounding the fort and making them prisoners. This was done under the superintendance of Fitzpatrick, who acted as commander-in-chief.

In a case of this kind any man not evincing the greatest degree of courage, and every symptom of bravery, is treated as a coward; and the person who advances first, furthest and fastest, and makes the greatest display of animal courage, soon rises in the estimation of his companions. Accordingly with the hope of gaining a little glory while an opportunity offered, though not for any electioneering purpose, as a politician in the States would do — I started into the brush, in company with two acquaintances (Smith and Kean) and two Indians. We made a circuitous route and came towards the fort from a direction which we thought we would be least expected. We advanced closer and closer, crawling upon our hands and knees, with the intention of giving them a select shot; and when within about forty yards of their breast work, one of our Indians was shot dead. At this we all lay still for some time, but Smith's foot happening to shake the weeds as he was laying on his belly, was shot through. I advanced a little further, but finding the balls to pass too quick and close, concluded to retreat. When I turned, I found that my companions had deserted me. In passing by, Smith asked me to carry him out, which met my approbation precisely, for I was glad to get out of this unpleasant situation under any pretext - provided my reputation for courage would not be questioned. After getting him on my back, still crawling on my hands and knees, I came across Kean, lying near where the first Indian fell, who was also mortally wounded and died soon after. I carried Smith to a place of safety and then returned to the siege. A continual fire was kept up, doing more or less execution on both sides until late in the afternoon, when we advanced to close quarters, having nothing but the thickness of their breast work between us, and having them completely surrounded on all sides to prevent any escaping. This position we maintained until sun-set, in the meantime having made preparations to set fire to the fort, which was built principally of old dry logs, as soon as night would set in, and stationed men at the point where we thought they would be most likely to make the first break, for the purpose of taking them on the wing, in their flight. Having made all these preparations, which were to put an end to all further molestation on the part of the Blackfeet, our whole scheme and contemplated victory was frustrated by a most ingenious and well executed device of the enemy. A few minutes before the torch was to be applied, our captives commenced the most tremendous yells and shouts of triumph, and menaces of defiance, which seemed to move heaven and earth. Quick as thought a report spread through all quarters, that the plain was covered with Blackfeet Indians coming to reinforce the besieged. So complete was the consternation in our ranks, created by this stratagem, that in five minutes afterwards, there was not a single white man, Flathead or Nez Perces Indian within a hundred yards of the fort. Every man thought only of his own security, and run for life without ever looking round, which would at once have convinced him of his folly. In a short time it was ascertained that it was only a stratagem, and our men began to collect together where our baggage was. I never shall forget the scene here exhibited. The rage of some was unbounded, and approached to madness. For my own part, although I felt much regret at the result after so much toil and danger, yet I could not but give the savages credit for the skill they

displayed in preserving their lives, at the very moment when desperation, as we thought, had seized the mind of each of them.

By the time we were made sensible of the full extent of our needless alarm, it had began to get dark; and on ascertaining the extent of the injury which we received, (having lost 32 killed, principally Indians,) it was determined not to again attempt to surround the fort, which was a sore disappointment to some of the men who were keen for chastising the Indians for their trick. We then took up our march for the rendezvous; but on starting one of our party of 15 men, who had first started out the day before, could not be found. Search was made, and he was found in the brush, severely wounded. — After carrying him on a litter a few miles he died and was buried in the Indian style: — which is by digging a hole in the ground, wrapping a blanket or skin round the body, placing it in the hole, and covering it with poles and earth. This is the manner of interring the dead in this country both by the Indians and whites, except in the winter season on account of the ground being frozen, when the Indians are in the habit of wrapping their dead in buffaloe robes, and laying them on poles from one tree to another, on which poles the corpse is tied with cords. The next morning we raised another war party and went back to the battle ground, but no Indians could be found. — They must have left the fort in great haste for we found 42 head of horses, together with Fitzpatrick's which they had taken on the mountain, two warriors and one squaw lying dead inside of their fort, besides a large quantity of their baggage, such as furs, skins, &c. There must have been a great number of them, from the holes they had dug in the ground around their dead horses and the edges of the fort, say from three to four hundred. I learned afterwards that the Nez Perces Indians shortly after found seven more dead Blackfeet, in some brush close by, where they had been secreted to save their scalps, which is the principal object with these Indians, in order to have their women dance. In the afternoon we returned to the rendezvous and presented Mr. Fitzpatrick with his long-lost and highly valued horse, which seemed to compensate for all the sufferings and hardships which he had encountered.

After remaining here a few days a violent dispute arose between Stephens and Fitzpatrick about the price of the horses which the latter was to give to the former for the beaver skins of Gant's which Stephens had sold to Fitzpatrick. No person interfered, for we all knew that it was a dishonest transaction from beginning to end. Fitzpatrick having every thing in his own possession, was therefore contented and as independent as any mean man who had it in his power to make his own terms. Stephens, on the contrary, was in a bad situation — having paid before hand, and not being able to force measures, had to put up with what he could get. Finally he succeeded in hiring four men, and started back to the mouth of the Laramies to secure the fur which he had sold to Fitzpatrick. He had not left many days, however, until he was overtaken by a scouting party of those Indians we had surrounded in the fort. Two of his men were killed, and himself shot through the thigh — having the two mules along, which was the ballance of the original stock, one of which was killed, and the other brought back the wounded Stephens, who died in a few days afterwards from mortification taking place in the wounded leg.

A few days after this occurrence, we were visited by a party belonging to the Nor West, or British trading company, from whom we were enabled to learn the way the Blackfeet Indians had got possession and fought under the British flag. It appeared by their story that these Indians some months previous, had fell on a party belonging to their company — but few of whom escaped to tell the fate of their comrades — and among the spoils which they obtained, was this flag, which they used as a signal to deceive and mislead their enemies, whom they might meet in these extensive plains.

Sept. 1st. After remaining here until today, during which time Mr. Saunders joined our company of fifteen, which made up for the one that was killed, and who was the only one besides myself, of Capt. Gant's company; leaving the balance with Fitzpatrick — some hiring with their equipments which they

purchased on credit. — We set to work making preparation to start the following morning, on our second attempt to reach some region where we could prosecute our business of trapping to some advantage. The conditions of our agreement were the same as on the first expedition, viz.: — each man to find an equal portion of traps, guns, and ammunition, and to receive an equal share of the peltries which we might catch.

On the morning of the 2nd Sept., having every thing ready, we left the rendezvous, all in a fine humor. We arrived on the head waters of the Multenemough river without any thing of moment occurring — where we made our fall's hunt. After travelling near 100 miles South West from the top of the mountains, or from the head of Lewis river, we got totally out of the range of the buffaloe. We were told by the natives that those animals were never known further west, which is something singular, as the country is just the same, if not better as to grass. These Indians subsist principally upon salmon, and such other fish as they can catch, with the assistance of roots, buds, berries, & some small game, which they kill with the bow and arrow. They are generally of a more swarthy nature, small and cowardly, and travel in small gangs of from four to five families — this they are compelled to do in order to keep from starvation. They are always roving from plain to plain, and from valley to valley - never remaining in one place longer than till game gets scarce. When on the move the women have to perform the most laborious part — having charge of the transportation of their baggage. While doing this, a female, the most feeble of their sex, will carry a load of perhaps a hundred weight a whole day, without manifesting the least fatigue or complaint. This tribe, which I believe is called the Bawnack, or Shoshonies, are the most indolent, and have the least ambition of any tribe we had yet discovered. They are lazy and dirty; and only strive to get as much as will keep them from starving. They are no way ill disposed towards the whites, or at least they never disturbed us - with the exception of stealing a few of our traps. We continued moving down the Multenemough for several hundred miles, during which time we subsisted principally upon beaver, deer, and bighorn — though we still had a little jirked buffaloe meat. Between trapping and trading we had made quite a profitable hunt. To get a beaver skin from these Indians worth eight or ten dollars, never cost more than an awl, a fish-hook, a knife, a string of beads, or something equally as trifling.

As winter was approaching, we began to make arrangements to return to some more favourable climate, by collecting our fur, and giving each man his share of the baggage. We travelled back with great speed, and arrived in the buffaloe country on the first of November, where we met with a nation of Snake Indians, with whom we made some small trades for buffaloe robes and skins for the winter. The manners and customs of the Snake Indians are very similar to those of the Flatheads, with the exception of stealing, which they consider no harm. The Snake Indians, or as some call them, the Shoshonies, were once a powerful nation, possessing a glorious hunting ground on the east side of the mountains; but they, like the Flatheads, have been almost annihilated by the revengeful Blackfeet, who, being supplied with firearms were enabled to defeat all Indian opposition. Their nation has been entirely broken up and scattered throughout all this wild region. The Shoshonies are a branch of the once powerful Snake tribe, as are also the more abject and forlorn tribe of Shuckers, or more generally termed, Diggers and Root eaters, who keep in the most retired recesses of the mountains and streams, subsisting on the most unwholesome food, and living the most like animals of any race of beings. We left the Snake Indians and took a more Southern direction to the Bear river, which empties into Big Salt Lake — followed this river for two days, and then crossed over to Weabers river. These two rivers are about the same size, say from two to three hundred yards wide, & from three to four hundred miles long. — They run South parallel with each other, and empty into the Big Salt Lake on the North side, at no great distance apart. - This lake is much larger than any other west of the mountains — supposed to be 200 miles long, and near the same in width. It is surrounded on the North, about the mouths of the rivers, by a mountainous & broken country, and on the South & West by a barren, sandy plain, in a manner incapable of vegetation. There is also a hill or peak

near the centre of it so high that the snow remains on it the greater part of the year. The water is of such a brackish nature that only part of it freezes in the coldest weather of the winter season. Its briny substance prevents all vegetation within a considerable distance of the margin of the lake. The Bear and Weabers rivers are the principal streams by which it is fed. In the Spring of the year, when the snow and ice melts and runs down off the mountains, this lake rises very high, on account of it having no outlet; and in the fall, or latter part of summer it sinks — leaving salt one and two inches thick on some parts of its shores. It is situated on the west side of the mountains, between the waters of the Columbia and Rio Colorado, or Red river, and is called by the natives, the Great Salt Lake. The rivers which empty into this lake abound with many kinds of fish, such as trout, cat-fish, and others suitable for hook and line, particularly at their mouths. Where the country is low, and small streams empties into them, the dams of the beaver causes the water to overflow its banks, and makes a swampy, marshy country for miles round. People trapping on these streams are compelled to construct canoes of Bull and buffaloe skins, in order to visit their traps. On leaving this lake we continued our journey towards the head waters of the Colorado, which stream empties into the Gulf of Calafornia. After a tedious, but not unpleasant tramp of several days we came to a beautiful situation on one of the main feeders of this river, where we halted to make preparations to spend the winter — it now being about the middle of November. We had remained here but a few days, during which time we were occupied in building tents, &c, for winter, when we were visited by a party of 70 or 80 Indian warriors. These Indians manifested the best of friendship towards us, while in our camp, and said they were going to war with the Snake Indians — whose country we were now in — and they also said they belonged to the Crow nation on the East side of the mountains. In all the intercourse had with them, while they were with us, not the least symptom of deception was discovered, and they parted with us manifesting as much regret as if we had been old acquaintances. But we were doomed to experience the faith of the Crow nation — for, on the same night of their departure, they returned and stole five of our best hunting horses. This was a serious loss to us, and a valuable prize for them — for an Indian belonging to these hunting and warring tribes is poor indeed if he is not the owner of a horse, as it is upon this animal they much depend for success in chasing the buffaloe, and upon him greatly depends the fate of the battle. Having a man in our company who had once been a captive in their village, and who could talk and understand a little of their language, we resolved at all hazards to give chase and retake our horses. We steered across the mountains towards the Southern head waters of the Missouri river. The first stream we came to on the east side is called Bighorn river — down which stream we travelled for some days, until we came to their village situated at the mouth of Stinking river. In this village we found a negro man, who informed us that he first came to this country with Lewis & Clark — with whom he also returned to the State of Missouri, and in a few years returned again with a Mr. Mackinney, a trader on the Missouri river, and has remained here ever since - which is about ten or twelve years. He has acquired a correct knowledge of their manner of living, and speaks their language fluently. He has rose to be quite a considerable character, or chief, in their village; at least he assumes all the dignities of a chief, for he has four wives, with whom he lives alternately. This is the custom of many of the chiefs.

After informing the negro of our stolen horses, he told us that they had them, and that the reason they were taken from us was because we were found in their enemies' country, and that they supposed we were going to trade them guns, &c. By giving the chiefs some trifling presents our horses were produced in as good trim as when they left us. (I shall say nothing more of these Indians at present, as I shall have occasion to speak of them when I again visit their village.)

About the first of January 1833, the game getting scarce in this vicinity, the Indians left us & moved down the river. We remained at this station employing our time in hunting, fishing, and such other sports as we could come at, but without any particular occurrence, until the 20th of February, when we set out on our

spring hunt. We crossed the country to the river Platte without any difficulty, and continued down this stream to the junction of it and the Laramies, where we had joined Fitzpatrick's company in the previous spring, and where also we had parted with Capt. Gant. On encamping for the night we found a tree off which the bark was peeled, and wrote on with a coal, that, by searching in a certain place mentioned, we would find a letter, — which we did, and found the document, written in Gant's hand, which stated that only two parties had returned, viz. — Washburns and his own — and also that Capt. Blackwell had come up from the States with a supply of provision, merchandize, ammuniton, &c. The letter went on to detail the hardships, sufferings, and misfortunes which they had encountered, which only amounted to this: that they had lost their horses last winter, and had been to Santa Fe and purchased more — while crossing the mountain his party had accidentally met with Washburn and his company — that they then ascertained for the first, that the company was insolvent and had declined doing business in this country — and that they [Gant's party] had left this place in September last, to go and establish a trading post on the Arkansas river, with the Arpahee Indians. The letter closed by stating that Stephens' party had left him and joined Fitzpatrick. This letter was directed to Mr. Saunders, who was in our company, and who, Gant supposed, would be the first to return.

Soon after the contents of the letter were made known to the company, some men were sent across the Laramies river to see if they could make any discoveries of importance, as we could see the remains of what we supposed to be an old encampment on its banks. These men, after searching for some time, found where several buffaloe had been slaughtered, and from the manner in which it was done, it was evident that it was the work of a party of hostile Indians - and not being able to trace which direction they had steered, we were at a great loss to know what to do — having no person to act as commander. There was much difference of opinion and great contention about which way we should take. Our object was, if possible, to avoid meeting with the Indians, as our force was small, and not well prepared to encounter a band of savages defended with firearms. Finally, it was decided that we should leave the rivers and strike for the mountains — thinking this route the least dangerous. After travelling an hour or so, we suddenly met with a body of eight or ten on horse back, who we judged to be hunting — not being backward about meeting with such a number, we marched boldly towards them. On this they immediately galloped off under full speed, in the direction which we were going. Thinking the main body to be in that direction, we thought to avoid them by turning to the right and keeping near the river. We did not advance far in this direction, however, until we suddenly came upon their encampment. Being thus led into their strong hold by mere accident, we held a hurried consultation as to our own safety. Their horses and white lodges could be distinctly seen although we were some distance off, and we flattered ourselves that we had not yet been discovered by any in the village, and that we might yet escape. With this hope we sounded a retreat and marched slowly & silently back for the purpose of sheltering ourselves with the timber, where we intended to build a fort immediately, for we knew that even if we were not discovered now, the party we first met would give the alarm, and the chase would be commenced. In going along, juking from bluff to bluff, in order to avoid being seen, we were overtaken by a single Indian on horseback. He would ride up at full gallop within 20 or 30 steps of us, and then suddenly wheel, ride back towards the camp, and then return as before. After repeating this several times, some of our men, when he came close, raised their guns, and he, thinking there might be danger in running away, came to us and told us that the chief had sent for us to come to his tent, to eat, smoke and be friendly. Not having confidence in his good intentions, all declined the invitation, but told the messenger that we would just retire into the timber, (where we intended to be occupied in the meantime in building a fort,) and that if the chief wished to have any thing to say to us, he could come there - for which we started into the woods, taking this fellow with us, with the intention of keeping him until the fort would be erected.

After going but a short distance our prisoner broke loose, and immediately ran onto some rising ground, where he made his horse perform many singular feats as a signal for his followers. We galloped off as fast as we could, but were soon surrounded on all sides, without any thing to shelter us, except a hole formed by the sinking of water - which are very numerous in some of these plains. Into this hole we drove our horses, and expected to reach the top in time to keep the Indians at bay, and make peace with them. Before we got our horses properly secured in this hole there was hundreds of red men standing above and eagerly looking down upon us, uttering the most terrifying yells of vengeance, brandishing their guns, bows and spears as if they would devour us. — We were in just such a situation now, as is calculated to bring on despair, with all its horrifying feelings, — each man holding his gun cocked and ready, resolved to sell his life only with the last drop of blood. — We stood in this situation, for a few minutes, waiting for them to commence, when there was one rushed into their ranks apparently much excited, who on addressing a few words to the warriors, they all put down their arms, and made signs to us to come out, that they would not molest us. This we did, but it was with a watchful, jealous eye. The man whose timely arrival seemed to have put a stop to their designs, and who doubtless here saved our lives, now came forward and signified to us that we had better go with them to their camp, and eat, drink and smoke, and he would exert his influence not to have us hurt — which advice we accordingly followed — taking our horses with us. On arriving at their camp, we found two who could talk the Crow language. The Rickarees (the nation in whose hands we now were) on being at war with the Crow nation took these two prisoners, as they told us, and adopted them as their brethren. — After manifesting a desire to be friendly with them, by smoking, &c. these Crow prisoners informed us that, had it not been for the timely arrival of the chief, when we were in the hole, we would most certainly have been cut to pieces. This is altogether probable. The feelings of every individual, as well as those of myself, when surrounded in this hole, were horrible in the extreme. The thought struck me, as I leaned against a rock, that here I must end my career. Our feelings may be imagined, but not described.

The Crow prisoners told us that the only reason they knew why the chief had interceded for us, was because he had not previously been consulted on the subject, (having been absent when we were discovered in the plain.) This chief took a particular liking for us, and seemed determined to save us from the destructive vengeance of his people. He prepared a comfortable lodge for our own accommodation, in which we slept and eat. We remained in this situation two days and part of the third night, without any thing to disturb us - during which time the Crow prisoners had many questions to ask about their own people. They appeared to be well treated, but notwithstanding they were anxious to make their escape. About midnight of the third night, our friendly chief, who slept with us every night, awoke us all, and told us the horrors of our situation. He said that he had a great many bad men among his followers, and that he was unable to appease their angry nature much longer — the red man thirsts for blood — that he had succeeded in saving us thus far, through much exertion — & that now, as the whole village was wrapt in slumber, it would be a fit time for us to escape. He gave us strict orders to travel with all speed, and not to slacken our pace for two days and nights, for he said as soon as our departure would be known, we would be pursued. When our horses were brought out and all things was ready, we were escorted by the chief until daylight, when he left us and returned - manifesting the most intense anxiety for our safety. Indeed we were loth to part with this kind man for we felt as if we were indebted to him for our lives. After parting with the chief, we pursued our journey with great speed, until the evening of the second day, when we were obliged to stop by a snow storm, which threatened us with destruction. We here turned our panting horses loose to graze, and made preparations to pass the night - which we did undisturbed. In the morning, two of the horses were not to be found. All search was in vain, and we gave them up for lost — concluding that they had fell into the hands of our enemies, and if so, we had better be on the move, as they were doubtless close at hand; but the owner, not being satisfied, again started out. — This detained us

a while longer, when, apprehending danger from the Indians, we fired two guns as a signal for him that we were going, if he was yet in hearing. We resumed our journey, and after travelling a few miles, halted for the straggler — but he never returned.

The Rickarees are a powerful nation, consisting of about 1000 warriors. Their principal chief is called Highbacked Wolf. Some twelve or fifteen years since, they were very friendly with the whites. This friendship was interrupted by the following circumstance: — About eight or ten years since, Mr. Mackenzie took a chief from three different nations (one of which was a Rickaree,) to Washington city, and while taking them back to their native wilds through Virginia, the Rickaree chief took sick and died in the city of Richmond. Mackenzie returned with the other two, Asnaboin and Mandan. While passing the Rickaree village, (which was then situated on the Missouri river, from whence they have since removed to this country,) Mackenzie stopped and informed them of the fate of their chief — which they disbelieved, and immediately declared war against the whites. They were much enraged, and made a violent attack upon the boats containing the merchandize of Mr. Mackenzie — a great part of which they destroyed, and have since been the cause of the death of numbers of white men.

April 10th. Having lost all hope of being rejoined by our lost man, who we concluded had been captured by the Indians, we resumed our journey with 14 men. - Beaver we found in abundance — catching more or less every day, and every thing seemed to promise a profitable business, until the 7th day of May — a day which will ever be remembered by each of us. Having encamped the night previous on a small creek in the Black Hills, or on the head waters of the river Platte, without timber or any thing to shelter ourselves, in case of an attack by the Indians, within 80 or 100 yards. We this evening again turned our horses loose to graze, which is not by any means customary and much less prudent, while travelling through a country infested with hostile savages, as they are always hovering around the encampment, ready to lay hands on any thing which they fancy. But on the present occasion we thought ourselves secure, as we had not seen nor met with any Indians for several days. On the following morning our horses were in sight on a hill a little above the encampment. About 9 o'clock three of us started to bring them down preparatory to our start. As there was no danger apprehended, neither of us took our guns. When we got to the top of the hill the horses were not to be seen — having descended the hill on the other side. The other two men soon found their horses and started with them to camp. After searching a while I found mine with several others. The horses appeared much frightened, and I began to apprehend some danger. Whilst leading my horse towards the camp, an Indian, armed with a bow and arrow, came rushing upon me. — I made several attempts to mount, but as often failed, for as I would spring to get on he would jump from under me. The savage now approached within about fifteen steps of me, and signified that he would slay me unless I stopped and delivered up my horse. I sprang behind a bunch of bushes, which afforded me a tolerable shelter. He then made signs to me that if I would deliver myself up he would not hurt me. But this I refused. My only weapon was a large knife, which I carried in a scabbard at my waist. I drew this out and proposed to meet him. He then gave me to understand, that if I would lay down the knife he would lay down the bow and arrow, and we would meet and be friends. This I also refused to do. — He made use of various inducements to get me from behind the bush, but I heeded them not, for I knew his intention was to kill me if it was in his power. He still advanced slowly toward me. I had been in several dangerous situations with the Indians and wild beasts, — in some of which I had almost despaired. But none seemed to cause the same feeling as did my present predicament. Alone, and unarmed — my situation was distressing indeed. I had no chance of escaping, and an immediate and cruel death I knew would be my fate if I surrendered. Whilst reflecting on what to do, and looking at him through an aperture in the bush, he shot an arrow at me, which fortunately missed its aim, and struck a branch within a few inches of my face, and fell harmless to the ground. By this time he had got quite close and being below me

on the hill side, the thought struck me that I might despatch him with a stone — for which purpose I stooped down to get one, and carelessly let my body move from the shelter afforded by the brush, and at that instant I felt the pointed arrow pierce my side. I jirked the weapon out immediately, and started to run, still holding to my horse. I expected every moment as I ran quartering past the Indian to receive another, which I most certainly would have done, if the savage had been in the possession of any more; and to run to the brush for those he had already discharged at me, would only be giving me time to escape. He then pursued me. After running a short distance I thought that my horse might be the means of saving my life, if I would leave him for the Indian, and accordingly I released my hold; but the Indian disregarded the horse and followed me. By this time, owing to the loss of blood from my wound, and the great excitement I was under, I began to grow weak and faint, for I thought that every moment would be my last, as I heard the Indian puffing & blowing in my rear. We were now within sight of our camp, and were fortunately discovered by the men then there, who immediately ran to my relief. When I seen the face of my companions, I lost all my strength and fell prostrate to the ground. The Indian, foiled in his design on my life, retreated for the purpose of making sure of my horse, but in this he was also mistaken, for in turn he was pursued by my companions as hotly as he had chased me. When my mind again resumed its sway, I found myself in the camp carefully attended by my companions. On entering into conversation with my companions, I found that I was not the only one who had encountered the Indians. I was ignorant of any more Indians being in the neighborhood than the one above alluded to, but it appeared by their story that, when the two men who started out with me, were returning with the horses, they came across a large body of Indians, supposed to be about 200, who, after a sharp engagement, in which one of our men, named Gillam, of Illinois, was killed, and two wounded, succeeded in taking all our horses except two. Whilst I was listening to this lamentable story, our spies came running to the camp, bringing the unwelcome tidings that the Indians were again approaching with great speed, determined to ride over us. Each man now gathered a robe, blanket, guns, and such things as he could not do without, & carried the wounded into the brush at the foot of the hill, where we immediately commenced building a fort. The Indians approached and surrounded our encampment very cautiously, thinking that they would take us by surprise, and capture man, beast and baggage without any difficulty — but they were outrageous when they found that there was no body at home. They made the best of their victory however, and took every thing we had left. — When they had completed the pillage, which was only done when they could no longer find any thing on which to lay their hands, they started off with their booty. - After they had travelled some distance they halted and collected in a circle, within plain view of where we were, and smoked to the Sun, or Great Spirit. While going through this ceremony, some of them happened to discover us. On this, they quit smoking, left their horses and came on foot within 30 or 40 steps of us, — but on seeing our fort, which was only partly built, they turned away and left us, without making any attack. We remained in this situation until morning - those who were able, being occupied in completing our fort. Soon after daylight the Indians again made their appearance, and approached within a stones throw of the fort, and on reconnoitering our situation they concluded that we were too well defended for them to gain any advantage over us, — and the second time they left us without giving us a chance of trying our strength.

This morning I felt very weak and feeble from my wound, and began to fear that it was more serious than was at first supposed. About 10 o'clock the company was ready for the move, and I was packed between two horses. After travelling two or three miles we halted to rest near some brush — but not without having sentinels stationed for the purpose of keeping a vigilant look-out, for we still expected an attack from the Indians. Not long after we halted our sentinels informed us that the savages were again approaching. We immediately went into the brush and commenced throwing up a fort. They this time approached very cautiously, & seemed determined to put an end to our lives. When they observed that we were defended by a breast work, they halted, reconnoitered on every side, and finally gave up and left us. These Indians

who had hung round our path so long, robbed us of so much necessary property, killed one and wounded three of us, and came so nigh exterminating our whole company, we found out, belonged to the Rickaree tribe — the same who frightened us in the sink hole, on Platte river.

It was now that we had leisure to contemplate our situation. Some of us had laboured hard, encountered one danger only to be eclipsed by another. We had at times endured the most excruciating suffering from hunger and fatigue — living in constant communion with the terrors of a wilderness studded with savages and no less dangerous beasts of prey, for two long years, and now left destitute of every thing except an old greasy blanket, a rifle and a few loads of ammunition, some thousands of miles from our paternal homes. To reflect on our present situation was enough to fill every heart with all the horrors of remorse. In fact, we felt a disposition about this time to do that which would not have been right, had an opportunity afforded. When we first embarked in this business it was with the expectation that to ensure a fortune in the fur trade only required a little perseverance and industry. We were not told that we were to be constantly annoyed by the Indians, but that it only required the observance of a peaceful disposition on our part, to secure their friendship and even support. Some of the Indians with whom we had intercourse, it is true, had been of great advantage to us in our trapping expeditions; but then it would be of short duration, — for, if they would not render themselves obnoxious by their own treachery, our friendship with them would be sure to meet with an interruption through some ingenious artifice of a neighbouring jealous tribe. Such had been the life we had led, and such the reward.

Our situation was not at all suited for sober calculation. Some appeared altogether careless what would become of them — seeming to have a willingness to turn in with and live the life of a savage; some two or three were anxious to leave the wilderness and return to the States as empty as when we left them. But this was rejected by nearly all, for we still had a distant hope of having better luck.

Some of our men were acquainted with the situation of the rendezvous of a company of traders on the head waters of the Colorado trading under the firm of B. L. E. Bowville & Co. and it was proposed to start for this post immediately. After much debate and persuasion, it was agreed that we should make the attempt. We got every thing ready — the wounded having entirely recovered — and started on our long and tedious journey. As we travelled along we killed plenty of various kinds of game — met with nothing to interrupt our journey, and on the 25th of July arrived at the camp of Bowville, which at this time consisted of 195 men, together with a small company belonging to Mackenzie, from the Missouri river, of 60 men. We were well received by these men, most of whom had been in the woods for several years, and experienced many hardships and privations, similar to what we had suffered. They seemed to sympathize with us about our loss, and all appeared anxious that we should turn in with them and restore our lost fortunes. After we had become thoroughly rested from the fatigue of our long tramp to this post, most of our men hired in different ways with this company. These men had been engaged in trapping in the vicinity of this rendezvous for a long time, & had caught nearly all the beaver, and were thinking about moving to some other section of country. There was a large tract of land laying to the South West of this, extending to the Columbia river on the North, and to the Pacific ocean and Gulph of Calafornia on the West and South, which was said to abound with beaver, and otherwise suited as a trading country. As our company was now very large, the officers concluded on dividing it into three divisions. Accordingly Capt. Bowville was left here with a considerable force to watch the movements of the Indians, and to do what he could at trapping; as this had been a great harbor for beaver, it was thought that there might be still some more to be caught. A Mr. Cerren with a few men was sent back to St. Lewis, with 4000 lbs. of beaver fur, with instructions to return and meet Capt. Bowville at the Great Salt Lake in the following summer, with a supply of provisions to do the company, for the two following years. The other division, under the command of a Mr. Walker, was ordered to steer through an unknown country, towards the Pacific, and if

he did not find beaver, he should return to the Great S. L. in the following summer. Mr. Walker was a man well calculated to undertake a business of this kind. He was well hardened to the hardships of the wilderness — understood the character of the Indians very well — was kind and affable to his men, but at the same time at liberty to command without giving of fence, — and to explore unknown regions was his chief delight. I was anxious to go to the coast of the Pacific, and for that purpose hired with Mr. Walker as clerk, for a certain sum per year. The 20th of Aug. was fixed as the day for each company to take its departure. When the day arrived every thing was in readiness, — each man provided with four horses, and an equal share of blankets, buffaloe robes, provisions, and every article necessary for the comfort of men engaged in an expedition of this kind. As we travelled along each man appeared in better spirits, and more lively than on any other similar occasion, - and I sometimes thought that we were now on an expedition from which we would realize some profit. On the fourth day of our journey we arrived at the huts of some Bawnack Indians. These Indians appear to live very poor and in the most forlorn condition. They generally make but one visit to the buffaloe country during the year, where they remain until they jirk as much meat as their females can lug home on their backs. They then quit the mountains and return to the plains, where they subsist on fish and small game the remainder of the year. They keep no horses, & are always an easy prey for other Indians provided with guns and horses. On telling these Indians the route we intended to take, they told us we must provide ourselves with meat enough to subsist upon for many days — which we found to be very good advice. We now set to work laying in a stock of provision, and in a few days each man was provided with about 60 pounds of substantial meat, which was packed upon our horses, and we set sail in good cheer.

On the 4th of September we killed our last buffaloe on the West side of the Salt Lake. We still continued along the margin of the Lake, with the intention of leaving it when we got to the extreme west side of it. About the 12th we found the country very poor, and almost without game, except goats and some few rabbits. On the 13th we left the Lake and took a westerly course into the most extensive & barren plains I ever seen. This day we came to a spring, where we found some Indians encamped, who were on their way up to the buffaloe country, to lay in their winters supply of meat. These Indians appear to be more wealthy, and exercise more ingenuity in providing for themselves than those we had met with a few days ago. They have paths beat from one spring or hole of water to another, and by observing these paths, they told us, we would be enabled to find water without much trouble. The chief of this tribe, further told us, that after travelling so many days South-west, (the course we were now about to take,) we would come to a high mountain which was covered with snow at the top the whole year round, and on each side of which we would find a large river to head, and descend into the sandy plains below, forming innumerable small lakes, and sinks into the earth and disappears. Some distance further down these plains, he said, we would come to another mountain, much larger than the first, which he had never been across. In all this space, he said, there was no game; but that near this latter mountain we would come across a tribe of poor Indians, whom he supposed would not be friendly. On the next morning we left these Indians, and pursued our course Northwest. Our men, who were in such fine spirits when we left the rendezvous, began to show symptoms of fatigue, & were no longer so full of sport. We travelled along these paths according to the directions of the Indians, now and then meeting with a few straggling natives, who were in a manner naked, on the trail of the main body to the buffaloe country. — Some of these straggling Indians showed us some lumps of salt, which was the most white, clear and beautiful I ever seen.

On the 30th we arrived at a considerable hill, which, in appearance, is similar to a smooth rock, — where we encamped for the night, and let our horses loose to graze — which we thought might now be done with safety, as we were no longer beset by the murderous Rickarees. While laying about resting ourselves, some of the men observed the horses very eagerly licking the stones which lay on the surface of the

ground, near the spring. This circumstance caused the men to examine the stones, which we found to be salt, and had been carried here from the hill by the Indians. Their surface was covered with moss or rust, but on breaking them, or rubbing off the rust, the salt is seen in its purity. This hill runs North and South, and is from one to three miles across, and produces no kind of vegetation, whatever except a little grass which grows in holes or gutters around its base, formed by water descending from the hill during the rainy season. This country appeared the most like a desert of any I had yet seen. It is so dry and sandy that there is scarcely any vegetation to be found — not even a spear of grass, except around the springs. The water in some of these springs, too, is so salt that it is impossible to drink it. The Indians say that it never rains, only in the spring of the year. Every thing here seems to declare that, here man shall not dwell.

After travelling a few days longer thro' these barren plains; we came to the mountain described by the Indian as having its peak covered with snow. It presents a most singular appearance — being entirely unconnected with any other chain. It is surrounded on either side by level plains, and rises abruptly to a great highth, rugged, and hard to ascend. To take a view of the surrounding country from this mountain, the eye meets with nothing but a smooth, sandy, level plain. On the whole, this mountain may be set down as one of the most remarkable phenomenas of nature. Its top is covered with the pinone tree, bearing a kind of mast, which the natives are very fond of, and which they collect for winter provision. This hill is nearly round, and looks like a hill or mound, such as may be met with in the prairies on the east side of the mountain.

Not far from our encampment we found the source of the river mentioned by the Indian. After we all got tired gazing at this mountain and the adjacent curiosities, we left it and followed down the river, in order to find water and grass for our horses. On this stream we found old signs of beaver, and we supposed that, as game was scarce in this country, the Indians had caught them for provision. The natives which we occasionally met with, still continued to be of the most poor and dejected kind — being entirely naked and very filthy. We came to the hut of one of these Indians who happened to have a considerable quantity of fur collected. — At this hut we obtained a large robe composed of beaver skins fastened together, in exchange for two awls and one fish-hook. This robe was worth from 30 to 40 dollars. We continued travelling down this river, now and then catching a few beaver. But, as we continued to extend our acquaintance with the natives, they began to practice their national failing of stealing. So eager were they to possess themselves of our traps, that we were forced to quit trapping in this vicinity and make for some other quarter. The great annoyance we sustained in this respect greatly displeased some of our men, and they were for taking vengeance before we left the country — but this was not the disposition of Captain Walker. These discontents being out hunting one day, fell in with a few Indians, two or three of whom they killed, and then returned to camp, not daring to let the Captain know it. The next day while hunting, they repeated the same violation — but this time not quite so successful, for the Captain found it out, and immediately took measures for its effectual suppression.

At this place, all the branches of this stream is collected from the mountain into the main channel, which forms quite a large stream; and to which we gave the name of Barren River — a name which we thought would be quite appropriate, as the country, natives and every thing belonging to it, justly deserves the name. — You may travel for many days on the banks of this river, without finding a stick large enough to make a walking cane. — While we were on its margin, we were compelled to do without fire, unless we chanced to come across some drift that had collected together on the beach. As we proceeded down the river we found that the trails of the Indians began to look as if their numbers were increasing, ever since our men had killed some of their brethren. The further we descended the river, the more promising the country began to appear, although it still retained its dry, sandy nature. We had now arrived within view of a cluster of hills or mounds, which presented the appearance, from a distance, of a number of beautiful

cities built up together. Here we had the pleasure of seeing timber, which grew in very sparing quantities some places along the river beach.

On the 4th of September we arrived at some lakes, formed by this river, which we supposed to be those mentioned by the Indian chief whom we met at the Great Salt Lake. Here the country is low and swampy, producing an abundance of very fine grass — which was very acceptable to our horses, as it was the first good grazing they had been in for a long time — and here, on the borders of one of these lakes, we encamped, for the purpose of spending the night, and letting our horses have their satisfaction. A little before sun-set, on taking a view of the surrounding waste with a spy-glass, we discovered smoke issuing from the high grass in every direction. This was sufficient to convince us that we were in the midst of a large body of Indians; but as we could see no timber to go to, we concluded that it would be as well to remain in our present situation and defend ourselves as well as we could. We readily guessed that these Indians were in arms to revenge the death of those which our men had killed up the river; & if they could succeed in getting any advantage over us, we had no expectation that they would give us any quarter. Our first care, therefore, was to secure our horses, which we did by fastening them all together, and then hitching them to pickets drove into the ground. This done, we commenced constructing something for our own safety. The lake was immediately in our rear, and piling up all our baggage in front, we had quite a substantial breast work — which would have been as impregnable to the Indian arrows, as were the cotton-bags to the British bullets at New Orleans in 1815. Before we had got every thing completed; however, the Indians issued from their hiding places in the grass, to the number, as near as I could guess, of 8 or 900, and marched straight towards us, dancing and singing in the greatest glee. When within about 150 yards of us, they all sat down on the ground, and despatched five of their chiefs to our camp to inquire whether their people might come in and smoke with us. This request Capt. Walker very prudently refused, as they evidently had no good intentions, but told them that he was willing to meet them half way between our breast work, and where their people were then sitting. This appeared to displease them very much, and they went back not the least bit pleased with the reception they had met with.

After the five deputies related the result of their visit to their constituents, a part of them rose up and signed to us, (which was the only mode of communicating with them) that they were coming to our camp. At this 10 or 12 of our men mounted the breast work and made signs to them that if they advanced a step further it was at the peril of their lives. They wanted to know in what way we would do it. Our guns were exhibited as the weapons of death. This they seemed to discredit and only laughed at us. They then wanted to see what effect our guns would have on some ducks that were then swimming in the lake, not far from the shore. We then fired at the ducks — thinking by this means to strike terror into the savages and drive them away. The ducks were killed, which astonished the Indians a good deal, though not so much as the noise of the guns — which caused them to fall flat to the ground. After this they put up a beaver skin on a bank for us to shoot at for their gratification — when they left us for the night. This night we stationed a strong guard, but no Indians made their appearance, and were permitted to pass the night in pleasant dreams.

Early in the morning we resumed our journey along the lakes, without seeing any signs of the Indians until after sunrise, when we discovered them issuing from the high grass in front, rear, and on either side of us. This created great alarm among our men, at first, as we thought they had surrounded us on purpose, but it appeared that we had only happened amongst them, and they were as much frightened as us. From this we turned our course from the border of the lake into the plain. We had not travelled far until the Indians began to move after us — first in small numbers, but presently in large companies. — They did not approach near until we had travelled in this way for several hours, when they began to send small parties in advance, who would solicit us most earnestly to stop and smoke with them. After they had repeated this

