

A S T O R I A ;

OR,

ENTERPRISE BEYOND

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

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AUTHOR OF "THE SKETCH BOOK," "THE ALHAMBRA," &c.

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CONTENTS TO VOL. II.

CHAPTER I.

The great bend of the Missouri—Crooks and McLellan meet with two of their Indian opponents—Wanton outrage of a white man the cause of Indian hostility—Dangers and precautions—An Indian war party—Dangerous situation of Mr. Hunt—A friendly encampment—Feasting and dancing—Approach of Manuel Lisa and his party—A grim meeting between old rivals—Pierre Dorion in a fury—A burst of chivalry . . . 1

CHAPTER II.

Features of the wilderness—Herds of buffalo—Antelopes—Their varieties and habits—John Day—His hunting stratagem—Interview with three Aricaras—Negotiations between the rival parties—The lefthanded and the big man, two Aricara chiefs—Aricara village—Its inhabitants—Ceremonials on landing—A council lodge—Grand conference—Speech of Lisa—Negotiation for horses—Shrewd suggestion of Gray Eyes, an Aricara chief—Encampment of the trading parties . . . 16

CHAPTER III.

An Indian horse fair—Love of the Indians for horses—Scenes in the Aricara village—Indian hospitality—Duties of Indian women—Game habits of the men—Their indolence—Love of gossiping—Rumours of lurking enemies—Scouts—An alarm—A sallying forth—

Indian dogs—Return of a horse-stealing party—An Indian deputation—Fresh alarms—Return of a successful war party—Dress of the Aricaras—Indian toilet—Triumphal entry of the war party—Meetings of relations and friends—Indian sensibility—Meeting of a wounded warrior and his mother—Festivities and lamentations 35

CHAPTER IV.

Wilderness of the far west—Great American desert—Parched seasons—Black hills—Rocky mountains—Wandering and predatory hordes—Speculations on what may be the future population—Apprehended dangers—A plot to desert—Rose the interpreter—His sinister character—Departure from the Aricara village 55

CHAPTER V.

Summer weather of the prairies—Purity of the atmosphere—Canadians on the march—Sickness in the camp—Big river—Vulgar nomenclature—Suggestions about the original Indian names—Camp of Cheyennes—Trade for horses—Character of the Cheyennes—Their horsemanship—Historical anecdotes of the tribe 65

CHAPTER VI.

New distribution of horses—Secret information of treason in the camp—Rose the interpreter, his perfidious character—His plots—Anecdotes of the Crow Indians—Notorious horse stealers—Some account of Rose—A desperado of the frontier 76

CHAPTER VII.

Substitute for fuel on the prairies—Fossil trees—Fierceness of the buffaloes when in heat—Three hunters missing—Signal fires and smokes—Uneasiness concerning the lost men—A plan to forestal a rogue—New arrangement with Rose—Return of the wanderers 83

CHAPTER VIII.

The Black mountains—Haunts of predatory Indians—
 Their wild and broken appearance—Superstitions con-
 cerning them—Thunder spirit—Singular noises in the
 mountains—Secretmines—Hidden treasures—Moun-
 tains in labour—Scientific explanation—Impassable
 defiles—Black-tailed deer—The bighorn or ahsahta—
 Prospect from a lofty height—Plain with herds of
 buffalo—Distant peaks of the Rocky mountains—
 Alarms in the camp—Tracks of grizzly bears—Dan-
 gerous nature of this animal—Adventures of William
 Cannon and John Day with grizzly bears . . . 93

CHAPTER IX.

Indian trail—Rough mountain travelling—Sufferings from
 hunger and thirst—Powder river—Game in abundance
 —A hunter's paradise—Mountain peak seen at a great
 distance—One of the Big Horn chain—Rocky moun-
 tains—Extent—Appearance—Height—The Great
 American Desert—Various characteristics of the
 mountains—Indian superstitions concerning them—
 Land of souls—Towns of the free and generous spirits
 —Happy hunting grounds 108

CHAPTER X.

Region of the Crow Indians—Scouts on the lookout—
 Visit from a crew of hard riders—A Crow camp—
 Presents to the Crow chief—Bargaining—Crow bullies
 —Rose among his Indian friends—Parting with the
 Crows—Perplexities among the mountains—More
 of the Crows—Equestrian children—Search after
 stragglers 118

CHAPTER XI.

Mountain glens—Wandering band of savages—Anecdotes
 of Shoshonies and Flatheads—Root diggers—Their

solitary lurking habits—Gnomes of the mountains— Wind river—Scarcity of food—Alteration of route— The Pilot Knobs or Tetons—Branch of the Colorado— Hunting camp	130
---	-----

CHAPTER XII.

A plentiful hunting camp—Shoshonie hunters—Hoback's river—Mad river—Encampment near the Pilot Knobs —A consultation—Preparations for a perilous voy- age	144
---	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

A consultation whether to proceed by land or water— Preparations for boat building—An exploring party— A party of trappers detached—Two Snake visitors— Their report concerning the river—Confirmed by the exploring party—Mad river abandoned—Arrival at Henry's fort—Detachment of Robinson, Hoback, and Reznor to trap—Mr. Miller resolves to accompany them—Their departure	151
--	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

Scanty fare—A mendicant Snake—Embarcation on Henry river—Joy of the voyageurs—Arrival at Snake river—Rapids and breakers—Beginning of misfor- tunes—Snake encampments—Parley with a savage— A second disaster—Loss of a boatman—The Caldron Linn	165
---	-----

CHAPTER XV.

Gloomy council—Exploring parties—Discouraging re- ports—Disastrous experiment—Detachments in quest of succour—Caches, how made—Return of one of the detachments—Unsuccessful—Further disappointments —The Devil's Scuttle Hole	178
--	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

Determination of the party to proceed on foot—Dreary deserts between Snake river and the Columbia—Distribution of effects preparatory to a march—Division of the party—Rugged march along the river—Wild and broken scenery—Shoshonies—Alarm of a Snake encampment—Intercourse with the Snakes—Horse dealing—Value of a tin kettle—Sufferings from thirst—A horse reclaimed—Fortitude of an Indian woman—Scarcity of food—Dog's flesh a dainty—News of Mr. Crooks and his party—Painful travelling among the mountains—Snow storms—A dreary mountain prospect—A bivouac during a wintry night—Return to the river bank 190

CHAPTER XVII.

An unexpected meeting—Navigation in a skin canoe—Strange fears of suffering men—Hardships of Mr. Crooks and his comrades—Tidings of Mr. McLellan—A retrograde march—A willow raft—Extreme suffering of some of the party—Illness of Mr. Crooks—Impatience of some of the men—Necessity of leaving the laggards behind 210

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Hunt overtakes the advanced party—Pierre Dorion, and his skeleton horse—A Shoshonic camp—A justifiable outrage—Feasting on horse flesh—Mr. Crooks brought to the camp—Undertakes to relieve his men—The skin ferry boat—Frenzy of Prevost—His melancholy fate—Enfeebled state of John Day—Mr. Crooks again left behind—The party emerge from among the mountains—Interview with Shoshonies—A guide procured to conduct the party across a mountain—Ferriage across Snake river—Reunion with Mr. Crooks's men—Final departure from the river 220

CHAPTER XIX.

Departure from Snake river—Mountains to the north—
Wayworn travellers—An increase of the Dorion family
—A camp of Shoshonies—A new year festival among
the Snakes—A wintry march through the mountains—A
sunny prospect and milder climate—Indian horse tracks
—Grassy valleys—A camp of Sciatogas—Joy of the
travellers—Dangers of abundance—Habits of the Scia-
togas—Fate of Carriere—The Umatalla—Arrival at
the banks of the Columbia—Tidings of the scattered
members of the expedition—Scenery on the Columbia
—Tidings of Astoria—Arrival at the Falls 233

CHAPTER XX.

The village of Wish-ram—Roguary of the inhabitants—
Their habitations—Tidings of Astoria—Of the Tonquin
massacre—Thieves about the camp—A band of brag-
garts—Embarcation—Arrival at Astoria—A joyful
reception—Old comrades—Adventures of Reed, M'Lel-
lan, and M'Kenzie, among the Snake river mountains
—Rejoicing at Astoria 254

CHAPTER XXI.

Scanty fare during the winter—A poor hunting ground—
The return of the fishing season—The uthecan or
smelt—Its qualities—Vast shoals of it—Sturgeon—
Indian modes of taking it—The salmon—Different
species—Nature of the country about the coast—
Forests and forest trees—A remarkable flowering vine—
Animals—Birds—Reptiles—Climate west of the moun-
tains—Mildness of the temperature—Soil of the coast
and the interior 268

CHAPTER XXII.

Natives in the neighbourhood of Astoria—Their persons
and characteristics—Causes of deformity—Their dress

—Their contempt of beards—Ornaments—Armour and weapons—Mode of flattening the head—Extent of the custom—Religious belief—The two great spirits of the air and of the fire—Priests or medicine men—The rival idols—Polygamy a cause of greatness—Petty warfare—Music, dancing, gambling—Thieving a virtue—Keen traders—Intrusive habits—Abhorrence of drunkenness—Anecdote of Comcomly 278

CHAPTER XXIII.

Spring arrangements at Astoria—Various expeditions set out—The Long Narrows—Pilfering Indians—Thievish tribe at Wish-ram—Portage at the Falls—Portage by moonlight—An attack, a rout, and a robbery—Indian cure for cowardice—A parley and compromise—The despatch party turn back—Meet Crooks and John Day—Their sufferings—Indian Perfidy—Arrival at Astoria 293

CHAPTER XXIV.

Comprehensive views—To supply the Russia fur establishment—An agent sent to Russia—Project of an annual ship—The Beaver fitted out—Her equipment and crew—Instructions to the captain—The Sandwich islands—Rumours of the fate of the Tonquin—Precautions at reaching the mouth of the Columbia . . . 313

A S T O R I A.

CHAPTER I.

THE GREAT BEND OF THE MISSOURI—CROOKS AND M'LELLAN MEET WITH TWO OF THEIR INDIAN OPPONENTS—WANTON OUTRAGE OF A WHITE MAN THE CAUSE OF INDIAN HOSTILITY—DANGERS AND PRECAUTIONS—AN INDIAN WAR PARTY—DANGEROUS SITUATION OF MR. HUNT—A FRIENDLY ENCAMPMENT FEASTING AND DANCING—APPROACH OF MANUEL LISA AND HIS PARTY—A GRIM MEETING BETWEEN OLD RIVALS—PIERRE DORION IN A FURY—A BURST OF CHIVALRY.

ON the afternoon of the following day (June 1st) they arrived at the great bend, where the river winds for about thirty miles round a circular peninsula, the neck of which is not above two thousand yards across. On the succeeding morning, at an early hour, they descried two Indians standing on a high bank of the river, waving and spreading their buffalo robes in

signs of amity. They immediately pulled to shore and landed. On approaching the savages, however, the latter showed evident symptoms of alarm, spreading out their arms horizontally, according to their mode of supplicating clemency. The reason was soon explained. They proved to be two chiefs of the very war party that had brought Messrs. Crooks and M'Lellan to a stand two years before, and obliged them to escape down the river. They ran to embrace these gentlemen, as if delighted to meet with them; yet they evidently feared some retaliation of their past misconduct, nor were they quite at ease until the pipe of peace had been smoked.

Mr. Hunt having been informed that the tribe to which these men belonged, had killed three white men during the preceding summer, reproached them with the crime and demanded their reasons for such savage hostility. "We kill white men," replied one of the chiefs, "because white men kill us. That very man," added he, pointing to Carson, one of the new recruits, "killed one of our brothers last sum-

mer. The three white men were slain to avenge his death."

The chief was correct in his reply. Carson admitted that, being with a party of Aricaras on the banks of the Missouri, and seeing a war party of Sioux on the opposite side, he had fired with his rifle across. It was a random shot, made without much expectation of effect, for the river was full half a mile in breadth. Unluckily it brought down a Sioux warrior for whose wanton destruction threefold vengeance had been taken, as has been stated. In this way outrages are frequently committed on the natives by thoughtless or mischievous white men; the Indians retaliate according to a law of their code, which requires blood for blood; their act, of what with them is pious vengeance, resounds throughout the land, and is represented as wanton and unprovoked; the neighbourhood is roused to arms; a war ensues, which ends in the destruction of half the tribe, the ruin of the rest, and their expulsion from their hereditary homes. Such is too often the real history of Indian warfare, which in general

is traced up only to some vindictive act of a savage; while the outrage of the scoundrel white man that provoked it is sunk in silence.

The two chiefs, having smoked their pipe of peace and received a few presents, departed well satisfied. In a little while two others appeared on horseback, and rode up abreast of the boats. They had seen the presents given to their comrades, but were dissatisfied with them, and came after the boats to ask for more. Being somewhat peremptory and insolent in their demands, Mr. Hunt gave them a flat refusal and threatened, if they or any of their tribe followed him with similar demands, to treat them as enemies. They turned and rode off in a furious passion. As he was ignorant what force these chiefs might have behind the hills, and as it was very possible they might take advantage of some pass of the river to attack the boats, Mr. Hunt called all stragglers on board and prepared for such emergency. It was agreed that the large boat commanded by Mr. Hunt, should ascend along the northeast side of the river, and the three smaller boats

along the south side. By this arrangement each party would command a view of the opposite heights above the heads and out of the sight of their companions, and could give the alarm should they perceive any Indians lurking there. The signal of alarm was to be two shots fired in quick succession.

The boats proceeded for the greater part of the day without seeing any signs of an enemy. About four o'clock in the afternoon the large boat, commanded by Mr. Hunt, came to where the river was divided by a long sand bar, which apparently, however, left a sufficient channel between it and the shore along which they were advancing. He kept up this channel, therefore, for some distance until the water proved too shallow for the boat. It was necessary, therefore, to put about, return down the channel, and pull round the lower end of the sand bar into the main stream. Just as he had given orders to this effect to his men, two signal guns were fired from the boats on the opposite side of the river. At the same moment a file of savage warriors was observed pouring down from

6 DANGEROUS SITUATION OF MR. HUNT.

the impending bank and gathering on the shore at the lower end of the bar. They were evidently a war party, being armed with bows and arrows, battle clubs and carbines, and round bucklers of buffalo hide, and their naked bodies were painted with black and white stripes. The natural inference was, that they belonged to the two tribes of Sioux which had been expected by the great war party, and that they had been invited to hostility by the two chiefs who had been enraged by the refusal and the menace of Mr. Hunt. Here then was a fearful predicament. Mr. Hunt and his crew seemed caught as it were in a trap. The Indians, to the number of about a hundred, had already taken possession of a point near which the boat would have to pass : others kept pouring down the bank, and it was probable that some would remain posted on the top of the height.

The hazardous situation of Mr. Hunt was perceived by those in the other boats and they hastened to his assistance. They were at some distance above the sand bar, however, and on the opposite side of the river, and saw, with

intense anxiety, the number of savages continually augmenting, at the lower end of the channel, so that the boat would be exposed to a fearful attack before they could render it any assistance. Their anxiety increased as they saw Mr. Hunt and his party descending the channel and dauntlessly approaching the point of danger; but it suddenly changed into surprise on beholding the boat pass close by the savage horde unmolested, and steer out safely into the broad river.

The next moment the whole band of warriors was in motion. They ran along the bank until they were opposite to the boats, then throwing by their weapons and buffalo robes, plunged into the river, waded and swam off to the boats and surrounded them in crowds, seeking to shake hands with every individual on board, for the Indians have long since found this to be the white man's token of amity, and they carry it to an extreme.

All uneasiness was now at an end. The Indians proved to be a war party of Aricaras, Mandans and Minatarees, consisting of three

hundred warriors, and bound on a foray against the Sioux. Their war plans were abandoned for the present, and they determined to return to the Aricara town, where they hoped to obtain from the white men arms and ammunition that would enable them to take the field with advantage over their enemies.

The boats now sought the first convenient place for encamping. The tents were pitched; the warriors fixed their camp at about a hundred yards distant; provisions were furnished from the boats sufficient for all parties; there was hearty though rude feasting in both camps, and in the evening the red warriors entertained their white friends with dances and songs, that lasted until after midnight.

On the following morning (July 3) the travellers re-embarked, and took a temporary leave of their Indian friends, who intended to proceed immediately for the Aricara town, where they expected to arrive in three days, long before the boats could reach there. Mr. Hunt had not proceeded far before the chief came galloping along the shore and made signs for a parley.

He said, his people could not go home satisfied unless they had something to take with them to prove that they had met with the white men. Mr. Hunt understood the drift of the speech, and made the chief a present of a cask of powder, a bag of balls, and and three dozen of knives, with which he was highly pleased. While the chief was receiving these presents an Indian came running along the shore and announced that a boat, filled with white men, was coming up the river. This was by no means agreeable tidings to Mr. Hunt, who correctly concluded it to be the boat of Mr. Manuel Lisa, and he was vexed to find that alert and adventurous trader upon his heels, whom he had hoped to have out manœuvred, and left far behind. Lisa, however, was too much experienced in the wiles of Indian trade to be lulled by the promise of waiting for him at the Poncas village; on the contrary, he had allowed himself no repose, and had strained every nerve to overtake the rival party, and availing himself of the moonlight, had even sailed during a considerable part of the night.

In this he was partly prompted by his apprehensions of the Sioux, having met a boat which had probably passed Mr. Hunt's party in the night, and which had been fired into by these savages.

On hearing that Lisa was so near at hand, Mr. Hunt perceived that it was useless to attempt any longer to evade him; after proceeding a few miles further, therefore, he came to a halt and waited for him to come up. In a little while the barge of Lisa made its appearance. It came sweeping gently up the river, manned by his twenty stout oarsmen, and armed by a swivel mounted at the bow. The whole number on board amounted to twenty-six men; among whom was Mr. Henry Brackenbridge, then a young, enterprising man who was a mere passenger, tempted by notions of curiosity to accompany Mr. Lisa. He has since made himself known by various writing, among which may be noted a narrative of this very voyage.

The approach of Lisa, while it was regarded with uneasiness by Mr. Hunt, roused the ire of

M'Lellan; who calling to mind old grievances, began to look round for his rifle, as if he really intended to carry his threat into execution and shoot him on the spot; and it was with some difficulty that Mr. Hunt was enabled to restrain his ire, and prevent a scene of outrage and confusion.

The meeting between the two leaders, thus mutually distrustful, could not be very cordial; and as to Messrs. Crooks and M'Lellan, though they refrained from any outbreak, yet they regarded in grim defiance their old rival and underplotter. In truth, a general distrust prevailed throughout the party concerning Lisa and his intentions. They considered him artful and slippery, and secretly anxious for the failure of their expedition. There being now nothing more to be apprehended from the Sioux, they suspected that Lisa would take advantage of his twenty-oared barge to leave them and get first among the Aricaras. As he had traded with those people and possessed great influence over them, it was feared he might make use of it to impede the business of Mr. Hunt and his

party. It was resolved, therefore, to keep a sharp look out upon his movements; and M'Lellan swore that if he saw the least sign of treachery on his part, he would instantly put his old threat into execution.

Notwithstanding these secret jealousies and heart-burnings, the two parties maintained an outward appearance of civility, and for two days continued forward in company with some degree of harmony. On the third day, however, an explosion took place, and it was produced by no less a personage than Pierre Dorion, the half-breed interpreter. It will be recollected that this worthy had been obliged to steal a march from St. Louis, to avoid being arrested for an old whiskey debt which he owed to the Missouri Fur Company, and by which Mr. Lisa had hoped to prevent his enlisting in Mr. Hunt's expedition. Dorion, since the arrival of Lisa, had kept aloof and regarded him with a sullen and dogged aspect. On the 5th of July the two parties were brought to a halt by a heavy rain, and remained encamped about a hundred yards apart. In the course of the day

Lisa undertook to tamper with the faith of Pierre Dorion, and inviting him on board of his boat, regaled him with his favourite whiskey. When he thought him sufficiently mellowed, he proposed to him to quit the service of his new employers, and return to his old allegiance. Finding him not to be moved by soft words, he called to mind his old debt to the company, and threatened to carry him off by force, in payment of it. The mention of this debt always stirred up the gall of Pierre Dorion, bringing with it the remembrance of the whiskey extortion. A violent quarrel arose between him and Lisa, and he left the boat in high dudgeon. His first step was to repair to the tent of Mr. Hunt, and reveal the attempt that had been made to shake his faith. While he was yet talking Lisa entered the tent, under the pretext of coming to borrow a towing line. High words instantly ensued between him and Dorion, which ended by the half-breed's dealing him a blow. A quarrel in the "Indian country," however, is not to be settled with fisticuffs. Lisa immediately rushed to his boat

for a weapon. Dorion snatched up a pair of pistols belonging to Mr. Hunt, and placed himself in battle array. The noise had roused the camp, and every one pressed to know the cause. Lisa now reappeared upon the field with a knife stuck in his girdle. Mr. Breckenridge, who had tried in vain to mollify his ire, accompanied him to the scene of action. Pierre Dorion's pistols gave him the advantage, and he maintained a most warlike attitude. In the mean time, Crooks and M'Lellan had learnt the cause of the affray, and were each eager to take the quarrel into their own hands. A scene of uproar and hubbub ensued that defies description. M'Lellan would have brought his rifle into play, and settled all old and new grudges by a pull of the trigger, had he not been restrained by Mr. Hunt. That gentleman acted as moderator, endeavouring to prevent a general *mêlée*; in the midst of the brawl, however, an expression was made use of by Lisa derogatory to his own honour. In an instant, the tranquil spirit of Mr. Hunt was in a flame. He now became as eager for fight as any one on the

ground, and challenged Lisa to settle the dispute on the spot with pistols. Lisa repaired to his boat to arm himself for the deadly feud. He was followed by Messrs. Bradbury and Breckenridge, who, novices in Indian life and the "chivalry" of the frontier, had no relish for scenes of blood and brawl. By their earnest mediation the quarrel was with great difficulty brought to a close without bloodshed; but the two leaders of the rival camps separated in anger, and all personal intercourse ceased between them.

CHAPTER II.

FEATURES OF THE WILDERNESS—HERDS OF BUFFALO—ANTELOPES
—THEIR VARIETIES AND HABITS—JOHN DAY—HIS HUNTING
STRATAGEM—INTERVIEW WITH THREE ARICARAS—NEGOTIA-
TIONS BETWEEN THE RIVAL PARTIES—THE LEFTHANDED AND
THE BIG MAN, TWO ARICARA CHIEFS—ARICARA VILLAGE—
ITS INHABITANTS—CEREMONIALS ON LANDING—A COUNCIL
LODGE—GRAND CONFERENCE—SPEECH OF LISA—NEGOTIATION
FOR HORSES—SHREWD SUGGESTION OF GRAY EYES, AN ARI-
CARA CHIEF—ENCAMPMENT OF THE TRADING PARTIES.

THE rival parties now coasted along the opposite sides of the river, within sight of each other; the barges of Mr. Hunt always keeping some distance in the advance, lest Lisa should push on and get first to the Aricara village. The scenery and objects, as they proceeded, gave evidence that they were advancing deeper and deeper into the domains of savage nature.

Boundless wastes kept extending to the eye, more and more animated by herds of buffalo. Sometimes these unwieldy animals were seen moving in long procession across the silent landscape; at other times they were scattered about, singly or in groups, on the broad enamelled prairies and green acclivities, some cropping the rich pasturage, others reclining amidst the flowery herbage; the whole scene realizing in a manner the old scriptural descriptions of the vast pastoral countries of the Orient, with "cattle upon a thousand hills."

At one place the shores seemed absolutely lined with buffaloes; many were making their way across the stream, snorting, and blowing, and floundering. Numbers, in spite of every effort, were borne by the rapid current within shot of the boats, and several were killed. At another place a number were descried on the beach of a small island, under the shade of the trees, or standing in the water, like cattle, to avoid the flies and the heat of the day.

Several of the best marksmen stationed them-

selves in the bow of a barge which advanced slowly and silently, stemming the current with the aid of a broad sail and a fair breeze. The buffaloes stood gazing quietly at the barge as it approached, perfectly unconscious of their danger. The fattest of the herd was selected by the hunters, who all fired together and brought down their victim.

Besides the buffaloes they saw abundance of deer, and frequent gangs of stately elks, together with light troops of sprightly antelopes, the fleetest and most beautiful inhabitants of the prairies.

There are two kinds of antelopes in these regions, one nearly the size of the common deer, the other not much larger than a goat. Their colour is a light gray, or rather dun, slightly spotted with white; and they have small horns like those of the deer, which they never shed. Nothing can surpass the delicate and elegant finish of their limbs, in which lightness, elasticity, and strength are wonderfully combined. All the attitudes and movements of this beau-

tiful animal are graceful and picturesque; and it is altogether a fit subject for the fanciful uses of the poet, as the oft sung gazelle of the east.

Their habits are shy and capricious; they keep on the open plains, are quick to take the alarm, and bound away with a fleetness that defies pursuit. When thus skimming across a prairie in the autumn, their light gray or dun colour blends with the hue of the withered herbage, the swiftness of their motion baffles the eye, and they almost seem unsubstantial forms, driven like gossamer before the wind.

While they thus keep to the open plain and trust to their speed, they are safe; but they have a prurient curiosity that sometimes betrays them to their ruin. When they have scud for some distance and left their pursuer behind, they will suddenly stop and turn to gaze at the object of their alarm. If the pursuit is not followed up they will, after a time, yield to their inquisitive hankering, and return to the place from whence they have been frightened.

John Day, the veteran hunter already mentioned, displayed his experience and skill in

entrapping one of these beautiful animals. Taking advantage of its well known curiosity, he laid down flat among the grass, and putting his handkerchief on the end of his ramrod, waved it gently in the air. This had the effect of the fabled fascination of the rattlesnake. The antelope gazed at the mysterious object for some time at a distance, then approached timidly, pausing and reconnoitring with increased curiosity; moving round the point of attraction in a circle, but still drawing nearer and nearer, until, being within the range of the deadly rifle, he fell a victim to his curiosity.

On the 10th of June, as the party were making brisk progress with a fine breeze, they met a canoe with three Indians descending the river. They came to a parley, and brought news from the Aricara village. The war party, which had caused such alarm at the sand bar, had reached the village some days previously, announced the approach of a party of traders, and displayed with great ostentation the presents they had received from them. On further conversation with these three Indians, Mr.

Hunt learnt the real danger which he had run, when hemmed up within the sand bar. The Mandans, who were of the war party, when they saw the boat so completely entrapped and apparently within their power, had been eager for attacking it, and securing so rich a prize. The Minatarees, also, were nothing loth, feeling in some measure committed in hostility to the whites, in consequence of their tribe having killed two white men above the fort of the Missouri Fur Company. Fortunately, the Aricaras who formed the majority of the war party, proved true in their friendship to the whites and prevented any hostile act, otherwise a bloody affray, and perhaps a horrible massacre, might have ensued.

On the 11th of June, Mr. Hunt and his companions encamped near an island about six miles below the Aricara village. Mr. Lisa encamped, as usual, at no great distance; but the same sullen and jealous reserve, and non-intercourse continued between them. Shortly after pitching the tents, Mr. Breckenridge made his appearance as an ambassador from the rival

camp. He came on behalf of his companions, to arrange the manner of making their entrance into the village and of receiving the chiefs ; for every thing of the kind is a matter of grave ceremonial among the Indians.

The partners now expressed frankly their deep distrust of the intentions of Mr. Lisa, and their apprehensions, that out of the jealousy of trade, and resentment of recent disputes, he might seek to instigate the Aricaras against them. Mr. Breckenridge assured them that their suspicions were entirely groundless, and pledged himself that nothing of the kind should take place. He found it difficult, however, to remove their distrust ; the conference, therefore, ended without producing any cordial understanding ; and M^cLellan recurred to his old threat of shooting Lisa the instant he discovered any thing like treachery in his proceedings.

That night the rain fell in torrents, accompanied by thunder and lightning. The camp was deluged, and the bedding and baggage drenched. All hands embarked at an early

hour, and set forward for the village. About nine o'clock, when about half way, they met a canoe, on board of which were two Aricara dignitaries. One, a fine looking man, much above the common size, was hereditary chief of the village; he was called the Lefthanded, on account of a personal peculiarity. The other, a ferocious looking savage, was the war chief, or generalissimo; he was known by the name of the Big Man, an appellation he well deserved from his size, for he was of a gigantic frame. Both were of fairer complexion than is usual with savages.

They were accompanied by an interpreter; a French creole; one of those haphazard wights of Gallic origin, who abound upon our frontier, living among the Indians like one of their own race. He had been twenty years among the Aricaras, had a squaw and a troop of piebald children, and officiated as interpreter to the chiefs. Through this worthy organ the two dignitaries signified to Mr. Hunt their sovereign intention to oppose the further progress of the expedition up the river unless

a boat were left to trade with them. Mr. Hunt in reply, explained the object of his voyage, and his intention of debarking at their village and proceeding thence by land; and that he would willingly trade with them for a supply of horses for his journey. With this explanation they were perfectly satisfied, and putting about, steered for their village to make preparations for the reception of the strangers.

The village of the Rikaras, Aricaras, or Ricarees, for the name is thus variously written, is between the 46th and 47th parallels of north latitude, and fourteen hundred and thirty miles above the mouth of the Missouri. The party reached it about ten o'clock in the morning, but landed on the opposite side of the river, where they spread out their baggage and effects to dry. From hence they commanded an excellent view of the village. It was divided into two portions, about eighty yards apart, being inhabited by two distinct bands. The whole extended about three quarters of a mile along the river bank, and was composed of conical lodges, that looked like

so many small hillocks, being wooden frames intertwined with osier, and covered with earth. The plain beyond the village swept up into hills of considerable height, but the whole country was nearly destitute of trees. While they were regarding the village, they beheld a singular fleet coming down the river. It consisted of a number of canoes, each made of a single buffalo hide stretched on sticks, so as to form a kind of circular trough. Each one was navigated by a single squaw, who knelt in the bottom and paddled; towing after her frail bark a bundle of floating wood intended for firing. This kind of canoe is in frequent use among the Indians; the buffalo hide being readily made up into a bundle and transported on horseback; it is very serviceable in conveying baggage across the rivers.

The great number of horses grazing around the village, and scattered over the neighbouring hills and valleys, bespoke the equestrian habits of the Aricaras, who are admirable horsemen. Indeed, in the number of his horses, consists

the wealth of an Indian of the prairies; who resembles an Arab in his passion for this noble animal, and in his adroitness in the management of it.

After a time, the voice of the sovereign chief, "the Lefthanded," was heard across the river, announcing that the council lodge was preparing, and inviting the white men to come over. The river was half a mile in width, yet every word uttered by the chieftain was heard; this may be partly attributed to the distinct manner in which every syllable of the compound words in the Indian languages is articulated and accented; but in truth, a savage warrior might often rival Achilles himself for force of lungs.*

Now came the delicate point of management; how the two rival parties were to conduct their visit to the village with proper circumspection and due decorum. Neither of the leaders had spoken to each other since their quarrel. All communication had been

* Bradbury, p. 110.

by ambassadors. Seeing the jealousy entertained of Lisa, Mr. Breckenridge, in his negotiation, had arranged that a deputation from each party should cross the river at the same time, so that neither would have the first access to the ear of the Aricaras.

The distrust of Lisa, however, had increased in proportion as they approached the sphere of action, and M'Lellan in particular, kept a vigilant eye upon his motions, swearing to shoot him if he attempted to cross the river first.

About two o'clock the large boat of Mr. Hunt was manned, and he stepped on board, accompanied by Messrs. M'Kenzie and M'Lellan; Lisa at the same time embarked in his barge; the two deputations amounted in all to fourteen persons, and never was any movement of rival potentates conducted with more wary exactness.

They landed amidst a rabble crowd, and were received on the bank by the lefthanded chief, who conducted them into the village with grave courtesy; driving to the right and

left the swarms of old squaws, imp-like boys, and vagabond dogs, with which the place abounded. They wound their way between the cabins which looked like dirt-heaps huddled together without any plan, and surrounded by old palisades; all filthy in the extreme, and redolent of villanous smells.

At length they arrived at the council lodge. It was somewhat spacious, and formed of four forked trunks of trees placed upright, supporting cross beams and a frame of poles interwoven with osiers, and the whole covered with earth. A hole sunken in the centre formed the fireplace, and immediately above was a circular hole in the apex of the lodge, to let out the smoke and let in the daylight. Around the lodge were recesses for sleeping, like the berths on board ships, screened from view by curtains of dressed skins. At the upper end of the lodge was a kind of hunting and warlike trophy consisting of two buffalo heads, garishly painted, surmounted by shields, bows, quivers of arrows; and other weapons.

On entering the lodge the chief pointed to

mats or cushions which had been placed around for the strangers, and on which they seated themselves, while he placed himself on a kind of stool. An old man then came forward with the pipe of peace or good fellowship, lighted and handed it to the chief, and then falling back, squatted himself near the door. The pipe was passed from mouth to mouth, each one taking a whiff, which is equivalent to the inviolable pledge of faith, of taking salt together among the ancient Britons. The chief then made a sign to the old pipebearer, who seemed to fill, likewise, the station of herald, seneschal, and public crier, for he ascended to the top of the lodge to make proclamation. Here he took his post beside the aperture for the emission of smoke, and the admission of light; the chief dictated from within what he was to proclaim, and he bawled it forth with a force of lungs that resounded over all the village. In this way he summoned the warriors and great men to council; every now and then reporting progress to his chief through the hole in the roof.

In a little while the braves and sages began

to enter one by one as their names were called or announced, emerging from under the buffalo robe suspended over the entrance instead of a door, stalking across the lodge to the skins placed on the floor and crouching down on them in silence. In this way twenty entered and took their seats, forming an assemblage worthy of the pencil; for the Aricaras are a noble race of men, large and well formed, and maintain a savage grandeur and gravity of demeanour in their solemn ceremonials.

All being seated, the old seneschal prepared the pipe of ceremony or council and having lit it, handed it to the chief. He inhaled the sacred smoke, gave a puff upward to the heaven, then downward to the earth, then towards the east; after this it was as usual passed from mouth to mouth, each holding it respectfully until his neighbour had taken several whiffs; and now the grand council was considered as opened in due form.

The chief made an harangue welcoming the white men to his village, and expressing his happiness in taking them by the hand as

friends; but at the same time complaining of the poverty of himself and his people; the usual prelude among Indians to begging or hard bargaining.

Lisa rose to reply, and the eyes of Hunt and his companions were eagerly turned upon him, those of M'Lellan glaring like a basilisk's. He began by the usual expressions of friendship, and then proceeded to explain the object of his own party. Those persons, however, said he, pointing to Mr. Hunt and his companions, are of a different party, and are quite distinct in their views; but, added he, though we are separate parties we make but one common cause when the safety of either is concerned. Any injury or insult offered to them I shall consider as done to myself, and will resent it accordingly. I trust, therefore, that you will treat them with the same friendship that you have always manifested for me, doing every thing in your power to serve them and to help them on their way. The speech of Lisa, delivered with an air of frankness and sincerity,

agreeably surprised and disappointed the rival party.

Mr. Hunt then spoke declaring the object of his journey to the great Salt lake beyond the mountains, and that he should want horses for the purpose, for which he was ready to trade, having brought with him plenty of goods. Both he and Lisa concluded their speeches by making presents of tobacco.

The Lefthanded chieftain in reply promised his friendship and aid to the new comers, and welcomed them to his village. He added that he had not the number of horses to spare that Mr. Hunt required, and expressed a doubt whether they should be able to part with any. Upon this, another chieftain, called Gray Eyes, made a speech and declared that they could readily supply Mr. Hunt with all the horses he might want, since if they had not enough in the village, they could easily steal more. This honest expedient immediately removed the main difficulty; but the chief deferred all trading for a day or two, until he

should have time to consult with his subordinate chiefs, as to market rates; for the principal chief of a village, in conjunction with his council, usually fixes the prices at which articles shall be bought and sold, and to them the village must conform.

The council now broke up. Mr. Hunt transferred his camp across the river at a little distance below the village and the lefthanded chief placed some of his warriors as a guard to prevent the intrusion of any of his people. The camp was pitched on the river bank just above the boats. The tents and the men wrapt in their blankets and bivouacking on skins in the open air, surrounded the baggage at night. Four sentinels also kept watch within sight of each other outside of the camp until midnight, when they were relieved by four others who mounted guard until daylight. Mr. Lisa encamped near to Mr. Hunt, between him and the village.

The speech of Mr. Lisa in the council had produced a pacific effect in the encampment. Though the sincerity of his friendship and

good will towards the new company still remained matter of doubt, he was no longer suspected of an intention to play false. The intercourse between the two leaders was, therefore, resumed, and the affairs of both parties went on harmoniously.

CHAPTER III.

AN INDIAN HORSE FAIR—LOVE OF THE INDIANS FOR HORSES—
SCENES IN THE ARICARA VILLAGE—INDIAN HOSPITALITY—
DUTIES OF INDIAN WOMEN—GAME HABITS OF THE MEN—THEIR
INDOLENCE—LOVE OF GOSSIPING—RUMOURS OF LURKING
ENEMIES—SCOUTS—AN ALARM—A SALLYING FORTH—INDIAN
DOGS—RETURN OF A HORSE-STEALING PARTY—AN INDIAN DEPU-
TATION—FRESH ALARMS—RETURN OF A SUCCESSFUL WAR PARTY
—DRESS OF THE ARICARAS—INDIAN TOILET—TRIUMPHAL
ENTRY OF THE WAR PARTY—MEETINGS OF RELATIONS AND
FRIENDS—INDIAN SENSIBILITY—MEETING OF A WOUNDED
WARRIOR AND HIS MOTHER—FESTIVITIES AND LAMENTATIONS.

A TRADE now commenced with the Ari-
caras under the regulation and supervision
of their two chieftains. Lisa sent a part of
his goods to the lodge of the lefthanded
dignitary, and Mr. Hunt established his
mart in the lodge of the Big Man. The
village soon presented the appearance of a
busy fair; and as horses were in demand, the
purlieus and the adjacent plain were like the

vicinity of a Tartar encampment; horses were put through all their paces, and horsemen were careering about with that dexterity and grace for which the Aricaras are noted. As soon as a horse was purchased, his tail was cropped, a sure mode of distinguishing him from the horses of the tribe; for the Indians disdain to practise this absurd, barbarous, and indecent mutilation, invented by some mean and vulgar mind, insensible to the merit and perfections of the animal. On the contrary, the Indian horses are suffered to remain in every respect the superb and beautiful animals which nature formed them.

The wealth of an Indian of the far west consists principally in his horses, of which each chief and warrior possesses a great number, so that the plains about an Indian village or encampment are covered with them. These form objects of traffic, or objects of depredation, and in this way pass from tribe to tribe over great tracts of country. The horses owned by the Aricaras are, for the most part, of the wild stock of the prairies; some, however, had been

obtained from the Poncas, Pawnees, and other tribes to the southwest, who had stolen them from the Spaniards in the course of horse-stealing expeditions into the Mexican territories. These were to be known by being branded; a Spanish mode of marking horses not practised by the Indians.

As the Aricaras were meditating another expedition against their enemies the Sioux, the articles of traffic most in demand were guns, tomahawks, scalping knives, powder, ball, and other munitions of war. The price of a horse, as regulated by the chiefs, was commonly ten dollars' worth of goods at first cost. To supply the demand thus suddenly created, parties of young men and braves had sallied forth on expeditions to steal horses; a species of service among the Indians which takes precedence of hunting, and is considered a department of honourable warfare.

While the leaders of the expedition were actively engaged in preparing for the approaching journey, those who had accompanied it for curiosity or amusement, found ample matter for

observation in the village and its inhabitants. Wherever they went they were kindly entertained. If they entered a lodge, the buffalo robe was spread before the fire for them to sit down; the pipe was brought, and while the master of the lodge conversed with his guests, the squaw put the earthen vessel over the fire, well filled with dried buffalo meat and pounded corn; for the Indian in his native state, before he has mingled much with white men, and acquired their sordid habits, has the hospitality of the Arab: never does a stranger enter his door without having food placed before him; and never is the food thus furnished made a matter of traffic.

The life of an Indian when at home in his village is a life of indolence and amusement. To the woman is consigned the labours of the household and the field; she arranges the lodge; brings wood for the fire; cooks; jerks venison and buffalo meat; dresses the skins of the animals killed in the chase; cultivates the little patch of maize, pumpkins, and pulse, which furnishes a great part of their provisions. Their

time for repose and recreation is at sunset, when the labours of the day being ended, they gather together to amuse themselves with petty games, or to hold gossiping convocations on the tops of their lodges.

As to the Indian, he is a game animal, not to be degraded by useful or menial toil. It is enough that he exposes himself to the hardships of the chase and the perils of war; that he brings home food for his family, and watches and fights for its protection. Every thing else is beneath his attention. When at home, he attends only to his weapons and his horses, preparing the means of future exploit. Or he engages with his comrades in games of dexterity, agility, and strength; or in gambling games in which every thing is put at hazard, with a recklessness seldom witnessed in civilized life.

A great part of the idle leisure of the Indians when at home, is passed in groups, squatted together on the bank of a river, on the top of a mound on the prairie, or on the roof of one of their earth-covered lodges, talking over the news of the day, the affairs of the tribe, the

events and exploits of their last hunting or fighting expedition; or listening to the stories of old times told by some veteran chronicler; resembling a group of our village quidnuncs and politicians, listening to the prosings of some superannuated oracle, or discussing the contents of an ancient newspaper.

As to the Indian women, they are far from complaining of their lot. On the contrary, they would despise their husbands could they stoop to any menial office, and would think it conveyed an imputation upon their own conduct. It is the worst insult one virago can cast upon another in a moment of altercation. "Infamous woman!" will she cry, "I have seen your husband carrying wood into his lodge to make the fire. Where was his squaw, that he should be obliged to make a woman of himself?"

Mr. Hunt and his fellow travellers had not been many days at the Aricara village, when rumours began to circulate that the Sioux had followed them up, and that a war party, four or five hundred in number, were lurking some-

where in the neighbourhood. These rumours produced much embarrassment in the camp. The white hunters were deterred from venturing forth in quest of game, neither did the leaders think it proper to expose them to such risk. The Aricaras, too, who had suffered greatly in their wars with this cruel and ferocious tribe, were roused to increased vigilance, and stationed mounted scouts upon the neighbouring hills. This, however, is a general precaution among the tribes of the prairies. Those immense plains present a horizon like the ocean, so that any object of importance can be descried afar, and information communicated to a great distance. The scouts are stationed on the hills, therefore, to look out both for game and for enemies, and are, in a manner, living telegraphs conveying their intelligence by concerted signs. If they wish to give notice of a herd of buffalo in the plain beyond, they gallop backwards and forwards abreast, on the summit of the hill. If they perceive an enemy at hand, they gallop to and fro, crossing each other; at sight of which, the whole village flies to arms.

Such an alarm was given in the afternoon of the 15th. Four scouts were seen crossing and recrossing each other at full gallop, on the summit of a hill about two miles distant down the river. The cry was up that the Sioux were coming. In an instant the village was in an uproar. Men, women, and children were all brawling and shouting; dogs barking, yelping, and howling. Some of the warriors ran for the horses to gather and drive them in from the prairie, some for their weapons. As fast as they could arm and equip they sallied forth; some on horseback, some on foot. Some hastily arrayed in their war dress, with coronets of fluttering feathers, and their bodies smeared with paint; others naked, and only furnished with the weapons they had snatched up. The women and children gathered on the tops of the lodges, and heightened the confusion of the scene by their vociferation. Old men who could no longer bear arms took similar stations, and harangued the warriors as they passed, exhorting them to valorous deeds. Some of the veterans took arms themselves, and sallied

forth with tottering steps. In this way, the savage chivalry of the village, to the number of five hundred, poured forth, helter skelter, riding and running, with hideous yells and war-whoops, like so many bedlamites or demoniacs let loose.

After a while the tide of war rolled back, but with far less uproar. Either it had been a false alarm, or the enemy had retreated on finding themselves discovered, and quiet was restored to the village. The white hunter continuing to be fearful of ranging this dangerous neighbourhood, fresh provisions began to be scarce in the camp. As a substitute, therefore, for venison and buffalo meat, the travellers had to purchase a number of dogs to be shot and cooked for the supply of the camp. Fortunately, however chary the Indians might be of their horses, they were liberal of their dogs. In fact, these animals swarm about an Indian village as they do about a Turkish town. Not a family but has two or three dozen belonging to it, of all sizes and colours; some, of a superior breed, are used for hunting; others, to draw the

sledge, while others, of a mongrel breed, and idle vagabond nature, are fattened for food. They are supposed to be descended from the wolf, and retain something of his savage but cowardly temper, howling rather than barking; showing their teeth and snarling on the slightest provocation, but sneaking away on the least attack.

The excitement of the village continued from day to day. On the day following the alarm just mentioned, several parties arrived from different directions, and were met and conducted by some of the braves to the council lodge, where they reported the events and success of their expeditions, whether of war or hunting; which news was afterwards promulgated throughout the village, by certain old men who acted as heralds or town criers. Among the parties which arrived was one that had been among the Snake nation stealing horses, and returned crowned with success. As they passed in triumph through the village they were cheered by the men, women, and children, collected as usual on the tops of the lodges,

and were exhorted by the Nestors of the village to be generous in their dealings with the white men.

The evening was spent in feasting and rejoicing among the relations of the successful warriors; but sounds of grief and wailing were heard from the hills adjacent to the village: the lamentations of women who had lost some relative in the foray.

An Indian village is subject to continual agitations and excitements. The next day arrived a deputation of braves from the Cheyenne or Shienne nation; a broken tribe, cut up, like the Aricaras, by wars with the Sioux, and driven to take refuge among the Black hills, near the sources of the Cheyenne river, from which they derive their name. One of these deputies was magnificently arrayed in a buffalo robe, on which various figures were fancifully embroidered with split quills dyed red and yellow; and the whole was fringed with the slender hoofs of young fawns, that rattled as he walked.

The arrival of this deputation was the signal for another of those ceremonials which occupy

so much of Indian life; for no being is more courtly and punctilious, and more observant of etiquette and formality than an American savage.

The object of the deputation was to give notice of an intended visit of the Shienne (or Cheyenne) tribe to the Aricara village in the course of fifteen days. To this visit Mr. Hunt looked forward, to procure additional horses for his journey; all his bargaining being ineffectual in obtaining a sufficient supply from the Aricaras. Indeed nothing could prevail upon the latter to part with their prime horses, which had been trained to buffalo hunting.

As Mr. Hunt would have to abandon his boats at this place, Mr. Lisa now offered to purchase them, and such of his merchandise as was superfluous, and to pay him in horses, to be obtained at a fort belonging to the Missouri Fur Company situated at the Mandan villages, about a hundred and fifty miles further up the river. A bargain was promptly made, and Mr. Lisa and Mr. Crooks, with several companions, set out for the fort to procure the horses.

They returned, after upwards of a fortnight's absence, bringing with them the stipulated number of horses. Still the cavalry was not sufficiently numerous to convey the party and the baggage and merchandise, and a few days more were required to complete the arrangements for the journey.

On the 9th of July, just before daybreak, a great noise and vociferation was heard in the village. This being the usual Indian hour of attack and surprise, and the Sioux being known to be in the neighbourhood, the camp was instantly on the alert. As the day broke Indians were descried in considerable number on the bluffs, three or four miles down the river. The noise and agitation in the village continued. The tops of the lodges were crowded with the inhabitants, all earnestly looking towards the hills, and keeping up a vehement chattering. Presently an Indian warrior galloped past the camp towards the village, and in a little while the legions began to pour forth.

The truth of the matter was now ascertained. The Indians upon the distant hills were three

hundred Aricara braves, returning from a foray. They had met the war party of Sioux who had been so long hovering about the neighbourhood, had fought with them the day before, killed several, and defeated the rest with the loss of but two or three of their own men and about a dozen wounded; and they were now halting at a distance until their comrades in the village should come forth to meet them, and swell the parade of their triumphal entry. The warrior who had galloped past the camp was the leader of the party hastening home to give tidings of his victory.

Preparations were now made for this great martial ceremony. All the finery and equipments of the warriors were sent forth to them, that they might appear to the greatest advantage. Those, too, who had remained at home, tasked their wardrobes and toilets to do honour to the procession.

The Aricaras generally go naked, but, like all savages, they have their gala dress of which they are not a little vain. This usually consists of a gay surcoat and leggings of the dressed

skin of the antelope, resembling chamois leather, and embroidered with porcupine quills brilliantly dyed. A buffalo robe is thrown over the right shoulder, and across the left is slung a quiver of arrows. They wear gay coronets of plumes, particularly those of the swan; but the feathers of the black eagle are considered the most worthy, being a sacred bird among the Indian warriors. He who has killed an enemy in his own land, is entitled to drag at his heels a fox-skin attached to each moccasins; and he who has slain a grizzly bear, wears a necklace of his claws, the most glorious trophy that a hunter can exhibit.

An Indian toilet is an operation of some toil and trouble; the warrior often has to paint himself from head to foot, and is extremely capricious and difficult to please, as to the hideous distribution of streaks and colours. A great part of the morning, therefore, passed away before there were any signs of the distant pageant. In the mean time a profound stillness reigned over the village. Most of the inhabitants had gone forth; others remained in mute

expectation. All sports and occupations were suspended, excepting that in the lodges the painstaking squaws were silently busied preparing the repasts for the warriors.

It was near noon that a mingled sound of voices and rude music faintly heard from a distance, gave notice that the procession was on the march. The old men and such of the squaws as could leave their employments hastened forth to meet it. In a little while it emerged from behind a hill, and had a wild and picturesque appearance as it came moving over the summit in measured step, and to the cadence of songs and savage instruments; the warlike standards and trophies flaunting aloft, and the feathers, and paint, and silver ornament of the warriors glaring and glittering in the sunshine.

The pageant had really something chivalrous in its arrangement. The Aricaras are divided into several bands, each bearing the name of some animal or bird, as the buffalo, the bear, the dog, the pheasant. The present party consisted of four of these bands, one of which was

the dog, the most esteemed in war, being composed of young men under thirty, and noted for prowess. It is engaged on the most desperate occasions. The bands marched in separate bodies under their several leaders. The warriors on foot came first, in platoons of ten or twelve abreast; then the horsemen. Each band bore as an ensign a spear or bow decorated with beads, porcupine quills and painted feathers. Each bore its trophies of scalps, elevated on poles, their long black locks streaming in the wind. Each was accompanied by its rude music and minstrelsy. In this way the procession extended nearly a quarter of a mile. The warriors were variously armed, some few with guns, others with bows and arrows, and war clubs, all had shields of buffalo hide, a kind of defence generally used by the Indians of the open prairies, who have not the covert of trees and forests to protect them. They were painted in the most savage style. Some had the stamp of a red hand across their mouths, a sign that they had drunk the life-blood of a foe!

As they drew near to the village the old men and the women began to meet them, and now a scene ensued that proved the fallacy of the old fable of Indian apathy and stoicism. Parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters met with the most rapturous expressions of joy ; while wailings and lamentations were heard from the relatives of the killed and wounded. The procession, however, continued on with slow and measured step, in cadence to the solemn chant, and the warriors maintained their fixed and stern demeanour.

Between two of the principal chiefs rode a young warrior who had distinguished himself in the battle. He was severely wounded, so as with difficulty to keep on his horse ; but he preserved a serene and steadfast countenance, as if perfectly unharmed. His mother had heard of his condition. She broke through the throng, and rushing up, threw her arms around him and wept aloud. He kept up the spirit and demeanour of a warrior to the last, but expired shortly after he had reached his home.

The village was now a scene of the utmost

festivity and triumph. The banners, and trophies, and scalps, and painted shields were elevated on poles near the lodges. There were war-feasts, and scalp-dances, with warlike songs and savage music; all the inhabitants were arrayed in their festal dresses; while the old heralds went round from lodge to lodge, promulgating with loud voices the events of the battle and the exploits of the various warriors.

Such was the boisterous revelry of the village; but sounds of another kind were heard on the surrounding hills; piteous wailings of the women, who had retired thither to mourn in darkness and solitude for those who had fallen in battle. There the poor mother of the youthful warrior who had returned home in triumph but to die, gave full vent to the anguish of a mother's heart. How much does this custom among the Indian women of repairing to the hill tops in the night, and pouring forth their wailings for the dead, call to mind the beautiful and affecting passage of scripture, "In Rama

was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.”

CHAPTER IV.

WILDERNESS OF THE FAR WEST — GREAT AMERICAN DESERT —
PARCHED SEASONS—BLACK HILLS—ROCKY MOUNTAINS—WAN-
DERING AND PREDATORY HORDES—SPECULATIONS ON WHAT
MAY BE THE FUTURE POPULATION—APPREHENDED DANGERS—
A PLOT TO DESERT—ROSE THE INTERPRETER—HIS SINISTER
CHARACTER—DEPARTURE FROM THE ARICARA VILLAGE.

WHILE Mr. Hunt was diligently preparing for his arduous journey, some of his men began to lose heart at the perilous prospect before them; but, before we accuse them of want of spirit, it is proper to consider the nature of the wilderness into which they were about to adventure. It was a region almost as vast and trackless as the ocean, and, at the time of which we treat, but little known, excepting through the

vague accounts of Indian hunters. A part of their route would lay across an immense tract stretching north and south for hundreds of miles along the foot of the Rocky mountains, and drained by the tributary streams of the Missouri and the Mississippi. This region, which resembles one of the immeasurable steppes of Asia, has not inaptly been termed "the great American desert." It spreads forth into undulating and treeless plains, and desolate sandy wastes, wearisome to the eye from their extent and monotony, and which are supposed by geologists, to have formed the ancient floor of the ocean, countless ages since, when its primeval waves beat against the granite bases of the Rocky mountains.

It is a land where no man permanently abides; for, in certain seasons of the year there is no food either for the hunter or his steed. The herbage is parched and withered; the brooks and streams are dried up; the buffalo, the elk, and deer have wandered to distant parts, keeping within the verge of expiring verdure, and leaving behind them a vast unin-

habited solitude, seamed by ravines, the beds of former torrents, but now serving only to tantalize and increase the thirst of the traveller.

Occasionally the monotony of this vast wilderness is interrupted by mountainous belts of sand and limestone, broken into confused masses; with precipitous cliffs and yawning ravines, looking like the ruins of a world; or is traversed by lofty and barren ridges of rock, almost impassable, like those denominated the Black hills. Beyond these rise the stern barriers of the Rocky mountains, the limits, as it were, of the Atlantic world. The rugged defiles and deep valleys of this vast chain form sheltering places for restless and ferocious bands of savages, many of them the remnants of tribes, once inhabitants of the prairies, but broken up by war and violence, and who carry into their mountain haunts the fierce passions and reckless habits of desperadoes.

Such is the nature of this immense wilderness of the far west; which apparently defies cultivation, and the habitation of civilized life.

Some portions of it along the rivers may partially be subdued by agriculture, others may form vast pastoral tracts, like those of the east; but it is to be feared that a great part of it will form a lawless interval between the abodes of civilized man, like the wastes of the ocean or the deserts of Arabia; and, like them, be subject to the depredations of the marauder. Here may spring up new and mongrel races, like new formations in geology, the amalgamation of the "debris" and "abrasions" of former races, civilized and savage; the remains of broken and almost extinguished tribes; the descendants of wandering hunters and trappers; of fugitives from the Spanish and American frontiers; of adventurers and desperadoes of every class and country, yearly ejected from the bosom of society into the wilderness. We are contributing incessantly to swell this singular and heterogeneous cloud of wild population that is to hang about our frontier, by the transfer of whole tribes of savages from the east of the Mississippi to the great wastes of the far west. Many of these

bear with them the smart of real or fancied injuries; many consider themselves expatriated beings wrongfully exiled from their hereditary homes, and the sepulchres of their fathers, and cherish a deep and abiding animosity against the race that has dispossessed them. Some may gradually become pastoral hordes, like those rude and migratory people, half shepherd, half warrior, who, with their flocks and herds, roam the plains of upper Asia; but, others, it is to be apprehended, will become predatory bands, mounted on the fleet steeds of the prairies, with the open plains for their marauding grounds, and the mountains for their retreats and lurking places. Here they may resemble those great hordes of the north, "Gog and Magog with their bands," that haunted the gloomy imaginations of the prophets. "A great company and a mighty host, all riding upon horses, and warring upon those nations which were at rest, and dwelt peaceably, and had gotten cattle and goods."

The Spaniards changed the whole character and habits of the Indians when they brought

the horse among them. In Chili, Tucuman and other parts, it has converted them, we are told, into Tartar-like tribes, and enabled them to keep the Spaniards out of their country, and even to make it dangerous for them to venture far from their towns and settlements. Are we not in danger of producing some such state of things in the boundless regions of the far west? That these are not mere fanciful and extravagant suggestions we have sufficient proofs in the dangers already experienced by the traders to the Spanish mart of Santa Fé, and to the distant posts of the fur companies. These are obliged to proceed in armed caravans, and are subject to murderous attacks from bands of Pawnees, Camanches and Blackfeet, that come scouring upon them in their weary march across the plains, or lie in wait for them among the passes of the mountains.

We are wandering, however, into excursive speculations, when our intention was merely to give an idea of the nature of the wilderness which Mr. Hunt was about to traverse; and

which at that time was far less known than at present; though it still remains in a great measure an unknown land. We cannot be surprised, therefore, that some of the least resolute of his party should feel dismay at the thoughts of adventuring into this perilous wilderness under the uncertain guidance of three hunters, who had merely passed once through the country and might have forgotten the landmarks. Their apprehensions were aggravated by some of Lisa's followers, who, not being engaged in the expedition, took a mischievous pleasure in exaggerating its dangers. They painted in strong colours, to the poor Canadian voyageurs, the risk they run of perishing with hunger and thirst; of being cut off by war-parties of the Sioux who scoured the plains; of having their horses stolen by the Upsarokas or Crows, who infested the skirts of the Rocky mountains; or of being butchered by the Blackfeet, who lurked among the defiles. In a word, there was little chance of their getting alive across the mountains; and even if they did, those

three guides knew nothing of the howling wilderness that lay beyond.

The apprehensions thus awakened in the minds of some of the men came well nigh proving detrimental to the expedition. Some of them determined to desert, and to make their way back to St. Louis. They accordingly purloined several weapons and a barrel of gunpowder, as ammunition for their enterprise, and buried them in the river bank, intending to seize one of the boats and make off in the night. Fortunately their plot was overheard by John Day, the Kentuckian, and communicated to the partners, who took quiet and effectual means to frustrate it.

The dangers to be apprehended from the Crow Indians had not been overrated by the camp gossips. These savages, through whose mountain haunts the party would have to pass, were noted for daring and excursive habits, and great dexterity in horse stealing. Mr. Hunt, therefore, considered himself fortunate in having met with a man who might be of great use to him in any intercourse he might have with the

tribe. This was a wandering individual named Edward Rose, whom he had picked up somewhere on the Missouri—one of those anomalous beings found on the frontier, who seem to have neither kin nor country. He had lived some time among the Crows, so as to become acquainted with their language and customs; and was, withal, a dogged, sullen, silent fellow, with a sinister aspect, and more of the savage than the civilized man in his appearance. He was engaged to serve in general as a hunter, but as guide and interpreter when they should reach the country of the Crows.

On the 18th of July, Mr. Hunt took up his line of march by land from the Aricara village, leaving Mr. Lisa and Mr. Nuttall there, where they intended to await the expected arrival of Mr. Henry from the Rocky mountains. As to Messrs. Bradbury and Breckenbridge, they had departed some days previously, on a voyage down the river to St. Louis, with a detachment from Mr. Lisa's party. With all his exertions, Mr. Hunt had been unable to obtain a sufficient number of horses for the accommodation of all

his people. His cavalcade consisted of eighty-two horses, most of them heavily laden with Indian goods, beaver traps, ammunition, Indian corn, corn meal, and other necessaries. Each of the partners was mounted, and a horse was allotted to the interpreter, Pierre Dorion, for the transportation of his luggage and his two children. His squaw, for the most part of the time, trudged on foot, like the residue of the party; nor did any of the men show more patience and fortitude than this resolute woman in enduring fatigue and hardship.

The veteran trappers and voyageurs of Lisa's party shook their heads as their comrades set out, and took leave of them as of doomed men; and even Lisa himself, gave it as his opinion, after the travellers had departed, that they would never reach the shores of the Pacific, but would either perish with hunger in the wilderness, or be cut off by the savages.

CHAPTER V.

SUMMER WEATHER OF THE PRAIRIES—PURITY OF THE ATMOSPHERE—CANADIANS ON THE MARCH—SICKNESS IN THE CAMP—BIG RIVER—VULGAR NOMENCLATURE—SUGGESTIONS ABOUT THE ORIGINAL INDIAN NAMES—CAMP OF CHEYENNES—TRADE FOR HORSES—CHARACTER OF THE CHEYENNES—THEIR HORSEMANSHIP—HISTORICAL ANECDOTES OF THE TRIBE.

THE course taken by Mr. Hunt was at first to the northwest, but soon turned and kept generally to the southwest, to avoid the country infested by the Blackfeet. His route took him across some of the tributary streams of the Missouri, and over immense prairies, bounded only by the horizon, and destitute of trees. It was now the height of summer, and these naked plains would be intolerable to the traveller were it not for the breezes which sweep

over them during the fervour of the day, bringing with them tempering airs from the distant mountains. To the prevalence of these breezes, and to the want of all leafy covert, may we also attribute the freedom from those flies and other insects so tormenting to man and beast during the summer months, in the lower plains, which are bordered and interspersed with woodland.

The monotony of these immense landscapes, also, would be as wearisome as that of the ocean, were it not relieved in some degree by the purity and elasticity of the atmosphere, and the beauty of the heavens. The sky has that delicious blue for which the sky of Italy is renowned; the sun shines with a splendour, unobscured by any cloud or vapour, and a starlight night on the prairies is glorious. This purity and elasticity of atmosphere increases as the traveller approaches the mountains, and gradually rises into the more elevated prairies.

On the second day of the journey, Mr. Hunt arranged the party into small and convenient messes, distributing among them the camp kettles. The encampments at night were as

before; some sleeping under tents, and others bivouacking in the open air. The Canadians proved as patient of toil and hardship on the land as on the water; indeed, nothing could surpass the patience and good humour of these men upon the march. They were the cheerful drudges of the party, loading and unloading the horses, pitching the tents, making the fires, cooking; in short, performing all those household and menial offices which the Indians usually assign to the squaws; and, like the squaws, they left all the hunting and fighting to others. A Canadian has but little affection for the exercise of the rifle.

The progress of the party was but slow for the first few days. Some of the men were indisposed; Mr. Crooks, especially, was so unwell that he could not keep on his horse. A rude kind of litter was, therefore, prepared for him, consisting of two long poles, fixed, one on each side of two horses, with a matting between them, on which he reclined at full length, and was protected from the sun by a canopy of boughs.

On the evening of the 23d (July) they encamped on the banks of what they term Big river; and here we cannot but pause to lament the stupid, common-place, and often ribald names entailed upon the rivers and other features of the great west, by traders and settlers. As the aboriginal tribes of these magnificent regions are yet in existence, the Indian names might easily be recovered; which, besides being in general more sonorous and musical, would remain mementoes of the primitive lords of the soil, of whom in a little while scarce any traces will be left. Indeed, it is to be wished that the whole of our country could be rescued, as much as possible, from the wretched nomenclature inflicted upon it, by ignorant and vulgar minds; and this might be done, in a great degree, by restoring the Indian names, wherever significant and euphonious. As there appears to be a spirit of research abroad in respect to our aboriginal antiquities, we would suggest, as a worthy object of enterprise, a map, or maps, of every part of our country, giving the Indian names wherever they could be ascertained.

Whoever achieves such a task worthily, will leave a monument to his own reputation.

To return from this digression. As the travellers were now in a country abounding with buffalo, they remained for several days encamped upon the banks of Big river, to obtain a supply of provisions, and to give the invalids time to recruit.

On the second day of their sojourn, as Ben Jones, John Day and others of the hunters were in pursuit of game, they came upon an Indian camp on the open prairie, near to a small stream which ran through a ravine. The tents or lodges were of dressed buffalo skins, sewn together and stretched on tapering pine poles, joined at top, but radiating at bottom, so as to form a circle capable of admitting fifty persons. Numbers of horses were grazing in the neighbourhood of the camp, or straying at large in the prairie; a sight most acceptable to the hunters. After reconnoitring the camp for some time, they ascertained it to belong to a band of Cheyenne Indians, the same that had sent a deputation to the Aricaras. They re-

ceived the hunters in the most friendly manner; invited them to their lodges, which were more cleanly than Indian lodges are prone to be, and set food before them with true uncivilized hospitality. Several of them accompanied the hunters back to the camp, when a trade was immediately opened. The Cheyennes were astonished and delighted to find a convoy of goods and trinkets thus brought into the very heart of the prairie; while Mr. Hunt and his companions were overjoyed to have an opportunity of obtaining a further supply of horses from these equestrian savages.

During a fortnight that the travellers lingered at this place, their encampment was continually thronged by the Cheyennes. They were a civil, well-behaved people, cleanly in their persons, and decorous in their habits. The men were tall, straight, and vigorous, with aquiline noses, and high cheek bones. Some were almost as naked as ancient statues, and might have stood as models for a statuary; others had leggins and mocassins of deer skin, and buffalo robes, which they threw gracefully over

their shoulders. In a little while, however, they began to appear in more gorgeous array, tricked out in the finery obtained from the white men ; bright cloths ; brass rings ; beads of various colours, and happy was he who could render himself hideous with vermilion.

The travellers had frequent occasion to admire the skill and grace with which these Indians managed their horses. Some of them made a striking display when mounted ; themselves and their steeds decorated in gala style ; for the Indians often bestow more finery upon their horses than upon themselves. Some would hang round the necks, or rather on the breasts of their horses, the most precious ornaments they had obtained from the white men ; others interwove feathers in their manes and tails. The Indian horses, too, appear to have an attachment to their wild riders, and indeed it is said that the horses of the prairies readily distinguish an Indian from a white man by the smell, and give a preference to the former. Yet the Indians, in general, are hard riders,

and, however they may value their horses, treat them with great roughness and neglect. Occasionally the Cheyennes joined the white hunters in pursuit of the elk and buffalo ; and when in the ardour of the chase, spared neither themselves nor their steeds, scouring the prairies at full speed, and plunging down precipices and frightful ravines that threatened the necks of both horse and horseman. The Indian steed, well trained to the chase, seems as mad as his rider, and pursues the game as eagerly as if it were his natural prey, on the flesh of which he was to banquet.

The history of the Cheyennes is that of many of those wandering tribes of the prairies. They were the remnant of a once powerful people called the Shaways, inhabiting a branch of the Red river which flows into Lake Winnipeg. Every Indian tribe has some rival tribe with which it wages implacable hostility. The deadly enemies of the Shaways were the Sioux, who, after a long course of warfare, proved too powerful for them, and drove them across the Mis-

souri. They again took root near the Warricame creek, and established themselves there in a fortified village.

The Sioux still followed them with deadly animosity; dislodged them from their village, and compelled them to take refuge in the Black hills, near the upper waters of the Sheyenne or Cheyenne river. Here they lost even their name, and became known among the French colonists by that of the river they frequented.

The heart of the tribe was now broken; its numbers were greatly thinned by their harassing wars. They no longer attempted to establish themselves in any permanent abode that might be an object of attack to their cruel foes. They gave up the cultivation of the fruits of the earth, and became a wandering tribe, subsisting by the chase, and following the buffalo in its migrations.

Their only possessions were horses, which they caught on the prairies, or reared, or captured on predatory incursions into the Mexican territories, as has already been mentioned.

With some of these they repaired once a year to the Aricara villages, exchanged them for corn, beans, pumpkins, and articles of European merchandise, and then returned into the heart of the prairies.

Such are the fluctuating fortunes of these savage nations. War, famine, pestilence, together or singly, bring down their strength and thin their numbers. Whole tribes are rooted up from their native places, wander for a time about these immense regions, become amalgamated with other tribes, or disappear from the face of the earth. There appears to be a tendency to extinction among all the savage nations; and this tendency would seem to have been in operation among the aboriginals of this country long before the advent of the white men, if we may judge from the traces and traditions of ancient populousness in regions which were silent and deserted at the time of the discovery; and from the mysterious and perplexing vestiges of unknown races, predecessors of those found in actual possession, and who must

long since have become gradually extinguished or been destroyed. The whole history of the aboriginal population of this country, however, is an enigma, and a grand one—will it ever be solved?

CHAPTER VI.

NEW DISTRIBUTION OF HORSES—SECRET INFORMATION OF TREASON IN THE CAMP—ROSE THE INTERPRETER, HIS PERFIDIOUS CHARACTER—HIS PLOTS—ANECDOTES OF THE CROW INDIANS—NOTORIOUS HORSE STEALERS—SOME ACCOUNT OF ROSE -- A DESPERADO OF THE FRONTIER.

ON the 6th of August the travellers bade farewell to the friendly band of Cheyennes, and resumed their journey. As they had obtained thirty-six additional horses by their recent traffic, Mr. Hunt made a new arrangement. The baggage was made up in smaller loads. A horse was allotted to each of the six prime hunters, and others were distributed among the voyageurs, a horse for every two, so that they could ride and walk alternately. Mr. Crooks being still too feeble to mount the saddle, was carried on a litter.

Their march this day lay among singular hills and knolls of an indurated red earth, resembling brick, about the bases of which were scattered pumice stones and cinders, the whole bearing traces of the action of fire. In the evening they encamped on a branch of Big river.

They were now out of the tract of country infested by the Sioux, and had advanced such a distance into the interior, that Mr. Hunt no longer felt apprehensive of the desertion of any of his men. He was doomed, however, to experience new cause of anxiety. As he was seated in his tent after nightfall, one of the men came to him privately, and informed him that there was mischief brewing in the camp. Edward Rose, the interpreter, whose sinister looks we have already mentioned, was denounced by this secret informer as a designing, treacherous scoundrel, who was tampering with the fidelity of certain of the men, and instigating them to a flagrant piece of treason. In the course of a few days they would arrive at the mountainous district infested by the Upsarokas or Crows, the tribe among which Rose was to officiate as

interpreter. His plan was that several of the men should join with him, when in that neighbourhood, in carrying off a number of the horses with their packages of goods, and deserting to those savages. He assured them of good treatment among the Crows, the principal chiefs and warriors of whom he knew: they would soon become great men among them, and have the finest women, and the daughters of the chiefs, for wives; and the horses and goods they carried off would make them rich for life.

The intelligence of this treachery on the part of Rose gave much disquiet to Mr. Hunt, for he knew not how far it might be effective among his men. He had already had proofs that several of them were disaffected to the enterprise, and loath to cross the mountains. He knew also that savage life had charms for many of them, especially the Canadians, who were prone to intermarry and domesticate themselves among the Indians.

And here a word or two concerning the Crows may be of service to the reader, as they

will figure occasionally in the succeeding narration.

The tribe consists of four bands, which have their nestling places in fertile, well wooded valleys, lying among the Rocky mountains, and watered by the Big Horse river and its tributary streams; but, though these are properly their homes, where they shelter their old people, their wives, and their children, the men of the tribe are almost continually on the foray and the scamper. They are, in fact, notorious marauders and horsestealers; crossing and recrossing the mountains, robbing on the one side, and conveying their spoils to the other. Hence, we are told, is derived their name, given to them on account of their unsettled and predatory habits; winging their flight like the crows, from one side of the mountains to the other, and making free booty of every thing that lies in their way. Horses, however, are the especial objects of their depredations, and their skill and audacity in stealing them are said to be astonishing. This is their glory and delight; an accomplished horsestealer fills up their idea

of a hero. Many horses are obtained by them, also, in barter from tribes in and beyond the mountains. They have an absolute passion for this noble animal; besides which he is with them an important object of traffic. Once a year they make a visit to the Mandans, Minatarees, and other tribes of the Missouri, taking with them droves of horses which they exchange for guns, ammunition, trinkets, vermilion, cloths of bright colours, and various other articles of European manufacture. With these they supply their own wants and caprices, and carry on the internal trade for horses already mentioned.

The plot of Rose to rob and abandon his countrymen when in the heart of the wilderness, and to throw himself into the hands of a horde of savages, may appear strange and improbable to those unacquainted with the singular and anomalous characters that are to be found about the borders. This fellow, it appears, was one of those desperadoes of the frontiers outlawed by their crimes, who combine the vices of civilized and savage life, and are ten times more barbarous than the Indians with whom they

consort. Rose had formerly belonged to one of the gangs of pirates who infested the islands of the Mississippi, plundering boats as they went up and down the river, and who sometimes shifted the scene of their robberies to the shore, waylaying travellers as they returned by land from New Orleans with the proceeds of their downward voyage, plundering them of their money and effects, and often perpetrating the most atrocious murders.

These hordes of villains being broken up and dispersed, Rose had betaken himself to the wilderness, and associated himself with the Crows, whose predatory habits were congenial with his own, had married a woman of the tribe, and, in short, had identified himself with those vagrant savages.

Such was the worthy guide and interpreter, Edward Rose. We give his story, however, not as it was known to Mr. Hunt and his companions at the time, but as it has been subsequently ascertained. Enough was known of the fellow and his dark and perfidious character to put Mr. Hunt upon his guard: still, as there

was no knowing how far his plans might have succeeded, and as any rash act might blow the mere smouldering sparks of treason into a sudden blaze, it was thought advisable by those with whom Mr. Hunt consulted, to conceal all knowledge or suspicion of the meditated treachery, but to keep up a vigilant watch upon the movements of Rose, and a strict guard upon the horses at night.

CHAPTER VII.

SUBSTITUTE FOR FUEL ON THE PRAIRIES—FOSSIL TREES—FIERCENESS OF THE BUFFALOES WHEN IN HEAT—THREE HUNTERS MISSING—SIGNAL FIRES AND SMOKES—UNEASINESS CONCERNING THE LOST MEN—A PLAN TO FORESTAL A ROGUE—NEW ARRANGEMENT WITH ROSE—RETURN OF THE WANDERERS.

THE plains over which the travellers were journeying continued to be destitute of trees or even shrubs; insomuch that they had to use the dung of the buffalo for fuel, as the Arabs of the desert use that of the camel. This substitute for fuel is universal among the Indians of these upper prairies, and is said to make a fire equal to that of turf. If a few chips are added, it throws out a cheerful and kindly blaze.

These plains, however, had not always been equally destitute of wood, as was evident from the trunks of trees which the travellers repeatedly met with, some still standing, others lying about in broken fragments, but all in a fossil state, having flourished in times long past. In these singular remains, the original grain of the wood was still so distinct that they could be ascertained to be the ruins of oak trees. Several pieces of the fossil wood were selected by the men to serve as whetstones.

In this part of the journey there was no lack of provisions, for the prairies were covered with immense herds of buffalo. These, in general, are animals of peaceable demeanour, grazing quietly like domestic cattle; but this was the season when they are in heat, and when the bulls are unusually fierce and pugnacious. There was accordingly a universal restlessness and commotion throughout the plain; and the amorous herds gave utterance to their feelings in low bellowings that resounded like distant thunder. Here and there fierce duellos took place between rival enamorados; butting their

huge shagged fronts together, goring each other with their short black horns, and tearing up the earth with their feet in perfect fury.

In one of the evening halts, Pierre Dorion, the interpreter, together with Carson and Gardpie, two of the hunters, were missing, nor had they returned by morning. As it was supposed they had wandered away in pursuit of buffalo, and would readily find the track of the party, no solicitude was felt on their account. A fire was left burning, to guide them by its column of smoke, and the travellers proceeded on their march. In the evening a signal fire was made on a hill adjacent to the camp, and in the morning it was replenished with fuel so as to last throughout the day. These signals are usual among the Indians, to give warnings to each other, or to call home straggling hunters; and such is the transparency of the atmosphere in those elevated plains, that a slight column of smoke can be discerned from a distance, particularly in the evenings. Two or three days elapsed, however, without the reappearance of

the three hunters ; and Mr. Hunt slackened his march to give them time to overtake him.

A vigilant watch continued to be kept upon the movements of Rose, and of such of the men as were considered doubtful in their loyalty ; but nothing occurred to excite immediate apprehensions. Rose evidently was not a favourite among his comrades, and it was hoped that he had not been able to make any real partisans.

On the 10th of August they encamped among hills, on the highest peak of which Mr. Hunt caused a huge pyre of pine wood to be made, which soon sent up a great column of flame that might be seen far and wide over the prairies. This fire blazed all night, and was amply replenished at daybreak ; so that the towering pillar of smoke could not but be descried by the wanderers if within the distance of a day's journey.

It is a common occurrence in these regions, where the features of the country so much resemble each other, for hunters to lose them-

selves and wander for many days, before they can find their way back to the main body of their party. In the present instance, however, a more than common solicitude was felt in consequence of the distrust awakened by the sinister designs of Rose.

The route now became excessively toilsome over a ridge of steep rocky hills, covered with loose stones. These were intersected by deep valleys, formed by two branches of Big river, coming from the south of west, both of which they crossed. These streams were bordered by meadows, well stocked with buffaloes. Loads of meat were brought in by the hunters; but the travellers were rendered dainty by profusion, and would cook only the choice pieces.

They had now travelled for several days at a very slow rate, and had made signal fires and left traces of their route at every stage, yet nothing was heard or seen of the lost men. It began to be feared that they might have fallen into the hands of some lurking band of savages. A party numerous as that of Mr. Hunt, with a long train of pack-horses, moving across open

plains or naked hills, is discoverable at a great distance by Indian scouts, who spread the intelligence rapidly to various points, and assemble their friends to hang about the skirts of the travellers, steal their horses, or cut off any stragglers from the main body.

Mr. Hunt and his companions were more and more sensible how much it would be in the power of this sullen and daring vagabond Rose, to do them mischief, when they should become entangled in the defiles of the mountains, with the passes of which they were wholly unacquainted, and which were infested by his freebooting friends, the Crows. There, should he succeed in seducing some of the party into his plans, he might carry off the best horses and effects, throw himself among his savage allies, and set all pursuit at defiance. Mr. Hunt resolved, therefore, to frustrate the knave, divert him, by management, from his plans, and make it sufficiently advantageous for him to remain honest. He took occasion, accordingly, in the course of conversation, to inform Rose that, having engaged him chiefly as a guide and

interpreter through the country of the Crows, they would not stand in need of his services beyond. Knowing, therefore, his connexion by marriage with that tribe, and his predilection for a residence among them, they would put no constraint upon his will, but, whenever they met with a party of that people, would leave him at liberty to remain among his adopted brethren. Furthermore that, in thus parting with him, they would pay him half a year's wages in consideration of his past services, and would give him a horse, three beaver traps, and sundry other articles calculated to set him up in the world.

This unexpected liberality, which made it nearly as profitable and infinitely less hazardous for Rose to remain honest than to play the rogue, completely disarmed him. From that time his whole deportment underwent a change. His brow cleared up and appeared more cheerful; he left off his sullen, skulking habits, and made no further attempts to tamper with the faith of his comrades.

On the 13th of August Mr. Hunt varied his

course and inclined westward, in hopes of falling in with the three lost hunters; who, it was now thought, might have kept to the right hand of Big river. This course soon brought him to a fork of the Little Missouri, about a hundred yards wide, and resembling the great river of the same name in the strength of its current, its turbid water, and the frequency of drift wood and sunken trees.

Rugged mountains appeared ahead, crowding down to the water edge, and offering a barrier to further progress on the side they were ascending. Crossing the river, therefore, they encamped on its north-west bank, where they found good pasturage and buffalo in abundance. The weather was overcast and rainy, and a general gloom pervaded the camp; the voyageurs sat moping in groups, with their shoulders as high as their heads, croaking their forebodings, when suddenly towards evening a shout of joy gave notice that the lost men were found. They came slowly lagging into the camp, with weary looks, and horses jaded and wayworn. They had, in fact, been for seven

ral days incessantly on the move. In their hunting excursion on the prairies they had pushed so far in pursuit of buffalo, as to find it impossible to retrace their steps over plains trampled by innumerable herds; and were baffled by the monotony of the landscape in their attempts to recall landmarks. They had ridden to and fro until they had almost lost the points of the compass, and become totally bewildered; nor did they ever perceive any of the signal fires and columns of smoke made by their comrades. At length, about two days previously, when almost spent by anxiety and hard riding, they came, to their great joy, upon the "trail" of the party, which they had since followed up steadily.

Those only, who have experienced the warm cordiality that grows up between comrades in wild and adventurous expeditions of the kind, can picture to themselves the hearty cheering with which the stragglers were welcomed to the camp. Every one crowded round them to ask questions, and to hear the story of their mis-

haps ; and even the squaw of the moody half-breed, Pierre Dorion, forgot the sternness of his domestic rule, and the conjugal discipline of the cudgel, in her joy at his safe return.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BLACK MOUNTAINS—HAUNTS OF PREDATORY INDIANS—THEIR WILD AND BROKEN APPEARANCE—SUPERSTITIONS CONCERNING THEM—THUNDER SPIRITS—SINGULAR NOISES IN THE MOUNTAINS—SECRET MINES—HIDDEN TREASURES—MOUNTAINS IN LABOUR—SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION—IMPASSABLE DEFILES—BLACK-TAILED DEER—THE BIGHORN OR AHAHTA—PROSPECT FROM A LOFTY HEIGHT—PLAIN WITH HERDS OF BUFFALO—DISTANT PEAKS OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS—ALARMS IN THE CAMP—TRACKS OF GRIZZLY BEARS—DANGEROUS NATURE OF THIS ANIMAL—ADVENTURES OF WILLIAM CANNON AND JOHN DAY WITH GRIZZLY BEARS.

MR. HUNT and his party were now on the skirts of the Black hills, or Black mountains, as they are sometimes called; an extensive chain, lying about a hundred miles east of the Rocky mountains, and stretching in a north-east direction from the south fork of the Nebraska, or Platte river, to the great north bend of the Missouri. The Sierra or ridge of the Black

hills, in fact, forms the dividing line between the waters of the Missouri and those of the Arkansas and the Mississippi, and gives rise to the Cheyenne, the Little Missouri, and several tributary streams of the Yellowstone.

The wild recesses of these hills, like those of the Rocky mountains, are retreats and lurking places for broken and predatory tribes, and it was among them that the remnant of the Cheyenne tribe took refuge, as has been stated, from their conquering enemies, the Sioux.

The Black hills are chiefly composed of sand stone, and in many places are broken into savage cliffs and precipices, and present the most singular and fantastic forms; sometimes resembling towns and castellated fortresses. The ignorant inhabitants of plains are prone to clothe the mountains that bound their horizon with fanciful and superstitious attributes. Thus the wandering tribes of the prairies who often behold clouds gathering round the summits of these hills, and lightning flashing, and thunder pealing from them, when all the neighbouring plains are serene and sunny, consider them the

abode of the genii or thunder spirits, who fabricate storms and tempests. On entering their defiles, therefore, they often hang offerings on the trees, or place them on the rocks, to propitiate the invisible "lords of the mountains," and procure good weather and successful hunting; and they attach unusual significance to the echoes which haunt the precipices. This superstition may also have arisen, in part, from a natural phenomenon of a singular nature. In the most calm and serene weather, and at all times of the day or night, successive reports are now and then heard among these mountains, resembling the discharge of several pieces of artillery. Similar reports were heard by Messrs. Lewis and Clarke in the Rocky mountains, which, they say, were attributed by the Indians to the bursting of the rich mines of silver contained in the bosom of the mountains.

In fact these singular explosions have received fanciful explanations from learned men, and have not been satisfactorily accounted for even

by philosophers. They are said to occur frequently in Brazil. Vasconcelles, a Jesuit father, describes one which he heard in the Sierra, or mountain region of Piratininga, and which he compares to the discharges of a park of artillery. The Indians told him that it was an explosion of stones. The worthy father had soon a satisfactory proof of the truth of their information, for the very place was found where a rock had burst and exploded from its entrails a stony mass, like a bomb-shell, and of the size of a bull's heart. This mass was broken either in its ejection or its fall, and wonderful was the internal organization revealed. It had a shell harder even than iron; within which were arranged, like the seeds of a pomegranate, jewels of various colours; some transparent as crystal; others of a fine red, and others of mixed hues. The same phenomenon is said to occur occasionally in the adjacent province of Guayra, where stones of the bigness of a man's hand are exploded, with a loud noise, from the bosom of the earth, and scatter about glittering

and beautiful fragments that look like precious gems, but are of no value.

The Indians of the Orellanna, also, tell of horrible noises heard occasionally in the Paraguaxo, which they consider the throes and groans of the mountain endeavouring to cast forth the precious stones hidden within its entrails. Others have endeavoured to account for these discharges of "mountain artillery" on humbler principles; attributing them to the loud reports made by the disruption and fall of great masses of rock, reverberated and prolonged by the echoes; others, to the disengagement of hydrogen, produced by subterraneous beds of coal in a state of ignition. In whatever way this singular phenomenon may be accounted for, the existence of it appears to be well established. It remains one of the lingering mysteries of nature which throw something of a supernatural charm over her wild mountain solitudes; and we doubt whether the imaginative reader will not rather join with the poor Indian in attributing it to the thunder spirits,

or the guardian genii of unseen treasures, than to any common-place physical cause.

Whatever might be the supernatural influences among these mountains, the travellers found their physical difficulties hard to cope with. They made repeated attempts to find a passage through, or over the chain, but were as often turned back by impassable barriers. Sometimes a defile seemed to open a practicable path, but it would terminate in some wild chaos of rocks and cliffs, which it was impossible to climb. The animals of these solitary regions were different from those they had been accustomed to. The black-tailed deer would bound up the ravines on their approach, and the bighorn would gaze fearlessly down upon them from some impending precipice, or skip playfully from rock to rock. These animals are only to be met with in mountainous regions. The former is larger than the common deer, but its flesh is not equally esteemed by hunters. It has very large ears, and the tip of the tail is black, from which it derives its name.

The bighorn is so named from its horns; which are of a great size, and twisted like those of a ram. It is called by some the argali, by others, the ibex, though differing from both of these animals. The Mandans call it the ahshta, a name much better than the clumsy appellation which it generally bears. It is of the size of a small elk, or large deer, and of a dun colour, excepting the belly and round the tail, where it is white. In its habits it resembles the goat, frequenting the rudest precipices; cropping the herbage from their edges; and like the chamois, bounding lightly and securely among dizzy heights, where the hunter dares not venture. It is difficult, therefore, to get within shot of it. Ben Jones the hunter, however, in one of the passes of the Black hills, succeeded in bringing down a bighorn from the verge of a precipice, the flesh of which was pronounced by the gourmands of the camp to have the flavour of excellent mutton.

Baffled in his attempts to traverse this mountain chain, Mr. Hunt skirted along it to the southwest, keeping it on the right;

and still in hope of finding an opening. At an early hour one day, he encamped in a narrow valley on the banks of a beautifully clear but rushy pool; surrounded by thickets bearing abundance of wild cherries, currants, and yellow and purple gooseberries.

While the afternoon's meal was in preparation, Mr. Hunt and Mr. M'Kenzie ascended to the summit of the nearest hill, from whence, aided by the purity and transparency of the evening atmosphere, they commanded a vast prospect on all sides. Below them extended a plain, dotted with innumerable herds of buffalo. Some were lying down among the herbage, others roaming in their unbounded pastures, while many were engaged in fierce contests like those already described, their low bellowings reaching the ear like the hoarse murmurs of the surf on a distant shore.

Far off in the west they descried a range of lofty mountains printing the clear horizon, some of them evidently capped with snow. These they supposed to be the Big Horn mountains, so called from the animal of that

name, with which they abound. They are a spur of the great Rocky chain. The hill from whence Mr. Hunt had this prospect was, according to his computation, about two hundred and fifty miles from the Aricara village.

On returning to the camp, Mr. Hunt found some uneasiness prevailing among the Canadian voyageurs. In straying among the thickets they had beheld tracks of grizzly bears in every direction; doubtless attracted thither by the fruit. To their dismay they now found that they had encamped in one of the favourite resorts of this dreaded animal. The idea marred all the comfort of the encampment. As night closed, the surrounding thickets were peopled with terrors; insomuch that, according to Mr. Hunt, they could not help starting at every little breeze that stirred the bushes.

The grizzly bear is the only really formidable quadruped of our continent. He is the favourite theme of the hunters of the far west, who describe him as equal in size to a common cow and of prodigious strength. He makes battle

if assailed, and often, if pressed by hunger, is the assailant. If wounded, he becomes furious and will pursue the hunter. His speed exceeds that of a man, but is inferior to that of a horse. In attacking he rears himself on his hind legs and springs the length of his body. Woe to horse or rider that comes within the sweep of his terrific claws, which are sometimes nine inches in length, and tear every thing before them.

At the time we are treating of, the grizzly bear was still frequent on the Missouri, and in the lower country, but, like some of the broken tribes of the prairies, he has gradually fallen back before his enemies and is now chiefly to be found in the upland regions, in rugged fastnesses like those of the Black hills and the Rocky mountains. Here he lurks in caverns, or holes which he has dugged in the sides of hills, or under the roots and trunks of fallen trees. Like the common bear he is fond of fruits, and mast, and roots, the latter of which he will dig up with his fore claws. He is carnivorous also, and will even attack and

conquer the lordly buffalo, dragging his huge carcass to the neighbourhood of his den, that he may prey upon it at his leisure.

The hunters, both white and red men, consider this the most heroic game. They prefer to hunt him on horseback, and will venture so near as sometimes to singe his hair with the flash of the rifle. The hunter of the grizzly bear, however, must be an experienced hand, and know where to aim at a vital part; for of all quadrupeds, he is the most difficult to be killed. He will receive repeated wounds without flinching, and rarely is a shot mortal unless through the head or heart.

That the dangers apprehended from the grizzly bear, at this night encampment, were not imaginary, was proved on the following morning. Among the hired men of the party was one William Cannon, who had been a soldier at one of the frontier posts, and entered into the employ of Mr. Hunt at Mackinaw. He was an inexperienced hunter and a poor shot, for which he was much bantered by his more adroit comrades. Piqued at their raillery, he had

been practising ever since he had joined the expedition, but without success. In the course of the present afternoon, he went forth by himself to take a lesson in venerie, and, to his great delight, had the good fortune to kill a buffalo. As he was a considerable distance from the camp, he cut out the tongue and some of the choice bits, made them into a parcel, and, slinging them on his shoulders by a strap passed round his forehead, as the voyageurs carry packages of goods, set out all glorious for the camp, anticipating a triumph over his brother hunters. In passing through a narrow ravine, he heard a noise behind him, and looking round beheld, to his dismay, a grizzly bear in full pursuit, apparently attracted by the scent of the meat. Cannon had heard so much of the invulnerability of this tremendous animal that he never attempted to fire, but, slipping the strap from his forehead, let go the buffalo meat and ran for his life. The bear did not stop to regale himself with the game, but kept on after the hunter. He had nearly overtaken him when Cannon reached a tree, and,

throwing down his rifle, scrambled up it. The next instant Bruin was at the foot of the tree; but, as this species of bear does not climb, he contented himself with turning the chase into a blockade. Night came on. In the darkness Cannon could not perceive whether or not the enemy maintained his station; but his fears pictured him rigorously mounting guard. He passed the night, therefore, in the tree, a prey to dismal fancies. In the morning the bear was gone. Cannon warily descended the tree, gathered up his gun, and made the best of his way back to the camp, without venturing to look after his buffalo meat.

While on this theme we will add another anecdote of an adventure with a grizzly bear, told of John Day, the Kentucky hunter, but which happened at a different period of the expedition. Day was hunting in company with one of the clerks of the company, a lively youngster, who was a great favourite with the veteran, but whose vivacity he had continually to keep in check. They were in search of deer, when suddenly a huge grizzly bear emerged

from a thicket about thirty yards distant, rearing himself upon his hind legs with a terrific growl, and displaying a hideous array of teeth and claws. The rifle of the young man was levelled in an instant, but John Day's iron hand was quickly upon his arm. "Be quiet, boy! be quiet!" exclaimed the hunter, between his clenched teeth, and without turning his eyes from the bear. They remained motionless. The monster regarded them for a time, then, lowering himself on his fore paws, slowly withdrew. He had not gone many paces before he again turned, reared himself on his hind legs, and repeated his menace. Day's hand was still on the arm of his young companion, he again pressed it hard, and kept repeating between his teeth, "Quiet, boy!—keep quiet!—keep quiet!"—though the latter had not made a move since his first prohibition. The bear again lowered himself on all fours, retreated some twenty yards further, and again turned, reared, showed his teeth, and growled. This third menace was too much for the game spirit of John Day. "By

Jove!" exclaimed he, "I can stand this no longer," and in an instant a ball from his rifle whizzed into the foe. The wound was not mortal; but, luckily, it dismayed instead of enraging the animal, and he retreated into the thicket.

Day's young companion reproached him for not practising the caution which he enjoined upon others. "Why, boy," replied the veteran, "caution is caution, but one must not put up with too much even from a bear. Would you have me suffer myself to be bullied all day by a varmint?"

CHAPTER IX.

INDIAN TRAIL — ROUGH MOUNTAIN TRAVELLING — SUFFERINGS FROM HUNGER AND THIRST — POWDER RIVER — GAME IN ABUNDANCE — A HUNTER'S PARADISE — MOUNTAIN PEAK SEEN AT A GREAT DISTANCE — ONE OF THE BIG HORN CHAIN — ROCKY MOUNTAINS — EXTENT — APPEARANCE — HEIGHT — THE GREAT AMERICAN DESERT — VARIOUS CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOUNTAINS — INDIAN SUPERSTITIONS CONCERNING THEM — LAND OF SOULS — TOWNS OF THE FREE AND GENEROUS SPIRITS — HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS.

For the two following days the travellers pursued a westerly course for thirty-four miles, along a ridge of country dividing the tributary waters of the Missouri and the Yellowstone. As landmarks they guided themselves by the summits of the far distant mountains, which they supposed to belong to the Big Horn chain. They were gradually rising into a higher tempe-

rature, for the weather was cold for the season, with a sharp frost in the night, and ice of an eighth of an inch in thickness.

On the twenty-second of August, early in the day, they came upon the trail of a numerous band. Rose and the other hunters examined the foot-prints with great attention, and determined it to be the trail of a party of Crows, returning from an annual trading visit to the Mandans. As this trail afforded more commodious travelling, they immediately struck into it, and followed it for two days. It led them over rough hills, and through broken gullies, during which time they suffered great fatigue from the ruggedness of the country. The weather, too, which had recently been frosty, was now oppressively warm, and there was great scarcity of water, insomuch that a valuable dog belonging to Mr. McKenzie died of thirst.

At one time they had twenty-five miles of painful travel, without a drop of water, until they arrived at a small running stream. Here they eagerly slaked their thirst; but, this being

allayed, the calls of hunger became equally importunate. Ever since they had got among these barren and arid hills, where there was a deficiency of grass, they had met with no buffaloes; those animals keeping in the grassy meadows near the streams. They were obliged, therefore, to have recourse to their corn meal, which they reserved for such emergencies. Some, however, were lucky enough to kill a wolf, which they cooked for supper, and pronounced excellent food.

The next morning they resumed their wayfaring, hungry and jaded, and had a dogged march of eighteen miles among the same kind of hills. At length they emerged upon a stream of clear water, one of the forks of Powder river, and to their great joy beheld once more wide grassy meadows, stocked with herds of buffalo. For several days they kept about the banks of this river, ascending it about eighteen miles. It was a hunter's paradise; the buffaloes were in such abundance that they were enabled to kill as many as they pleased, and to jerk a sufficient supply of meat for several days' journey-

ing. Here, then, they revelled and reposed after their hungry and weary travel, hunting and feasting, and reclining upon the grass. Their quiet, however, was a little marred by coming upon traces of Indians, who, they concluded, must be Crows; they were therefore obliged to keep a more vigilant watch than ever upon their horses. For several days they had been directing their march towards the lofty mountain described by Mr. Hunt and Mr. M'Kenzie on the 17th of August, the height of which rendered it a landmark over a vast extent of country. At first it had appeared to them solitary and detached; but as they advanced towards it, it proved to be the principal summit of a chain of mountains. Day by day it varied in form, or rather its lower peaks, and the summits of others of the chain emerged above the clear horizon, and finally the inferior line of hills which connected most of them rose to view. So far, however, are objects discernible in the pure atmosphere of these elevated plains, that, from the place where they first

descried the main mountain, they had to travel a hundred and fifty miles before they reached its base. Here they encamped on the thirtieth of August, having come nearly four hundred miles since leaving the Aricara village.

The mountain which now towered above them was one of the Big Horn chain, bordered by a river of the same name, and extending for a long distance rather east of north and west of south. It was a part of the great system of granite mountains which forms one of the most important and striking features of North America, stretching parallel to the coast of the Pacific from the Isthmus of Panama almost to the Arctic ocean; and presenting a corresponding chain to that of the Andes in the southern hemisphere. This vast range has acquired from its rugged and broken character, and its summits of naked granite, the appellation of the Rocky mountains, a name, by no means distinctive, as all elevated ranges are rocky. Among the early explorers it was known as the range of Chippewyan mountains, and this

Indian name is the one it is likely to retain in poetic usage. Rising from the midst of vast plains and prairies, traversing several degrees of latitude, dividing the waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific, and seeming to bind with diverging ridges the level regions on its flanks, it has been figuratively termed the backbone of the northern continent.

The Rocky mountains do not present a range of uniform elevation, but rather groups and occasionally detached peaks. Though some of these rise to the region of perpetual snows, and are upwards of eleven thousand feet in real altitude, yet their height from their immediate bases is not so great as might be imagined, as they swell up from elevated plains, several thousand feet above the level of the ocean. These plains are often of a desolate sterility, mere sandy wastes, formed of the detritus of the granite heights, destitute of trees and herbage, scorched by the ardent and reflected rays of the summer's sun, and, in winter, swept by chilling blasts from the snow-clad mountains. Such is a great part of that vast region extending

north and south along the mountains, several hundred miles in width, which has not improperly been termed the Great American Desert. It is a region that almost discourages all hope of cultivation, and can only be traversed with safety by keeping near the streams which intersect it. Extensive plains likewise occur among the higher regions of the mountains, of considerable fertility. Indeed, these lofty plats of table land seem to form a peculiar feature in the American continents. Some occur among the Cordilleras of the Andes, where cities, and towns, and cultivated farms, are to be seen eight thousand feet above the level of the sea.

The Rocky mountains, as we have already observed, occur sometimes singly or in groups, and occasionally in collateral ridges. Between these are deep valleys, with small streams winding through them, which find their way into the lower plains, augmenting as they proceed, and ultimately discharging themselves into those vast rivers, which traverse the prairies like great arteries, and drain the continent.

While the granitic summits of the Rocky mountains are bleak and bare, many of the inferior ridges are scantily clothed with scrubbed pines, oaks, cedar, and furze. Various parts of the mountains also bear traces of volcanic action. Some of the interior valleys are strewn with scoria and broken stones, evidently of volcanic origin; the surrounding rocks bear the like character, and vestiges of extinguished craters are to be seen on the elevated heights.

We have already noticed the superstitious feelings with which the Indians regard the Black hills; but this immense range of mountains, which divides all that they know of the world, and gives birth to such mighty rivers, is still more an object of awe and veneration. They call it "The crest of the world," and think that Wacondah, or the master of life, as they designate the Supreme Being, has his residence among these aerial heights. The tribes on the eastern prairies call them the mountains of the setting sun. Some of them place the "happy hunting grounds," their ideal paradise,

among the recesses of these mountains; but say that they are invisible to living men. Here also is the "Land of souls," in which are the "towns of the free and generous spirits," where those who have pleased the master of life while living, enjoy after death all manner of delights.

Wonders are told of these mountains by the distant tribes, whose warriors or hunters have ever wandered in their neighbourhood. It is thought by some that, after death, they will have to travel these mountains and ascend one of their highest and most rugged peaks, among rocks and snows and tumbling torrents. After many moons of painful toil they will reach the summit, from whence they will have a view over the land of souls. There they will see the happy hunting grounds, with the souls of the brave and good living in tents in green meadows, by bright running streams, or hunting the herds of buffalo, and elks, and deer, which have been slain on earth. There, too, they will see the villages or towns of the free and generous spirits brightening in the midst of delicious prairies. If they have acquitted themselves

well while living, they will be permitted to descend and enjoy this happy country; if otherwise, they will but be tantalised with this prospect of it, and then hurled back from the mountain, to wander about the sandy plains, and endure the eternal pangs of unsatisfied thirst and hunger.

CHAPTER X.

REGION OF THE CROW INDIANS—SCOUTS ON THE LOOKOUT—VISIT FROM A CREW OF HARD RIDERS—A CROW CAMP—PRESENTS TO THE CROW CHIEF—BARGAINING—CROW BULLIES—ROSE AMONG HIS INDIAN FRIENDS—PARTING WITH THE CROWS—PERPLEXITIES AMONG THE MOUNTAINS—MORE OF THE CROWS—EQUESTRIAN CHILDREN—SEARCH AFTER STRAGGLERS.

THE travellers had now arrived in the vicinity of the mountain regions infested by the Crow Indians. These restless marauders, as has already been observed, are apt to be continually on the prowl about the skirts of the mountains ; and even when encamped in some deep and secluded glen, they keep scouts upon the cliffs and promontories, who, unseen themselves, can discern every living thing that moves over the subjacent plains and valleys. It was not to be expected that

our travellers could pass unseen through a region thus vigilantly sentinelled ; accordingly, in the edge of the evening, not long after they had encamped at the foot of the Big Horn Sierra, a couple of wild-looking beings, scantily clad in skins, but well armed, and mounted on horses as wild-looking as themselves, were seen approaching with great caution from among the rocks. They might have been mistaken for two of the evil spirits of the mountains so formidable in Indian fable.

Rose was immediately sent out to hold a parley with them, and invite them to the camp. They proved to be two scouts from the same band that had been tracked for some days past, and which was now encamped at some distance in the folds of the mountain. They were easily prevailed upon to come to the camp, where they were well received, and, after remaining there until late in the evening, departed to make a report of all they had seen and experienced, to their companions.

The following day had scarce dawned when a troop of these wild mountain scamperers

came galloping with whoops and yells into the camp, bringing an invitation from their chief for the white men to visit him. The tents were accordingly struck, the horses laden, and the party were soon on the march. The Crow horsemen, as they escorted them, appeared to take a pride in showing off their equestrian skill and hardihood ; careering at full speed on their half-savage steeds, and dashing among rocks and crags, and up and down the most rugged and dangerous places with perfect ease and unconcern.

A ride of sixteen miles brought them, in the afternoon, in sight of the Crow camp. It was composed of leathern tents pitched in a meadow on the border of a small clear stream at the foot of the mountain. A great number of horses were grazing in the vicinity, many of them doubtless captured in marauding excursions.

The Crow chieftain came forth to meet his guests with great professions of friendship, and conducted them to his tents, pointing out, by the way, a convenient place where they might

fix their camp. No sooner had they done so, than Mr. Hunt opened some of the packages and made the chief a present of a scarlet blanket, and a quantity of powder and ball; he gave him also some knives, trinkets, and tobacco to be distributed among his warriors, with all which the grim potentate seemed, for the time, well pleased. As the Crows, however, were reputed to be perfidious in the extreme, and as errant freebooters as the bird after which they were so worthily named, and as their general feelings towards the whites were known to be by no means friendly, the intercourse with them was conducted with great circumspection.

The following day was passed in trading with the Crows for buffalo robes and skins, and in bartering galled and jaded horses for others that were in good condition. Some of the men also purchased horses on their own account, so that the number now amounted to one hundred and twenty-one, most of them sound and active, and fit for mountain service.

Their wants being supplied, they ceased all

further traffic, much to the dissatisfaction of the Crows, who became extremely urgent to continue the trade, and, finding their importunities of no avail, assumed an insolent and menacing tone. All this was attributed by Mr. Hunt and his associates, to the perfidious instigations of Rose the interpreter, who they suspected of the desire to foment ill will between them and the savages, for the promotion of his nefarious plans. M'Lellan, with his usual *tranchant* mode of dealing out justice, resolved to shoot the desperado on the spot in case of any outbreak. Nothing of the kind, however, occurred. The Crows were probably daunted by the resolute, though quiet, demeanour of the white men, and the constant vigilance and armed preparation which they maintained; and Rose, if he really still harboured his knavish designs, must have perceived that they were suspected, and, if attempted to be carried into effect, might bring ruin on his own head.

The next morning, bright and early, Mr. Hunt proposed to resume his journeying. He

took a ceremonious leave of the Crow chieftain, and his vagabond warriors, and, according to previous arrangements, consigned to their cherishing friendship and fraternal adoption, their worthy confederate, Rose ; who, having figured among the water pirates of the Mississippi, was well fitted to rise to distinction among the land pirates of the Rocky mountains.

It is proper to add that the ruffian was well received among the tribe, and appeared to be perfectly satisfied with the compromise he had made ; feeling much more at his ease among savages than among white men. It is outcasts from civilization, fugitives from justice, and heartless desperadoes of this kind, who sow the seeds of enmity and bitterness among the unfortunate tribes of the frontier. There is no enemy so implacable against a country or a community as one of its own people who has rendered himself an alien by his crimes.

Right glad to be relieved from this treacherous companion, Mr. Hunt pursued his course along the skirts of the mountain in a southern direction, seeking for some practicable

defile by which he might pass through it; none such presented, however, in the course of fifteen miles, and he encamped on a small stream, still on the outskirts. The green meadows which border these mountain streams are generally well stocked with game, and the hunters soon killed several fat elks, which supplied the camp with fresh meat. In the evening the travellers were surprised by an unwelcome visit from several Crows, belonging to a different band from that which they had recently left, and who said their camp was among the mountains. The consciousness of being environed by such dangerous neighbours, and of being still within the range of Rose and his fellow ruffians, obliged the party to be continually on the alert, and to maintain weary vigils throughout the night, lest they should be robbed of their horses.

On the 3d of September, finding that the mountain still stretched onwards, presenting a continued barrier, they endeavoured to force a passage to the westward, but soon became entangled among rocks and precipices which set all their efforts at defiance. The mountain

seemed for the most part rugged, bare, and steril; yet here and there it was clothed with pines, and with shrubs and flowering plants, some of which were in bloom. In toiling among these weary places, their thirst became excessive, for no water was to be met with. Numbers of the men wandered off into rocky dells and ravines, in hopes of finding some brook or fountain; some of whom lost their way, and did not rejoin the main party.

After half a day of painful and fruitless scrambling, Mr. Hunt gave up the attempt to penetrate in this direction, and, returning to the little stream on the skirts of the mountain, pitched his tents within six miles of his encampment of the preceding night. He now ordered that signals should be made for the stragglers in quest of water, but the night passed away without their return.

The next morning, to their surprise, Rose made his appearance at the camp, accompanied by some of his Crow associates. His unwelcome visit revived their suspicions, but he announced himself as a messenger of good-

will from the chief, who, finding they had taken a wrong road, had sent Rose and his companions to guide them to a nearer and better one across the mountain.

Having no choice, being themselves utterly at fault, they set out under this questionable escort. They had not gone far before they fell in with the whole party of Crows, who, they now found, were going the same road with themselves. The two cavalcades of white and red men, therefore, pushed on together, and presented a wild and picturesque spectacle, as, equipped with various weapons and in various garbs, with trains of packhorses, they wound in long lines through the rugged defiles, and up and down the crags and steeps of the mountain.

The travellers had again an opportunity to see and admire the equestrian habitudes and address of this hard-riding tribe. They were all mounted, man, woman, and child, for the Crows have horses in abundance, so that no one goes on foot. The children are perfect imps on horseback. Among them was one so

young that he could not yet speak. He was tied on a colt of two years old, but managed the reins as if by instinct, and plied the whip with true Indian prodigality. Mr. Hunt inquired the age of this infant jockey, and was answered that "he had seen two winters."

This is almost realizing the fable of the centaurs; nor can we wonder at the equestrian adroitness of these savages, who are thus in a manner cradled in the saddle, and become in infancy almost identified with the animal they bestride.

The mountain defiles were exceedingly rough and broken, and the travelling painful to the burdened horses. The party, therefore, preceded but slowly, and were gradually left behind by the band of Crows, who had taken the lead. It is more than probable that Mr. Hunt loitered in his course, to get rid of such fellow-travellers. Certain it is that he felt a sensation of relief as he saw the whole crew, the renegade Rose, and all, disappear among the windings of the mountain, and heard the

last yelp of the savages die away in the distance.

When they were fairly out of sight, and out of hearing, he encamped on the head waters of the little stream of the preceding day, having come about sixteen miles. Here he remained all the succeeding day, as well to give time for the Crows to get in the advance, as for the stragglers, who had wandered away in quest of water two days previously, to rejoin the camp. Indeed, considerable uneasiness began to be felt concerning these men, lest they should become utterly bewildered in the defiles of the mountains, or should fall into the hands of some marauding band of savages. Some of the most experienced hunters were sent in search of them; others, in the mean time, employed themselves in hunting. The narrow valley in which they encamped being watered by a running stream, yielded fresh pasturage, and, though in the heart of the Big Horn mountains, was well stocked with buffalo. Several of these were killed, as also a grizzly bear. In the even-

ing, to the satisfaction of all parties, the stragglers made their appearance, and provisions being in abundance, there was hearty good cheer in the camp.

CHAPTER XI.

MOUNTAIN GLENS — WANDERING BAND OF SAVAGES — ANECDOTES
OF SHOSHONIES AND FLATHEADS — ROOT DIGGERS — THEIR
SOLITARY LURKING HABITS — GNOMES OF THE MOUNTAINS —
WIND RIVER — SCARCITY OF FOOD — ALTERATION OF ROUTE —
THE PILOT KNOBS OR TETONS — BRANCH OF THE COLORADO —
HUNTING CAMP.

RESUMING their course on the following morning, Mr. Hunt and his companions continued on westward through a rugged region of hills and rocks, but diversified in many places by grassy little glens, with springs of water, bright sparkling brooks, clumps of pine trees, and a profusion of flowering plants, which were in full bloom, although the weather was frosty. These beautiful and verdant recesses, running through and softening the rugged mountains,

were cheering and refreshing to the wayworn travellers.

In the course of the morning, as they were entangled in a defile, they beheld a small band of savages, as wild looking as the surrounding scenery, who reconnoitred them warily from the rocks before they ventured to advance. Some of them were mounted on horses rudely caparisoned, with bridles or halters of buffalo hide, one end trailing after them on the ground. They proved to be a mixed party of Flatheads and Shoshonies, or Snakes; and as these tribes will be frequently mentioned in the course of this work, we shall give a few introductory particulars concerning them.

The Flatheads in question are not to be confounded with those of the name who dwell about the lower waters of the Columbia; neither do they flatten their heads, as the others do. They inhabit the banks of a river on the west side of the mountains, and are described as simple, honest, and hospitable. Like all people of similar character, whether civilized or savage, they are prone to be imposed upon; and are

especially maltreated by the ruthless Blackfeet, who harass them in their villages, steal their horses by night, or openly carry them off in the face of day, without provoking pursuit or retaliation.

The Shoshonies are a branch of the once powerful and prosperous tribe of the Snakes, who possessed a glorious hunting country about the upper forks of the Missouri, abounding in beaver and buffalo. Their hunting ground was occasionally invaded by the Blackfeet, but the Snakes battled bravely for their domains, and a long and bloody feud existed, with variable success. At length the Hudson's Bay Company, extending their trade into the interior, had dealings with the Blackfeet, who were nearest to them, and supplied them with fire-arms. The Snakes, who occasionally traded with the Spaniards, endeavoured, but in vain, to obtain similar weapons; the Spanish traders wisely refused to arm them so formidably. The Blackfeet had now a vast advantage, and soon dispossessed the poor Snakes of their favourite hunting grounds, their land of plenty, and drove

them from place to place, until they were fain to take refuge in the wildest and most desolate recesses of the Rocky mountains. Even here they are subjected to occasional visits from their implacable foes, as long as they have horses, or any other property, to tempt the plunderer. Thus by degrees the Snakes have become a scattered, broken spirited, impoverished people; keeping about lonely rivers and mountain streams, and subsisting chiefly upon fish. Such of them as still possess horses, and occasionally figure as hunters, are called Shoshonies; but there is another class, the most abject and forlorn, who are called Shuckers, or more commonly Diggers and Root eaters. These are a shy, secret, solitary race, who keep in the most retired parts of the mountains, lurking like gnomes in caverns and clefts of the rocks, and subsisting in a great measure on the roots of the earth. Sometimes, in passing through a solitary mountain valley, the traveller comes perchance upon the bleeding carcass of a deer or buffalo that has just been slain. He looks round in vain for the hunter; the whole land-

scape is lifeless and deserted: at length he perceives a thread of smoke, curling up from among the crags and cliffs, and scrambling to the place, finds some forlorn and skulking brood of diggers, terrified at being discovered.

The Shoshonies, however, who, as has been observed, have still "horse to ride and weapon to wear," are somewhat bolder in their spirit, and more open and wide in their wanderings. In the autumn, when salmon disappear from the rivers, and hunger begins to pinch, they even venture down into their ancient hunting grounds, to make a foray among the buffaloes. In this perilous enterprise they are occasionally joined by the Flatheads, the persecutions of the Blackfeet having produced a close alliance and co-operation between these luckless and maltreated tribes. Still, notwithstanding their united force, every step they take within the debateable ground, is taken in fear and trembling, and with the utmost precaution: and an Indian trader assures us, that he has seen at least five hundred of them, armed and equipped for action, and keeping watch upon the hill

tops, while about fifty were hunting in the prairie. Their excursions are brief and hurried; as soon as they have collected and jerked sufficient buffalo meat for winter provisions, they pack their horses, abandon the dangerous hunting grounds, and hasten back to the mountains, happy if they have not the terrible Blackfeet rattling after them.

Such a confederate band of Shoshonies and Flatheads, was the one met by our travellers. It was bound on a visit to the Arapahoes, a tribe inhabiting the banks of the Nebraska. They were armed to the best of their scanty means, and some of the Shoshonies had bucklers of buffalo hide, adorned with feathers and leathern fringes, and which have a charmed virtue in their eyes, from having been prepared, with mystic ceremonies by their conjurers.

In company with this wandering band our travellers proceeded all day. In the evening they encamped near to each other in a defile of the mountains, on the borders of a stream running north, and falling into Bighorn river. In the vicinity of the camp, they found goose-

berries, strawberries, and currants, in great abundance. The defile bore traces of having been a thoroughfare for countless herds of buffaloes, though not one was to be seen. The hunters succeeded in killing an elk and several black-tailed deer.

They were now in the bosom of the second Bighorn ridge, with another lofty and snow-crowned mountain, full in view to the west. Fifteen miles of western course, brought them, on the following day, down into an intervening plain, well stocked with buffalo. Here the Snakes and Flatheads joined with the white hunters in a successful hunt, that soon filled the camp with provisions. •

On the morning of the 9th of September, the travellers parted company with their Indian friends, and continued on their course to the west. A march of thirty miles brought them, in the evening, to the banks of a rapid and beautifully clear stream about a hundred yards wide. It is the north fork or branch of the Bighorn river, but bears its peculiar name of the Wind river, from being subject in the winter

season to a continued blast which sweeps its banks and prevents the snow from lying on them. This blast is said to be caused by a narrow gap or funnel in the mountains through which the river forces its way between perpendicular precipices, resembling cut rocks.

This river gives its name to a whole range of mountains consisting of three parallel chains, eighty miles in length, and about twenty or twenty-five broad. One of its peaks is probably fifteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, being one of the highest of the Rocky Sierra. These mountains give rise, not merely to the Wind or Bighorn river, but to several branches of the Yellowstone and the Missouri on the east, and of the Columbia and Colorado on the west; thus dividing the sources of these mighty streams.

For five succeeding days, Mr. Hunt and his party continued up the course of the Wind river, to the distance of about eighty miles, crossing and recrossing it, according to its windings, and the nature of its banks; sometimes passing through valleys, at other times scrambling over

rocks and hills. The country in general was destitute of trees, but they passed through groves of wormwood, eight and ten feet in height, which they used occasionally for fuel, and they met with large quantities of wild flax.

The mountains were destitute of game; they came in sight of two grizzly bears, but could not get near enough for a shot; provisions, therefore, began to be scanty. They saw large flights of the kind of thrush commonly called the robin, and many smaller birds of migratory species; but the hills in general appeared lonely and with few signs of animal life. On the evening of the 14th September, they encamped on the forks of the Wind, or Bighorn river. The largest of these forks came from the range of Wind river mountains.

The hunters who served as guides to the party in this part of their route, had assured Mr. Hunt that, by following up Wind river, and crossing a single mountain ridge he would come upon the waters of the Columbia. The scarcity of game, however, which already had been felt to a pinching

degree, and which threatened them with famine among the sterile heights which lay before them, admonished them to change their course. It was determined, therefore, to make for a stream, which, they were informed, passed through the neighbouring mountains, to the south of west, on the grassy banks of which it was probable they would meet with buffalo. Accordingly, about three o'clock on the following day, meeting with a beaten Indian road which led in the proper direction, they struck into it, turning their backs upon Wind river.

In the course of the day, they came to a height that commanded an almost boundless prospect. Here one of the guides paused, and, after considering the vast landscape attentively, pointed to three mountain peaks glistening with snow, which rose, he said, above a fork of Columbia river. They were hailed by the travellers with that joy with which a beacon on a seashore is hailed by mariners after a long and dangerous voyage. It is true there was many a weary league to be traversed before they should reach these landmarks, for, allowing for their evident

height, and the extreme transparency of the atmosphere, they could not be much less than a hundred miles distant. Even after reaching them, there would yet remain hundreds of miles of their journey to be accomplished. All these matters were forgotten in the joy at seeing the first landmarks of the Columbia, that river which formed the bourn of the expedition. These remarkable peaks are known to some travellers as the Tetons; as they had been guiding points for many days, to Mr. Hunt, he gave them the name of the Pilot Knobs.

The travellers continued their course to the south of west for about forty miles, through a region so elevated that patches of snow lay on the highest summits, and on the northern declivities. At length they came to the desired stream, the object of their search, the waters of which flowed to the west. It was, in fact, a branch of the Colorado, which falls into the gulf of California, and had received from the hunters the name of Spanish river, from information given by the Indians, that Spaniards resided upon its lower waters.

The aspect of this river and its vicinity was cheering to the wayworn and hungry travellers. Its banks were green, and there were grassy valleys running from it in various directions, into the heart of the rugged mountains, with herds of buffalo quietly grazing. The hunters sallied forth with keen alacrity, and soon returned laden with provisions.

In this part of the mountains Mr. Hunt met with three different kinds of gooseberries. The common purple, on a low and very thorny bush; a yellow kind, of an excellent flavour, growing on a stalk free from thorns; and a deep purple, of the size and taste of our winter grape, with a thorny stalk. There were also three kinds of currants, one very large, and well tasted, of a purple colour, and growing on a bush eight or nine feet high. Another of a yellow colour, and of the size and taste of the large red currant, the bush four or five feet high; and the third a beautiful scarlet, resembling the strawberry in sweetness, though rather insipid, and growing on a low bush.

On the 17th, they continued down the course of the river, making fifteen miles to the southwest. The river abounded with geese and ducks, and there were signs of its being inhabited by beaver and otters: indeed they were now approaching regions where these animals, the great objects of the fur trade, are said to abound. They encamped for the night opposite the end of a mountain in the west, which was probably the last chain of the Rocky mountains. On the following morning they abandoned the main course of Spanish river, and taking a northwest direction for eight miles, came upon one of its little tributaries, issuing out of the bosom of the mountains, and running through green meadows, yielding pasturage to herds of buffalo. As these were probably the last of that animal they would meet with, they encamped on the grassy banks of the river, determined to spend several days in hunting, so as to be able to jerk sufficient meat to supply them until they should reach the waters of the Columbia, where they trusted to find fish enough for their support. A little

repose, too, was necessary for both men and horses, after their rugged and incessant marching; having in the course of the last seventeen days, traversed two hundred and sixty miles of rough, and in many parts, steril mountain country.

CHAPTER XII.

A PLENTIFUL HUNTING CAMP—SHOSHONIE HUNTERS—HOBACK'S
RIVER—MAD RIVER—ENCAMPMENT NEAR THE PILOT KNOBS—
A CONSULTATION—PREPARATIONS FOR A PERILOUS VOYAGE.

FIVE days were passed by Mr. Hunt and his companions in the fresh meadows watered by the bright little mountain stream. The hunters made great havoc among the buffaloes, and brought in quantities of meat; the voyageurs busied themselves about the fires, roasting and stewing for present purposes, or drying provisions for the journey; the packhorses eased of their burdens, rolled in the grass, or grazed at large about the ample pastures; those of the party who had no call upon their services, indulged in the luxury of perfect relaxation,

and the camp presented a picture of rude feasting and revelry, of mingled bustle and repose, characteristic of a halt in a fine hunting country. In the course of one of their excursions, some of the men came in sight of a small party of Indians, who instantly fled in great apparent consternation. They immediately returned to camp with the intelligence: upon which Mr. Hunt and four others flung themselves upon their horses and sallied forth to reconnoitre. After riding for about eight miles, they came upon a wild mountain scene. A lonely green valley stretched before them, surrounded by rugged heights. A herd of buffalo were careering madly through it, with a troop of savage horsemen in full chase, plying them with their bows and arrows. The appearance of Mr. Hunt and his companions put an abrupt end to the hunt; the buffalo scuttled off in one direction, while the Indians plied their lashes and galloped off in another, as fast as their steeds could carry them. Mr. Hunt gave chase; there was a sharp scamper, though of short continuance. Two young Indians, who were

indifferently mounted, were soon overtaken. They were terribly frightened, and evidently gave themselves up for lost. By degrees their fears were allayed by kind treatment; but they continued to regard the strangers with a mixture of awe and wonder; for it was the first time in their lives they had ever seen a white man.

They belonged to a party of Snakes who had come across the mountains on their autumnal hunting excursion to provide buffalo meat for the winter. Being persuaded of the peaceable intentions of Mr. Hunt and his companions, they willingly conducted them to their camp. It was pitched in a narrow valley on the margin of a stream. The tents were of dressed skins; some of them fantastically painted; with horses grazing about them. The approach of the party caused a transient alarm in the camp, for these poor Indians were ever on the look out for cruel foes. No sooner, however, did they recognise the garb and complexion of their visitors, than their apprehensions were changed into joy; for some of them had dealt with white men, and

knew them to be friendly, and to abound with articles of singular value. They welcomed them, therefore, to their tents, set food before them, and entertained them to the best of their power.

They had been successful in their hunt, and their camp was full of jerked buffalo meat; all of the choicest kind, and extremely fat. Mr. Hunt purchased enough of them, in addition to what had been killed and cured by his own hunters, to load all the horses excepting those reserved for the partners and the wife of Pierre Dorion. He found also a few beaver skins in their camp, for which he paid liberally, as an inducement for them to hunt for more; informing them that some of his party intended to live among the mountains, and trade with the native hunters for their peltries. The poor Snakes soon comprehended the advantages thus held out to them, and promised to exert themselves to procure a quantity of beaver skins for future traffic.

Being now well supplied with provisions, Mr. Hunt broke up his encampment on the

24th of September, and continued on to the west. A march of fifteen miles, over a mountain ridge, brought them to a stream about fifty feet in width, which Hoback, one of their guides, who had trapped about the neighbourhood when in the service of Mr. Henry, recognised for one of the head waters of the Columbia. The travellers hailed it with delight, as the first stream they had encountered tending toward their point of destination. They kept along it for two days, during which, from the contribution of many rills and brooks, it gradually swelled into a small river. As it meandered among rocks and precipices, they were frequently obliged to ford it, and such was its rapidity, that the men were often in danger of being swept away. Sometimes the banks advanced so close upon the river, that they were obliged to scramble up and down their rugged promontories, or to skirt along their bases where there was scarce a foothold. Their horses had dangerous falls in some of these passes. One of them rolled, with his load, nearly two hundred feet down hill into the river, but without

receiving any injury. At length they emerged from these stupendous defiles, and continued for several miles along the bank of Hoback's river, through one of the stern mountain valleys. Here it was joined by a river of greater magnitude and swifter current, and their united waters swept off through the valley in one impetuous stream, which, from its rapidity and turbulence, had received the name of Mad river. At the confluence of these streams the travellers encamped. An important point in their arduous journey had been obtained, a few miles from their camp rose the three vast snowy peaks called the Tetons, or the Pilot Knobs, the great landmarks of the Columbia, by which they had shaped their course through this mountain wilderness. By their feet flowed the rapid current of Mad river, a stream ample enough to admit of the navigation of canoes, and down which they might possibly be able to steer their course to the main body of the Columbia. The Canadian voyageurs rejoiced at the idea of once more launching themselves upon their favourite element; of exchanging their horses for canoes,

and of gliding down the bosoms of rivers, instead of scrambling over the backs of mountains. Others of the party, also, inexperienced in this kind of travelling, considered their toils and troubles as drawing to a close. They had conquered the chief difficulties of this great rocky barrier, and now flattered themselves with the hope of an easy downward course for the rest of their journey. Little did they dream of the hardships and perils by land and water, which were yet to be encountered in the frightful wilderness that intervened between them and the shores of the Pacific!

CHAPTER XIII.

A CONSULTATION WHETHER TO PROCEED BY LAND OR WATER—
PREPARATIONS FOR BOAT BUILDING—AN EXPLORING PARTY—
A PARTY OF TRAPPERS DETACHED—TWO SNAKE VISITORS—
THEIR REPORT CONCERNING THE RIVER—CONFIRMED BY THE
EXPLORING PARTY—MAD RIVER ABANDONED—ARRIVAL AT
HENRY'S FORT—DETACHMENT OF ROBINSON, HOBACK, AND
REZNER TO TRAP—MR. MILLER RESOLVES TO ACCOMPANY THEM
—THEIR DEPARTURE.

ON the banks of Mad river Mr. Hunt held a consultation with the other partners as to their future movements. The wild and impetuous current of the river rendered him doubtful whether it might not abound with impediments lower down, sufficient to render the navigation of it slow and perilous, if not impracticable.

The hunters who had acted as guides, knew nothing of the character of the river below; what rocks, and shoals, and rapids might obstruct it, or through what mountains and deserts it might pass. Should they then abandon their horses, cast themselves loose in fragile barks upon this wild, doubtful, and unknown river; or should they continue their more toilsome and tedious, but perhaps more certain wayfaring by land?

The vote, as might have been expected, was almost unanimous for embarkation; for when men are in difficulties every change seems to be for the better. The difficulty now was to find timber of sufficient size for the construction of canoes, the trees in these high mountain regions being chiefly a scrubbed growth of pines and cedars, aspens, haws and service berries, and a small kind of cotton tree with a leaf resembling that of the willow. There was a species of large fir, but so full of knots as to endanger the axe in hewing it. After searching for some time, a growth of timber, of sufficient

size, was found lower down the river, whereupon the encampment was moved to the vicinity.

The men were now set to work to fell trees, and the mountains echoed to the unwonted sound of their axes. While preparations were thus going on for a voyage down the river, Mr. Hunt, who still entertained doubts of its practicability, despatched an exploring party, consisting of John Reed the clerk, John Day the hunter, and Pierre Dorion the interpreter, with orders to proceed several days' march along the stream, and notice its course and character.

After their departure, Mr. Hunt turned his thoughts to another object of importance. He had now arrived at the head waters of the Columbia, which were among the main points embraced by the enterprise of Mr. Astor. These upper streams were reputed to abound in beaver, and had as yet been unmolested by the white trapper. The numerous signs of beaver met with during the recent search for timber, gave evidence that the neighbourhood was a good "trapping ground." Here then it was

proper to begin to cast loose those leashes of hardy trappers, that are detached from trading parties, in the very heart of the wilderness. The men detached in the present instance were Alexander Carson, Louis St. Michel, Pierre Detayé, and Pierre Delaunay. Trappers generally go in pairs, that they may assist, protect and comfort each other in their lonely and perilous occupations. Thus Carson and St. Michel formed one couple, and Detayé and Delaunay another. They were fitted out with traps, arms, ammunition, horses, and every other requisite, and were to trap upon the upper part of Mad river, and upon the neighbouring streams of the mountains. This would probably occupy them for some months; and, when they should have collected a sufficient quantity of peltries, they were to pack them upon their horses and make the best of their way to the mouth of Columbia river, or to any intermediate post which might be established by the company. They took leave of their comrades and started off on their several courses with stout hearts, and cheerful countenances; though these lonely

cruisings into a wild and hostile wilderness seem to the uninitiated equivalent to being cast adrift in the ship's yawl in the midst of the ocean.

Of the perils that attend the lonely trapper, the reader will have sufficient proof, when he comes, in the after part of this work, to learn the hard fortunes of these poor fellows in the course of their wild peregrinations.

The trappers had not long departed, when two Snake Indians wandered into the camp. When they perceived that the strangers were fabricating canoes, they shook their heads and gave them to understand that the river was not navigable. Their information, however, was scoffed at by some of the party, who were obstinately bent on embarkation, but was confirmed by the exploring party who returned after several days absence. They had kept along the river with great difficulty for two days, and found it a narrow, crooked, turbulent stream, confined in a rocky channel, with many rapids, and occasionally overhung with precipices. From the summit of one of these they

had caught a bird's eye view of its boisterous career, for a great distance, through the heart of the mountain, with impending rocks and cliffs. Satisfied, from this view, that it was useless to follow its course either by land or water, they had given up all further investigation.

These concurring reports determined Mr. Hunt to abandon Mad river, and seek some more navigable stream. This determination was concurred in by all his associates excepting Mr. Miller, who had become impatient of the fatigue of land travel, and was for immediate embarkation at all hazards. This gentleman had been in a gloomy and irritated state of mind for some time past, being troubled with a bodily malady that rendered travelling on horseback extremely irksome to him, and being, moreover, discontented with having a smaller share in the expedition than his comrades. His unreasonable objections to a further march by land were overruled, and the party prepared to decamp.

Robinson, Hoback, and Rezner, the three

hunters who had hitherto served as guides among the mountains, now stepped forward, and advised Mr. Hunt to make for the post established during the preceding year by Mr. Henry, of the Missouri Fur Company. They had been with Mr. Henry, and, as far as they could judge by the neighbouring landmarks, his post could not be very far off. They presumed there could be but one intervening ridge of mountains, which might be passed without any great difficulty. Henry's post, or fort, was on an upper branch of the Columbia, down which they made no doubt it would be easy to navigate in canoes.

The two Snake Indians being questioned in the matter, showed a perfect knowledge of the situation of the post, and offered, with great alacrity, to guide them to the place. Their offer was accepted, greatly to the displeasure of Mr. Miller, who seemed obstinately bent upon braving the perils of Mad river.

The weather for a few days past had been stormy; with rain and sleet. The Rocky mountains are subject to tempestuous winds

from the west; these sometimes come in flaws or currents, making a path through the forests many yards in width, and whirling off trunks and branches to a great distance. The present storm subsided on the 3d of October, leaving all the surrounding heights covered with snow; for, while rain had fallen in the valley, it had snowed on the hill tops.

On the 4th, they broke up their encampment, and crossed the river, the water coming up to the girths of their horses. After travelling four miles, they encamped at the foot of the mountain, the last, as they hoped, which they should have to traverse. Four days more took them across it, and over several plains, watered by beautiful little streams, tributaries of Mad river. Near one of their encampments there was a hot spring continually emitting a cloud of vapour. These elevated plains, which give a peculiar character to the mountains, are frequented by large gangs of antelopes, fleet as the wind.

On the evening of the 8th October, after a cold wintry day, with gusts of westerly wind and flur-

ries of snow, they arrived at the sought for post of Mr. Henry. Here he had fixed himself, after being compelled by the hostilities of the Blackfeet, to abandon the upper waters of the Missouri. The post, however, was deserted, for Mr. Henry had left it in the course of the preceding spring, and, as it afterwards appeared, had fallen in with Mr. Lisa, at the Aricara village on the Missouri, sometime after the separation of Mr. Hunt and his party.

The weary travellers gladly took possession of the deserted log huts which had formed the post, and which stood on the bank of a stream upwards of a hundred yards wide, on which they intended to embark. There being plenty of suitable timber in the neighbourhood, Mr. Hunt immediately proceeded to construct canoes. As he would have to leave his horses and their accoutrements here, he determined to make this a trading post, where the trappers and hunters, to be distributed about the country, might repair; and where the traders might touch on their way through the mountains to and from the establishment at the mouth of

the Columbia. He informed the two Snake Indians of this determination, and engaged them to remain in that neighbourhood and take care of the horses until the white men should return, promising them ample rewards for their fidelity. It may seem a desperate chance to trust to the faith and honesty of two such vagabonds; but, as the horses would have, at all events, to be abandoned, and would otherwise become the property of the first vagrant horde that should encounter them, it was one chance in favour of their being regained.

At this place another detachment of hunters prepared to separate from the party for the purpose of trapping beaver. Three of these had already been in this neighbourhood, being the veteran Robinson and his companions, Hoback and Rezner, who had accompanied Mr. Henry across the mountains, and who had been picked up by Mr. Hunt on the Missouri, on their way home to Kentucky. According to agreement they were fitted out with horses, traps, ammunition, and every thing requisite

for their undertaking, and were to bring in all the peltries they should collect, either to this trading post, or to the establishment at the mouth of Columbia river. Another hunter, of the name of Cass, was associated with them in their enterprise. It is in this way that small knots of trappers and hunters are distributed about the wilderness by the fur companies, and like cranes and bitterns, haunt its solitary streams. Robinson the Kentuckian, the veteran of the "bloody ground," who, as has already been noted, had been scalped by the Indians in his younger days, was the leader of this little band. When they were about to depart, Mr. Miller called the partners together, and threw up his share in the company, declaring his intention of joining the party of trappers.

This resolution struck every one with astonishment, Mr. Miller being a man of education and of cultivated habits, and little fitted for the rude life of a hunter. Beside, the precarious and slender profits arising from such a life were

beneath the prospects of one who held a share in the general enterprise. Mr. Hunt was especially concerned and mortified at his determination, as it was through his advice and influence he had entered into the concern. He endeavoured, therefore, to dissuade him from this sudden resolution ; representing its rashness, and the hardships and perils to which it would expose him. He earnestly advised him, however he might feel dissatisfied with the enterprise, still to continue on in company until they should reach the mouth of Columbia river. There they would meet the expedition that was to come by sea ; when, should he still feel disposed to relinquish the undertaking, Mr. Hunt pledged himself to furnish him a passage home in one of the vessels belonging to the company.

To all this, Miller replied abruptly, that it was useless to argue with him, as his mind was made up. They might furnish him, or not, as they pleased, with the necessary supplies, but he was determined to part company here, and

set off with the trappers. So saying, he flung out of their presence without vouchsafing any further conversation.

Much as this wayward conduct gave them anxiety, the partners saw it was in vain to remonstrate. Every attention was paid to fit him out for his headstrong undertaking. He was provided with four horses, and all the articles he required. The two Snakes undertook to conduct him and his companions to an encampment of their tribe, lower down among the mountains, from whom they would receive information as to the best trapping grounds. After thus guiding them, the Snakes were to return to Fort Henry, as the new trading post was called, and take charge of the horses which the party would leave there, of which, after all the hunters were supplied, there remained seventy-seven. These matters being all arranged, Mr. Miller set out with his companions, under guidance of the two Snakes, on the 10th of October; and much did it grieve the friends of that gentleman to see him thus wantonly casting himself loose upon savage

life. How he and his comrades fared in the wilderness, and how the Snakes acquitted themselves of their trust, respecting the horses, will hereafter appear in the course of these rambling anecdotes.

CHAPTER XIV.

SCANTY FARE—A MENDICANT SNAKE—EMBARCATION ON HENRY RIVER—JOY OF THE VOYAGEURS—ARRIVAL AT SNAKE RIVER—RAPIDS AND BREAKERS—BEGINNING OF MISFORTUNES—SNAKE ENCAMPMENTS—PARLEY WITH A SAVAGE—A SECOND DISASTER—LOSS OF A BOATMAN—THE CALDRON LINN.

WHILE the canoes were in preparation, the hunters ranged about the neighbourhood, but with little success. Tracts of buffaloes were to be seen in all directions, but none of a fresh date. There were some elk, but extremely wild; two only were killed. Antelopes were likewise seen, but too sly and fleet to be approached. A few beavers were taken every night, and salmon trout of a small size, so that the camp had principally to subsist upon dried buffalo meat.

On the 14th, a poor, half-naked Snake Indian, one of that forlorn caste called the Shuckers, or diggers, made his appearance at the camp. He came from some lurking place among the rocks and cliffs, and presented a picture of that famishing wretchedness to which these lonely fugitives among the mountains are sometimes reduced. Having received wherewithal to allay his hunger, he disappeared, but in the course of a day or two returned to the camp bringing with him his son, a miserable boy, still more naked and forlorn than himself. Food was given to both; they skulked about the camp like hungry hounds, seeking what they might devour, and having gathered up the feet and entrails of some beavers that were lying about, slunk off with them to their den among the rocks.

By the 18th of October, fifteen canoes were completed, and on the following day the party embarked with their effects; leaving their horses grazing about the banks, and trusting to the honesty of the two Snakes, and some special turn of good luck for their future recovery.

The current bore them along at a rapid rate ; the light spirits of the Canadian voyageurs, which had occasionally flagged upon land, rose to their accustomed buoyancy on finding themselves again upon the water. They wielded their paddles with their wonted dexterity, and for the first time made the mountains echo with their favourite boat songs.

In the course of the day the little squadron arrived at the confluence of Henry and Mad rivers, which, thus united, swelled into a beautiful stream of a light pea-green colour, navigable for boats of any size, and which, from the place of junction, took the name of Snake river, a stream doomed to be the scene of much disaster to the travellers. The banks were here and there fringed with willow thickets and small cotton-wood trees. The weather was cold, and it snowed all day, and great flocks of ducks and geese, sporting in the water or streaming through the air, gave token that winter was at hand ; yet the hearts of the travellers were light, and, as they glided down the little river, they flattered themselves with the hope of soon reach-

ing the Columbia. After making thirty miles in a southerly direction, they encamped for the night in a neighbourhood which required some little vigilance, as there were recent traces of grizzly bears among the thickets.

On the following day the river increased in width and beauty; flowing parallel to a range of mountains on the left, which at times were finely reflected in its light green waters. The three snowy summits of the Pilot Knobs or Tetons, were still seen towering in the distance. After pursuing a swift but placid course for twenty miles, the current began to foam and brawl, and assume the wild and broken character common to the streams west of the Rocky mountains. In fact, the rivers which flow from those mountains to the Pacific, are essentially different from those which traverse the great prairies on their eastern declivities. The latter, though sometimes boisterous, are generally free from obstructions, and easily navigated; but the rivers to the west of the mountains descend more steeply and impetuously, and are continually liable to cascades and rapids. The latter abounded in the part of

the river which the travellers were now descending. Two of the canoes filled among the breakers; the crews were saved, but much of the lading was lost or damaged, and one of the canoes drifted down the stream and was broken among the rocks.

On the following day, October 21st, they made but a short distance when they came to a dangerous strait, where the river was compressed for nearly half a mile between perpendicular rocks, reducing it to the width of twenty yards, and increasing its violence. Here they were obliged to pass the canoes down cautiously by a line from the impending banks. This consumed a great part of a day; and after they had re-embarked they were soon again impeded by rapids, when they had to unload their canoes and carry them and their cargoes for some distance by land. It is at these places, called "portages," that the Canadian voyageur exhibits his most valuable qualities; carrying heavy burdens, and toiling to and fro, on land and in the water, over rocks and precipices, among brakes and brambles, not only without a

murmur, but with the greatest cheerfulness and alacrity, joking and laughing, and singing scraps of old French ditties.

The spirits of the party, however, which had been elated on first varying their journey from land to water, had now lost some of their buoyancy. Every thing ahead was wrapped in uncertainty. They knew nothing of the river on which they were floating. It had never before been navigated by a white man, nor could they meet with an Indian to give them any information concerning it. It kept on its course through a vast wilderness of silent and apparently uninhabited mountains, without a savage wigwam upon its banks, or bark upon its waters. The difficulties and perils they had already passed, made them apprehend others before them, that might effectually bar their progress. As they glided onward, however, they regained heart and hope. The current continued to be strong; but it was steady, and though they met with frequent rapids, none of them were bad. Mountains were constantly to be seen in different directions, but sometimes the swift river glided

through prairies, and was bordered by small cotton-wood trees and willows. These prairies at certain seasons are ranged by migratory herds of the wide-wandering buffalo, the tracks of which, though not of recent date, were frequently to be seen. Here, too, were to be found the prickly pear or Indian fig, a plant which loves a more southern climate. On the land were large flights of magpies, and American robins; whole fleets of ducks and geese navigated the river, or flew off in long streaming files at the approach of the canoes; while the frequent establishments of the pains-taking and quiet-loving beaver, showed that the solitude of these waters was rarely disturbed, even by the all-pervading savage.

They had now come near two hundred and eighty miles since leaving Fort Henry, yet without seeing a human being, or a human habitation; a wild and desert solitude extended on either side of the river, apparently almost destitute of animal life. At length, on the 24th of October, they were gladdened by the sight of some savage tents, and hastened to land, and

visit them, for they were anxious to procure information to guide them on their route. On their approach, however, the savages fled in consternation. They proved to be a wandering band of Shoshonies. In their tents were great quantities of small fish about two inches long, together with roots and seeds, or grain, which they were drying for winter provisions. They appeared to be destitute of tools of any kind, yet there were bows and arrows very well made; the former were formed of pine, cedar, or bone, strengthened by sinews, and the latter of the wood of rose bushes, and other crooked plants, but carefully straightened, and tipped with stone of a bottle-green colour.

There were also vessels of willow and grass, so closely wrought as to hold water, and a seine neatly made with meshes, in the ordinary manner, of the fibres of wild flax or nettle. The humble effects of the poor savages remained unmolested by their visitors, and a few small articles, with a knife or two, were left in the camp, and were no doubt regarded as invaluable prizes.

Shortly after leaving this deserted camp, and re-embarking in the canoes, the travellers met with three of the Snakes on a triangular raft made of flags or reeds; such was their rude mode of navigating the river. They were entirely naked excepting small mantles of hare skins over their shoulders. The canoes approached near enough to gain a full view of them, but they were not to be brought to a parley.

All further progress for the day was barred by a fall in the river of about thirty feet perpendicular; at the head of which the party encamped for the night.

The next day was one of excessive toil, and but little progress: the river winding through a wild rocky country, and being interrupted by frequent rapids, among which the canoes were in great peril. On the succeeding day they again visited a camp of wandering Snakes, but the inhabitants fled with terror at the sight of a fleet of canoes, filled with white men, coming down their solitary river.

As Mr. Hunt was extremely anxious to gain information concerning his route, he endea-

voured by all kinds of friendly signs to entice back the fugitives. At length one, who was on horseback, ventured back with fear and trembling. He was better clad, and in better condition than most of his vagrant tribe that Mr. Hunt had yet seen. The chief object of his return appeared to be to intercede for a quantity of dried meat and salmon trout, which he had left behind; on which, probably, he depended for his winter's subsistence. The poor wretch approached with hesitation, the alternate dread of famine and of white men operating upon his mind. He made the most abject signs, imploring Mr. Hunt not to carry off his food. The latter tried in every way to reassure him, and offered him knives in exchange for his provisions: great as was the temptation, the poor Snake could only prevail upon himself to spare a part; keeping a feverish watch over the rest, lest it should be taken away. It was in vain Mr. Hunt made inquiries of him concerning his route, and the course of the river. The Indian was too much frightened and bewildered to comprehend him or to reply; he did nothing

but alternately commend himself to the protection of the Good Spirit, and supplicate Mr. Hunt not to take away his fish and buffalo meat; and in this state they left him, trembling about his treasures.

In the course of that and the next day they made nearly eighty miles; the river inclining to the south of west, and being clear and beautiful, nearly half a mile in width, with many populous communities of the beaver along its banks. The 28th of October, however, was a day of disaster. The river again became rough and impetuous, and was chafed and broken by numerous rapids. These grew more and more dangerous, and the utmost skill was required to steer among them. Mr. Crooks was seated in the second canoe of the squadron, and had an old experienced Canadian for steersman, named Antoine Clappine, one of the most valuable of the voyageurs. The leading canoe had glided safely among the turbulent and roaring surges, but in following it, Mr. Crooks perceived that his canoe was bearing towards a rock. He called out to the steersman, but his warning

voice was either unheard or unheeded. In the next moment they struck upon the rock. The canoe was split and overturned. There were five persons on board. Mr. Crooks and one of his companions were thrown amidst roaring breakers and a whirling current, but succeeded, by strong swimming, to reach the shore. Clappine and two others clung to the shattered bark, and drifted with it to a rock. The wreck struck the rock with one end, and swinging round flung poor Clappine off into the raging stream, which swept him away, and he perished. His comrades succeeded in getting upon the rock, from whence they were afterwards taken off.

This disastrous event brought the whole squadron to a halt, and struck a chill into every bosom. Indeed, they had arrived at a terrific strait, that forbade all further progress in the canoes, and dismayed the most experienced voyageur. The whole body of the river was compressed into a space of less than thirty feet in width, between two ledges of rocks, upwards of two hundred feet high, and formed a whirling and tumultuous vortex, so frightfully agitated,

as to receive the name of "The Caldron Linn." Beyond this fearful abyss, the river kept raging and roaring on, until lost to sight among impending precipices.

CHAPTER XV.

GLOOMY COUNCIL—EXPLORING PARTIS—DISCOURAGING REPORTS
—DISASTROUS EXPERIMENT—DETACHMENTS IN QUEST OF SUC-
COUR—CACHES, HOW MADE—RETURN OF ONE OF THE DETACH-
MENTS — UNSUCCESSFUL — FURTHER DISAPPOINTMENTS — THE
DEVIL'S SCUTTLE HOLE.

MR. HUNT and his companions encamped upon the borders of the Caldron Linn, and held gloomy council as to their future course. The recent wreck had dismayed even the voyageurs, and the fate of their popular comrade, Clappine, one of the most adroit and experienced of their fraternity, had struck sorrow to their hearts; for, with all their levity, these thoughtless beings have great kindness towards each other.

The whole distance they had navigated since leaving Henry's fort, was computed to

be about three hundred and forty miles ; strong apprehensions were now entertained that the tremendous impediments before them would oblige them to abandon their canoes. It was determined to send exploring parties on each side of the river, to ascertain whether it was possible to navigate it further. Accordingly, on the following morning three men were despatched along the south bank, while Mr. Hunt and three others proceeded along the north. The two parties returned after a weary scramble among swamp, rocks, and precipices, and with very disheartening accounts. For nearly forty miles that they had explored, the river foamed and roared along through a deep and narrow channel, from twenty to thirty yards wide, which it had worn, in the course of ages, through the heart of a barren rocky country. The precipices on each side, were often two and three hundred feet high, sometimes perpendicular and sometimes overhanging, so that it was impossible, excepting in one or two places, to get down to the margin of the stream. This dreary strait was rendered

the more dangerous by frequent rapids, and occasionally perpendicular falls from ten to forty feet in height ; so that it seemed almost hopeless to attempt to pass the canoes down it. The party, however, who had explored the south side of the river had found a place, about six miles from the camp, where they thought it possible the canoes might be carried down the bank and launched upon the stream, and from whence they might make their way with the aid of occasional portages. Four of the best canoes were accordingly selected for the experiment, and were transported to the place on the shoulders of sixteen of the men. At the same time, Mr. Reed the clerk, and three men, were detached to explore the river still further down than the previous scouting parties had been, and at the same time to look out for Indians from whom provisions might be obtained and a supply of horses, should it be found necessary to proceed by land.

The party who had been sent with the canoes returned on the following day, weary and de-

jected. One of the canoes had been swept away with all the weapons and effects of four of the voyageurs, in attempting to pass it down a rapid by means of a line. The other three had stuck fast among the rocks, so that it was impossible to move them; the men returned, therefore, in despair, and declared the river unnavigable.

The situation of the unfortunate travellers was now gloomy in the extreme. They were in the heart of an unknown wilderness, untraversed as yet by a white man. They were at a loss what route to take, and how far they were from the ultimate place of their destination, nor could they meet, in these uninhabited wilds, with any human being to give them information. The repeated accidents to their canoes had reduced their stock of provisions to five days allowance, and there was now every appearance of soon having famine added to their other sufferings.

This last circumstance rendered it more perilous to keep together than to separate. Accordingly, after a little anxious but bewildered

council, it was determined that several small detachments should start off in different directions, headed by the several partners. Should any of them succeed in falling in with friendly Indians, within a reasonable distance, and obtaining a supply of provisions and horses, they were to return to the aid of the main body: otherwise, they were to shift for themselves, and shape their course according to circumstances; keeping the mouth of Columbia river as the ultimate point of their wayfaring. Accordingly, three several parties set off from the camp at Caldron Linn, in opposite directions. Mr. M'Lellan, with three men, kept down along the bank of the river. Mr. Crooks, with five others, turned their steps up it; retracing by land the wary course they had made by water, intending, should they not find relief nearer at hand, to keep on until they should reach Henry's fort, where they hoped to find the horses they had left there, and to return with them to the main body.

The third party, composed of five men, was headed by Mr. M'Kenzie, who struck to the

northward, across the desert plains, in hopes of coming upon the main stream of the Columbia.

Having seen these three adventurous bands depart upon their forlorn expeditions, Mr. Hunt turned his thoughts to provide for the subsistence of the main body left to his charge, and to prepare for their future march. There remained with him thirty-one men, besides the squaw and two children of Pierre Dorion. There was no game to be met with in the neighbourhood; but beavers were occasionally trapped about the river banks, which afforded a scanty supply of food; in the mean time they comforted themselves that some one or other of the foraging detachments would be successful, and return with relief.

Mr. Hunt now set to work with all diligence, to prepare *caches*, in which to deposite the baggage and merchandise, of which it would be necessary to disburden themselves, preparatory to their weary march by land; and here we shall give a brief description of those contrivances, so noted in the wilderness.

A cache is a term common among traders

and hunters. to designate a hiding place for provisions and effects. It is derived from the French word *cache*, to conceal, and originated among the early colonists of Canada and Louisiana; but the secret depository which it designates was in use among the aboriginals long before the intrusion of the white men. It is, in fact, the only mode that migratory hordes have of preserving their valuables from robbery, during their long absences from their villages or accustomed haunts, on hunting expeditions, or during the vicissitudes of war. The utmost skill and caution are required to render these places of concealment invisible to the lynx eye of an Indian. The first care is to seek out a proper situation, which is generally some dry low bank of clay, on the margin of a water course. As soon as the precise spot is pitched upon, blankets, saddle cloths, and other coverings, are spread over the surrounding grass and bushes, to prevent foot tracks, or any other derangement; and as few hands as possible are employed. A circle of about two feet in diameter is then nicely cut in the sod,

which is carefully removed, with the loose soil immediately beneath it, and laid aside in a place where it will be safe from any thing that may change its appearance. The uncovered area is then digged perpendicularly to the depth of about three feet, and is then gradually widened so as to form a conical chamber six or seven feet deep. The whole of the earth displaced by this process, being of a different colour from that on the surface, is handed up in a vessel, and heaped into a skin or cloth, in which it is conveyed to the stream and thrown into the midst of the current, that it may be entirely carried off. Should the cache not be formed in the vicinity of a stream, the earth thus thrown up is carried to a distance, and scattered in such a manner as not to leave the minutest trace. The cave being formed, is well lined with dry grass, bark, sticks, and poles, and occasionally a dried hide. The property intended to be hidden is then laid in, after having been well aired: a hide is spread over it, and dried grass, brush, and stones, thrown in, and trampled down until

the pit is filled to the neck, the loose soil, which had been put aside, is then brought, and rammed down firmly, to prevent its caving in, and is frequently sprinkled with water, to destroy the scent, lest the wolves and bears should be attracted to the place, and root up the concealed treasure. When the neck of the cache is nearly level with the surrounding surface, the sod is again fitted in with the utmost exactness, and any bushes, stocks or stones, that may have originally been about the spot, are restored to their former places. The blankets and other coverings are then removed from the surrounding herbage: all tracks are obliterated: the grass is gently raised by the hand to its natural position, and the minutest chip or straw is scrupulously gleaned up and thrown into the stream. After all is done, the place is abandoned for the night, and, if all be right next morning, is not visited again, until there be a necessity for re-opening the cache. Four men are sufficient in this way to conceal the amount of three tons' weight of provisions or merchandize, in the course of two days. Nine caches

were required to contain the goods and baggage which Mr. Hunt found it necessary to leave at this place.

Three days had been thus employed since the departure of the several detachments, when that of Mr. Crooks unexpectedly made its appearance. A momentary joy was diffused through the camp, for they supposed succour to be at hand. It was soon dispelled. Mr. Crooks and his companions had become completely disheartened by this retrograde march through a bleak and barren country; and had found, computing from their progress and the accumulating difficulties besetting every step, that it would be impossible to reach Henry's fort, and return to the main body in the course of the winter. They had determined, therefore to rejoin their comrades, and share their lot.

One avenue of hope was thus closed upon the anxious sojourners at the Caldron Linn; their main expectation of relief was now from the two parties under Reed and M'Lellan, which had proceeded down the river; for, as to

Mr. M'Kenzie's detachment, which had struck across the plains, they thought it would have sufficient difficulty in struggling forward through the trackless wilderness. For five days they continued to support themselves by trapping and fishing. Some fish of tolerable size were speared at night by the light of cedar torches; others, that were very small, were caught in nets with fine meshes. The product of their fishing, however, was very scanty. Their trapping was also precarious; and the tails and bellies of the beavers were dried and put by for the journey.

At length, two of the companions of Mr. Reed returned, and were hailed with the most anxious eagerness. Their report served but to increase the general despondency. They had followed Mr. Reed for some distance below the point to which Mr. Hunt had explored, but had met with no Indians, from whom to obtain information and relief. The river still presented the same furious aspect, brawling and boiling along a narrow and rugged channel, between rocks that rose like walls.

A lingering hope, which had been indulged by some of the party, of proceeding by water, was now finally given up: the long and terrific strait of the river set all further progress at defiance, and in their disgust at the place, and their vexation at the disasters sustained there, they gave it the indignant, though not very decorous appellation of the Devil's Scuttle Hole.

CHAPTER XVI.

DETERMINATION OF THE PARTY TO PROCEED ON FOOT—DREARY DESERTS BETWEEN SNAKE RIVER AND THE COLUMBIA—DISTRIBUTION OF EFFECTS PREPARATORY TO A MARCH—DIVISION OF THE PARTY—RUGGED MARCH ALONG THE RIVER—WILD AND BROKEN SCENERY—SHOSHONEES—ALARM OF A SNAKE ENCAMPMENT—INTERCOURSE WITH THE SNAKES—HORSE DEALING—VALUE OF A TIN KETTLE—SUFFERINGS FROM THIRST—A HORSE RECLAIMED—FORTITUDE OF AN INDIAN WOMAN—SCARCITY OF FOOD—DOG'S FLESH A DAINTY—NEWS OF MR. CROOKS AND HIS PARTY—PAINFUL TRAVELLING AMONG THE MOUNTAINS—SNOW STORMS—A DREARY MOUNTAIN PROSPECT—A BIVOUACK DURING A WINTRY NIGHT—RETURN TO THE RIVER BANK.

THE resolution of Mr. Hunt and his companions was now taken to set out immediately on foot. As to the other detachments that had in a manner gone forth to seek their fortunes, there was little chance of their return; they would probably make their own way through the

wilderness. At any rate, to linger in the vague hope of relief from them, would be to run the risk of perishing with hunger. Besides, the winter was rapidly advancing, and they had a long journey to make through an unknown country, where all kinds of perils might await them. They were yet, in fact, a thousand miles from Astoria, but the distance was unknown to them at the time: every thing before and around them was vague and conjectural, and wore an aspect calculated to inspire despondency.

In abandoning the river, they would have to launch forth upon vast trackless plains destitute of all means of subsistence, where they might perish of hunger and thirst. A dreary desert of sand and gravel extends from Snake river almost to the Columbia. Here and there is a thin and scanty herbage, insufficient for the pasturage of horse or buffalo. Indeed these treeless wastes between the Rocky mountains and the Pacific, are even more desolate and barren than the naked upper prairies on the

Atlantic side; they present vast desert tracts that must ever defy cultivation, and interpose dreary and thirsty wilds between the habitations of man, in traversing which, the wanderer will often be in danger of perishing.

Seeing the hopeless character of these wastes, Mr. Hunt and his companions determined to keep along the course of the river, where they would always have water at hand and would be able occasionally to procure fish and beaver, and might perchance meet with Indians, from whom they could obtain provisions.

They now made their final preparations for the march. All their remaining stock of provisions consisted of forty pounds of Indian corn, twenty pounds of grease, about five pounds of portable soup, and a sufficient quantity of dried meat to allow each man a pittance of five pounds and a quarter, to be reserved for emergencies. This being properly distributed, they deposited all their goods and superfluous articles in the caches, taking nothing with them but what was indispensable to the

journey. With all their management each man had to carry twenty pounds' weight beside his own articles and equipments.

That they might have the better chance of procuring subsistence in the scanty regions they were to traverse, they divided their party into two bands, Mr. Hunt, with eighteen men, beside Pierre Dorion and his family, was to proceed down the north side of the river, while Mr. Crooks with eighteen men, kept along the south side.

On the morning of the 9th of October, the two parties separated and set forth on their several courses. Mr. Hunt and his companions followed along the right bank of the river, which made its way far below them, brawling at the foot of perpendicular precipices of solid rock, two and three hundred feet high. For twenty-eight miles that they travelled this day, they found it impossible to get down to the margin of the stream. At the end of this distance they encamped for the night at a place which admitted a scrambling descent. It was with the greatest difficulty, however, that

they succeeded in getting up a kettle of water from the river for the use of the camp. As some rain had fallen in the afternoon, they passed the night under the shelter of the rocks.

The next day they continued thirty-two miles to the northwest, keeping along the river, which still ran in its deep cut channel. Here and there a sandy beach or a narrow strip of soil, fringed with dwarf willows, would extend for a little distance along the foot of the cliffs, and sometimes a reach of still water would intervene like a smooth mirror between the foaming rapids.

As through the preceding day, they journeyed on without finding, except in one instance, any place where they could get down to the river's edge, and they were fain to allay the thirst caused by hard travelling, with the water collected in the hollow of the rocks.

In the course of their march on the following morning, they fell into a beaten horse path leading along the river, which showed that they were in the neighbourhood of some Indian village or encampment. They had not pro-

ceeded far along it, when they met with two Shoshonies, or Snakes. They approached with some appearance of uneasiness, and accosting Mr. Hunt, held up a knife, which by signs they let him know they had received from some of the white men of the advance parties. It was with some difficulty that Mr. Hunt prevailed upon one of the savages to conduct him to the lodges of his people. Striking into a trail or path which led up from the river, he guided them for some distance in the prairie, until they came in sight of a number of lodges made of straw, and shaped like haystacks. Their approach, as on former occasions, caused the wildest affright among the inhabitants. The women hid such of their children as were too large to be carried, and too small to take care of themselves, under straw, and, clasping their infants to their breasts, fled across the prairie. The men awaited the approach of the strangers, but evidently in great alarm.

Mr. Hunt entered the lodges, and, as he was looking about, observed where the children were concealed; their black eyes glistening

like those of snakes from beneath the straw. He lifted up the covering to look at them; the poor little beings were horribly frightened, and their fathers stood trembling, as if a beast of prey were about to pounce upon the brood.

The friendly manner of Mr. Hunt soon dispelled these apprehensions; he succeeded in purchasing some excellent dried salmon, and a dog, an animal much esteemed as food, by the natives; and when he returned to the river one of the Indians accompanied him. He now came to where lodges were frequent along the banks, and, after a day's journey of twenty-six miles to the northwest, encamped in a populous neighbourhood. Forty or fifty of the natives soon visited the camp, conducting themselves in a very amicable manner. They were well clad, and all had buffalo robes, which they procured from some of the hunting tribes in exchange for salmon. Their habitations were very comfortable; each had its pile of worm-wood at the door for fuel, and within was abundance of salmon, some fresh, but the greater part cured. When the white men

visited the lodges, however, the women and children hid themselves through fear. Among the supplies obtained here were two dogs, on which our travellers breakfasted, and found them to be very excellent, well-flavoured, and hearty food.

In the course of the three following days, they made about sixty-three miles, generally in a north-west direction. They met with many of the natives in their straw-built cabins who received them without alarm. About their dwellings were immense quantities of the heads and skins of salmon, the best parts of which had been cured, and hidden in the ground. The women were badly clad; the children worse; their garments were buffalo robes, or the skins of foxes, wolves, hares, and badgers, and sometimes the skins of ducks sewed together, with the plumage on. Most of the skins must have been procured by traffic with other tribes, or in distant hunting excursions, for the naked prairies in the neighbourhood afforded few animals, excepting horses, which were abundant. There were signs of

buffaloes having been there, but a long time before.

On the 15th of November, they made twenty-eight miles along the river which was entirely free from rapids. The shores were lined with dead salmon, which tainted the whole atmosphere. The natives whom they met spoke of Mr. Reed's party having passed through that neighbourhood. In the course of the day Mr. Hunt saw a few horses, but the owners of them took care to hurry them out of the way. All the provisions they were able to procure, were two dogs and a salmon. On the following day they were still worse off, having to subsist on parched corn, and the remains of their dried meat. The river this day had resumed its turbulent character, forcing its way through a narrow channel between steep rocks, and down violent rapids. They made twenty miles over a rugged road, gradually approaching a mountain in the northwest, covered with snow, which had been in sight for three days past.

On the 17th, they met with several Indians, one of whom had a horse. Mr. Hunt was ex-

tremely desirous of obtaining it as a packhorse; for the men, worn down by fatigue and hunger, found the loads of twenty pounds' weight which they had to carry, daily growing heavier and more galling. The Indians, however, along this river, were never willing to part with their horses, having none to spare. The owner of the steed in question seemed proof against all temptation; article after article of great value in Indian eyes was offered and refused. The charms of an old tin kettle, however, were irresistible, and a bargain was concluded.

A great part of the following morning was consumed in lightening the packages of the men and arranging the load for the horse. At this encampment there was no food for fuel, even the wormwood on which they had frequently depended, having disappeared. For the two last days they had made thirty miles to the northwest.

On the 19th of November, Mr. Hunt was lucky enough to purchase another horse for his own use, giving in exchange a tomahawk, a knife, a fire steel, and some beads and garter-

ing. In an evil hour, however, he took the advice of the Indians to abandon the river, and follow a road or trail, leading into the prairies. He soon had cause to repent the change. The road led across a dreary waste, without verdure; and where there was neither fountain, nor pool, nor running stream. The men now began to experience the torments of thirst, aggravated by their usual diet of dried fish. The thirst of the Canadian voyageurs became so insupportable as to drive them to the most revolting means of allaying it. For twenty-five miles did they toil on across this dismal desert, and laid themselves down at night, parched and disconsolate, beside their wormwood fires; looking forward to still greater sufferings on the following day. Fortunately it began to rain in the night, to their infinite relief; the water soon collected in puddles and afforded them delicious draughts.

Refreshed in this manner, they resumed their wayfaring as soon as the first streaks of dawn gave light enough for them to see their path. The rain continued all day, so that they

no longer suffered from thirst, but hunger took its place, for, after travelling thirty-three miles they had nothing to sup on but a little parched corn.

The next day brought them to the banks of a beautiful little stream, running to the west, and fringed with groves of cotton wood and willow. On its borders was an Indian camp, with a great many horses grazing around it. The inhabitants, too, appeared to be better clad than usual. The scene was altogether a cheering one to the poor half-famished wanderers. They hastened to the lodges, but on arriving at them, met with a check that at first dampened their cheerfulness. An Indian immediately laid claim to the horse of Mr. Hunt, saying that it had been stolen from him. There was no disproving a fact, supported by numerous bystanders, and which the horse stealing habits of the Indians rendered but too probable; so Mr. Hunt relinquished his steed to the claimant; not being able to retain him by a second purchase.

At this place they encamped for the night,

and made a sumptuous repast upon fish and a couple of dogs, procured from their Indian neighbours. The next day they kept along the river, but came to a halt after ten miles march, on account of the rain. Here they again got a supply of fish and dogs from the natives; and two of the men were fortunate enough each to get a horse in exchange for a buffalo robe. One of these men was Pierre Dorion, the half-breed interpreter, to whose suffering family the horse was a most timely acquisition. And here we cannot but notice the wonderful patience, perseverance, and hardihood of the Indian women, as exemplified in the conduct of the poor squaw of the interpreter. She was now far advanced in her pregnancy, and had two children to take care of; one four, and the other two years of age. The latter of course she had frequently to carry on her back, in addition to the burden usually imposed upon the squaw, yet she had borne all her hardships without a murmur, and throughout this weary and painful journey, had kept pace with the best of the pedestrians. Indeed on various occasions in the course of

this enterprise, she displayed a force of character that won the respect and applause of the white men.

Mr. Hunt endeavoured to gather some information from these Indians concerning the country, and the course of the rivers. His communications with them had to be by signs, and a few words which he had learnt, and of course were extremely vague. All that he could learn from them was, that the great river, the Columbia, was still far distant, but he could ascertain nothing as to the route he ought to take to arrive at it. For the two following days they continued westward upward of forty miles along the little stream, until they crossed it just before its junction with Snake river, which they found still running to the north. Before them was a wintry looking mountain, covered with snow on all sides.

In three days more they made about seventy miles; fording two small rivers, the waters of which were very cold. Provisions were extremely scarce; their chief sustenance was portable soup; a meagre diet for weary pedestrians.

On the 27th of November the river led them into the mountains through a rocky defile where there was scarcely room to pass. They were frequently obliged to unload the horses to get them by the narrow places; and sometimes to wade through the water in getting round rocks and butting cliffs. All their food this day was a beaver which they had caught the night before; by evening, the cravings of hunger were so sharp, and the prospect of any supply among the mountains so faint, that they had to kill one of the horses. "The men," says Mr. Hunt, in his journal, "find the meat very good, and indeed, so should I, were it not for the attachment I have to the animal."

Early in the following day, after proceeding ten miles to the north, they came to two lodges of Shoshonies: who seemed in nearly as great an extremity as themselves, having just killed two horses for food. They had no other provisions excepting the seed of a weed which they gather in great quantities, and pound fine. It resembles hemp seed. Mr. Hunt purchased a bag of it, and also some small pieces of horse

flesh which he began to relish, pronouncing them "fat and tender."

From these Indians he received information that several white men had gone down the river, some on one side, and a good many on the other; these last he concluded to be Mr. Crooks and his party. He was thus released from much anxiety about their safety, especially as the Indians spoke of Mr. Crooks having one of his dogs yet, which showed that he and his men had not been reduced to extremity of hunger.

As Mr. Hunt feared he might be several days in passing through this mountain defile, and run the risk of famine, he encamped in the neighbourhood of the Indians, for the purpose of bartering with them for a horse. The evening was expended in ineffectual trials. He offered a gun, a buffalo robe, and various other articles. The poor fellows had, probably, like himself, the fear of starvation before their eyes. At length the women, learning the object of his pressing solicitations, and tempting offers, set up such a horrible hue and cry, that he was fairly howled and scolded from the ground.

The next morning early, the Indians seemed

very desirous to get rid of their visitors, fearing, probably for the safety of their horses. In reply to Mr. Hunt's inquiries about the mountains, they told him that he would have to sleep but three nights more among them; and that six days travelling would take him to the falls of the Columbia; information in which he put no faith, believing it was only given to induce him to set forward. These, he was told, were the last Snakes he would meet with, and that he would soon come to a nation called Sciatogas.

Forward then did he proceed on his tedious journey, which at every step grew more painful. The road continued for two days through narrow defiles, where they were repeatedly obliged to unload the horses. Sometimes the river passed through such rocky chasms and under such steep precipices, that they had to leave it, and make their way, with excessive labour, over immense hills, almost impassable for horses. On some of these hills were a few pine trees, and their summits were covered with snow. On the second day of this scramble one of the hunters killed a black-tailed deer, which afforded

the half-starved travellers a sumptuous repast. Their progress these two days was twenty-eight miles, a little to the northward of east.

The month of December set in drearily, with rain in the valleys, and snow upon the hills. They had to climb a mountain with snow to the midleg, which increased their painful toil. A small beaver supplied them with a scanty meal, which they eked out with frozen blackberries, haws, and chokecherries, which they found in the course of their scramble. Their journey this day, though excessively fatiguing, was but thirteen miles; and all the next day they had to remain encamped, not being able to see half a mile ahead, on account of a snow storm. Having nothing else to eat, they were compelled to kill another of their horses. The next day they resumed their march in snow and rain, but with all their efforts could only get forward nine miles, having for a part of the distance to unload the horses and carry the packs themselves. On the succeeding morning they were obliged to leave the river, and scramble up the hills. From the summit of these,

they got a wide view of the surrounding country, and it was a prospect almost sufficient to make them despair. In every direction they beheld snowy mountains, partially sprinkled with pines and other evergreens, and spreading a desert and toilsome world around them. The wind howled over the bleak and wintry landscape, and seemed to penetrate to the marrow of their bones. They waded on through the snow which at every step was more than knee deep.

After toiling in this way all day, they had the mortification to find that they were but four miles distant from the encampment of the preceding night, such was the meandering of the river among these dismal hills. Pinched with famine, exhausted with fatigue, with evening approaching, and a wintry wild still lengthening as they advanced ; they began to look forward with sad forebodings to the night's exposure upon this frightful waste. Fortunately they succeeded in reaching a cluster of pines about sunset. Their axes were immediately at work ; they cut down trees, piled them up in great

heaps, and soon had huge fires “to cheer their cold and hungry hearts.”

About three o'clock in the morning it again began to snow, and at daybreak they found themselves, as it were, in a cloud; scarcely being able to distinguish objects at the distance of a hundred yards. Guiding themselves by the sound of running water, they set out for the river, and by slipping and sliding contrived to get down to its bank. One of the horses, missing his footing, rolled down several hundred yards with his load, but sustained no injury. The weather in the valley was less rigorous than on the hills. The snow lay but ankle deep, and there was a quiet rain now falling. After creeping along for six miles, they encamped on the border of the river. Being utterly destitute of provisions, they were again compelled to kill one of their horses to appease their famishing hunger.

CHAPTER XVII.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING — NAVIGATION IN A SKIN CANOE —
STRANGE FEARS OF SUFFERING MEN — HARDSHIPS OF MR.
CROOKS AND HIS COMRADES — TIDINGS OF MR. M'LELLAN — A
RETROGRADE MARCH — A WILLOW RAFT — EXTREME SUFFERING
OF SOME OF THE PARTY — ILLNESS OF MR. CROOKS — IMPA-
TIENCE OF SOME OF THE MEN — NECESSITY OF LEAVING THE
LAGGARDS BEHIND.

THE wanderers had now accomplished four hundred and seventy-two miles of their dreary journey since leaving the Caldron Linn, how much further they had yet to travel, and what hardships to encounter, no one knew.

On the morning of the 6th of December, they left their dismal encampment, but had scarcely begun their march, when, to their surprise, they beheld a party of white men coming up along the opposite bank of the river. As

they drew nearer, they were recognised for Mr. Crooks and his companions. When they came opposite, and could make themselves heard across the murmuring of the river, their first cry was for food: in fact, they were almost starved. Mr. Hunt immediately returned to the camp, and had a kind of canoe made out of the skin of the horse, killed on the preceding night. This was done after the Indian fashion, by drawing up the edges of the skin with thongs, and keeping them distended by sticks or thwarts pieces. In this frail bark, Sardepic, one of the Canadians, carried over a portion of the flesh of the horse to the famishing party on the opposite side of the river, and brought back with him Mr. Crooks, and the Canadian, Le Clerc. The forlorn and wasted looks, and starving condition of these two men, struck dismay into the hearts of Mr. Hunt's followers. They had been accustomed to each other's appearance, and to the gradual operation of hunger and hardship upon their frames, but the change in the looks of these men, since last they parted, was a type of the famine and desolation

of the land; and they now began to indulge the horrible presentiment that they would all starve together, or be reduced to the direful alternative of casting lots!

When Mr. Crooks had appeased his hunger, he gave Mr. Hunt some account of his way-faring. On the side of the river, along which he had kept, he had met with but few Indians, and those were too miserably poor to yield much assistance. For the first eighteen days, after leaving the Caldron Linn, he and his men had been confined to half a meal in twenty-four hours; for three days following, they had subsisted on a single beaver, a few wild cherries, and the soles of old mocassins, and for the last six days, their only animal food had been the carcass of a dog. They had been three days' journey further down the river than Mr. Hunt, always keeping as near to its banks as possible, and frequently climbing over sharp and rocky ridges that projected into the stream. At length they had arrived to where the mountains increased in height, and came closer to the river, with perpendicular precipices, which rendered

it impossible to keep along the stream. The river here rushed with incredible velocity through a defile not more than thirty yards wide, where cascades and rapids succeeded each other almost without intermission. Even had the opposite banks, therefore, been such as to permit a continuance of their journey, it would have been madness to attempt to pass the tumultuous current, either on rafts or otherwise. Still bent, however, on pushing forward, they attempted to climb the opposing mountains; and struggled on through the snow for half a day, until, coming to where they could command a prospect, they found that they were not half way to the summit, and that mountain upon mountain lay piled beyond them, in wintry desolation. Fannished and emaciated as they were, to continue forward would be to perish; their only chance seemed to be to regain the river, and retrace their steps up its banks. It was in this forlorn and retrograde march that they had met with Mr. Hunt and his party.

Mr. Crooks also gave information of some others of their fellow adventurers. He had spoken several days previously with Mr. Reed and Mr. M'Kenzie, who, with their men, were on the opposite side of the river, where it was impossible to get over to them. They informed him that Mr. M'Lellan had struck across from the little river above the mountains, in the hope of falling in with some of the tribe of Flatheads, who inhabit the western skirts of the Rocky range. As the companions of Reed and M'Kenzie were picked men, and had found provisions more abundant on their side of the river, they were in better condition, and more fitted to contend with the difficulties of the country, than those of Mr. Crooks, and when he lost sight of them, were pushing onward, down the course of the river.

Mr. Hunt took a night to revolve over his critical situation, and to determine what was to be done. No time was to be lost; he had twenty men and more, in his own party, to provide for, and Mr. Crooks and his men to relieve.

To linger would be to starve. The idea of retracing his steps was intolerable, and, notwithstanding all the discouraging accounts of the ruggedness of the mountains lower down the river, he would have been disposed to attempt them, but the depth of the snow with which they were covered, deterred him; having already experienced the impossibility of forcing his way against such an impediment.

The only alternative, therefore, appeared to be, to return and seek the Indian bands scattered along the small rivers and mountains. Perhaps, from some of these he might procure horses enough to support him until he could reach the Columbia; for he still cherished the hope of arriving at that river in the course of the winter, though he was apprehensive that few of Mr. Crooks's party would be sufficiently strong to follow him. Even in adopting this course, he had to make up his mind to the certainty of several days of famine at the outset, for it would take that time to reach the last Indian lodges from which he had parted, and until they should

arrive there, his people would have nothing to subsist upon but haws and wild berries, excepting one miserable horse, which was little better than skin and bone.

After a night of sleepless cogitation, Mr. Hunt announced to his men the dreary alternative he had adopted, and preparations were made to take Mr. Crooks and Le Clerc across the river, with the remainder of the meat, as the other party were to keep up along the opposite bank. The skin canoe had unfortunately been lost in the night, a raft was constructed, therefore, after the manner of the natives, of bundles of willows, but it could not be floated across the impetuous current. The men were directed, in consequence, to keep on along the river by themselves, while Mr. Crooks and Le Clerc would proceed with Mr. Hunt. They all, then, took up their retrograde march with drooping spirits.

In a little while, it was found that Mr. Crooks and Le Clerc were so feeble as to walk with difficulty, so that Mr. Hunt was obliged to

retard his pace, that they might keep up with him. His men grew impatient at the delay. They murmured that they had a long and desolate region to traverse, before they could arrive at the point where they might expect to find horses ; that it was impossible for Crooks and Le Clerc, in their feeble condition, to get over it ; that to remain with them would only be to starve in their company. They importuned Mr. Hunt, therefore, to leave these unfortunate men to their fate, and think only of the safety of himself and his party. Finding him not to be moved, either by entreaties or their clamours, they began to proceed without him, singly and in parties. Among those who thus went off was Pierre Dorion, the interpreter. Pierre owned the only remaining horse ; which was now a mere skeleton. Mr. Hunt had suggested, in their present extremity, that it should be killed for food ; to which the half-breed flatly refused his assent, and cudgelling the miserable animal forward, pushed on sullenly, with the air of a man doggedly determined to quarrel for his right. In this way

Mr. Hunt saw his men, one after another, break away, until but five remained to bear him company.

On the following morning another raft was made, on which Mr. Crooks and Le Clerk again attempted to ferry themselves across the river, but after repeated trials, had to give up in despair. This caused additional delay: after which they continued to crawl forward at a snail's pace. Some of the men who had remained with Mr. Hunt now became impatient of these incumbrances, and urged him, clamorously, to push forward, crying out that they should all starve. The night which succeeded was intensely cold, so that one of the men was severely frost-bitten. In the course of the night, Mr. Crooks was taken ill, and in the morning was still more incompetent to travel. Their situation was now desperate, for their stock of provisions was reduced to three beaver skins. Mr. Hunt, therefore, resolved to push on, overtake his people, and insist upon having the horse of Pierre Dorion sacrificed for the relief of all hands. Accordingly, he left two of

his men to help Crooks and Le Clerc on their way, giving them two of the beaver skins for their support; the remaining skin he retained, as provision for himself and the three other men who struck forward with him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MR. HUNT OVERTAKES THE ADVANCED PARTY—PIERRE DORION, AND HIS SKELETON HORSE—A SHOSHONIE CAMP—A JUSTIFIABLE OUTRAGE—FEASTING ON HORSE FLESH—MR. CROOKS BROUGHT TO THE CAMP—UNDERTAKES TO RELIEVE HIS MEN—THE SKIN FERRY BOAT—FRENZY OF PREVOST—HIS MELANCHOLY FATE—ENFEEBLED STATE OF JOHN DAY — MR. CROOKS AGAIN LEFT BEHIND—THE PARTY EMERGE FROM AMONG THE MOUNTAINS—INTERVIEW WITH SHOSHONICS—A GUIDE PROCURED TO CONDUCT THE PARTY ACROSS A MOUNTAIN — FERRIAGE ACROSS SNAKE RIVER—REUNION WITH MR. CROOKS'S MEN—FINAL DEPARTURE FROM THE RIVER.

ALL that day Mr. Hunt and his three comrades travelled without eating. At night they made a tantalizing supper on their beaver skin, and were nearly starved with hunger and cold. The next day, December 10th, they overtook the advance party, who were all as much famished as themselves, some of them not

having eaten since the morning of the 7th. Mr. Hunt now proposed the sacrifice of Pierre Dorion's skeleton horse. Here he again met with positive and vehement opposition from the half-breed, who was too sullen and vindictive a fellow to be easily dealt with. What was singular, the men, though suffering such pinching hunger, interfered in favour of the horse. They represented, that it was better to keep on as long as possible without resorting to this last resource. Possibly the Indians, of whom they were in quest, might have shifted their encampment, in which case it would be time enough to kill the horse to escape starvation. Mr. Hunt, therefore, was prevailed upon to grant Pierre Dorion's horse a reprieve.

Fortunately, they had not proceeded much further, when, towards evening, they came in sight of a lodge of Shoshonies, with a number of horses grazing around it. The sight was as unexpected as it was joyous. Having seen no Indians in this neighbourhood as they passed down the river, they must have subsequently come out from among the mountains. Mr.

Hunt, who first descried them, checked the eagerness of his companions, knowing the unwillingness of these Indians to part with their horses, and their aptness to hurry them off and conceal them, in case of alarm. This was no time to risk such a disappointment. Approaching, therefore, stealthily and silently, they came upon the savages by surprise, who fled in terror. Five of their horses were eagerly seized, and one was despatched upon the spot. The carcass was immediately cut up, and a part of it hastily cooked and ravenously devoured. A man was now sent on horseback with a supply of the flesh to Mr. Crooks and his companions. He reached them in the night: they were so famished that the supply sent them seemed but to aggravate their hunger, and they were almost tempted to kill and eat the horse that had brought the messenger. Availing themselves of the assistance of the animal, they reached the camp early in the morning.

On arriving there, Mr. Crooks was shocked to find that, while the people on this side of the river, were amply supplied with provisions,

none had been sent to his own forlorn and famishing men on the opposite bank. He immediately caused a skin canoe to be constructed, and called out to his men to fill their camp kettles with water, and hang them over the fire, that no time might be lost in cooking the meat the moment it should be received. The river was so narrow, though deep, that every thing could be distinctly heard and seen across it. The kettles were placed on the fire, and the water was boiling by the time the canoe was completed. When all was ready, however, no one would undertake to ferry the meat across. A vague, and almost superstitious, terror had infected the minds of Mr. Hunt's followers, enfeebled and rendered imaginative of horrors by the dismal scenes and sufferings through which they had passed. They regarded the haggard crew, hovering like spectres of famine on the opposite bank, with indefinite feelings of awe and apprehension, as if something desperate and dangerous was to be feared from them.

Mr. Crooks tried in vain to reason or shame

them out of this singular state of mind. He then attempted to navigate the canoe himself, but found his strength incompetent to brave the impetuous current. The good feelings of Ben Jones the Kentuckian, at length overcame his fears, and he ventured over. The supply he brought was received with trembling avidity. A poor Canadian, however, named Jean Baptiste Prevost, whom famine had rendered wild and desperate, ran frantically about the bank, after Jones had returned, crying out to Mr. Hunt to send the canoe for him, and take him from that horrible region of famine, declaring that otherwise he would never march another step, but would lie down there and die.

The canoe was shortly sent over again, under the management of Joseph Delaunay, with further supplies. Prevost immediately pressed forward to embark. Delaunay refused to admit him, telling him that there was now a sufficient supply of meat on his side of the river. He replied that it was not cooked, and he should starve before it was ready; he im-

plored, therefore, to be taken where he could get something to appease his hunger immediately. Finding the canoe putting off without him, he forced himself aboard. As he drew near the opposite shore, and beheld meat roasting before the fires, he jumped up, shouted, clapped his hands, and danced in a delirium of joy, until he upset the canoe. The poor wretch was swept away by the current and drowned, and it was with extreme difficulty that Delaunay reached the shore.

Mr. Hunt now sent all his men forward excepting two or three. In the evening, he caused another horse to be killed, and a canoe to be made out of the skin, in which he sent over a further supply of meat to the opposite party. The canoe brought back John Day, the Kentucky hunter, who came to join his former employer and commander, Mr. Crooks. Poor Day, once so active and vigorous, was now reduced to a condition even more feeble and emaciated than his companions. Mr. Crooks had such a value for the man, on account of his past services and faithful cha-

racter, that he determined not to quit him ; he exhorted Mr. Hunt, however, to proceed forward, and join the party, as his presence was all important to the conduct of the expedition. One of the Canadians, Jean Baptiste Dubreuil, likewise remained with Mr. Crooks.

Mr. Hunt left two horses with them, and a part of the carcass of the last that had been killed. This, he hoped, would be sufficient to sustain them until they should reach the Indian encampment.

One of the chief dangers attending the enfeebled condition of Mr. Crooks and his companions, was their being overtaken by the Indians whose horses had been seized : though Mr. Hunt hoped that he had guarded against any resentment on the part of the savages, by leaving various articles in their lodge, more than sufficient to compensate for the outrage he had been compelled to commit.

Resuming his onward course, Mr. Hunt came up with his people in the evening. The next day, December 13th, he beheld several

Indians, with three horses, on the opposite side of the river, and after a time came to the two lodges which he had seen on going down. Here he endeavoured in vain to barter a rifle for a horse, but again succeeded in effecting the purchase with an old tin kettle, aided by a few beads.

The two succeeding days were cold and stormy; the snow was augmenting, and there was a good deal of ice running in the river. Their road, however, was becoming easier; they were getting out of the hills, and finally emerged into the open country, after twenty days of fatigue, famine, and hardship of every kind, in the ineffectual attempt to find a passage down the river.

They now encamped on a little willowed stream, running from the east, which they had crossed on the 26th of November. Here they found a dozen lodges of Shoshonies, recently arrived, who informed them that had they persevered along the river, they would have found their difficulties augment until they

became absolutely insurmountable. This intelligence added to the anxiety of Mr. Hunt for the fate of Mr. M'Kenzie and his people, who had kept on.

Mr. Hunt now followed up the little river, and encamped at some lodges of Shoshonies, from whom he procured a couple of horses, a dog, a few dried fish, and some roots, and dried cherries. Two or three days were exhausted in obtaining information about the route, and what time it would take to get to the Sciatogas, a hospitable tribe, on the west side of the mountains, represented as having many horses. The replies were various, but concurred in saying that the distance was great, and would occupy from seventeen to twenty-one nights. Mr. Hunt then tried to procure a guide; but though he sent to various lodges up and down the river, offering articles of great value in Indian estimation, no one would venture. The snow they said was waist deep in the mountains; and to all his offers they shook their heads, gave a shiver, and replied,

“we shall freeze! we shall freeze!” at the same time they urged him to remain and pass the winter among them.

Mr. Hunt was in a dismal dilemma. To attempt the mountains without a guide, would be certain death to him and all his people; to remain there, after having already been so long on the journey, and at such great expense, was worse to him, he said, than “two deaths.” He now changed his tone with the Indians, charged them with deceiving him in respect to the mountains, and talking with a “forked tongue,” or, in other words, with lying. He upbraided them with their want of courage, and told them they were women to shrink from the perils of such a journey. At length one of them, piqued by his taunts, or tempted by his offers, agreed to be his guide; for which he was to receive a gun, a pistol, three knives, two horses, and a little of every article in the possession of the party; a reward sufficient to make him one of the wealthiest of his vagabond nation.

Once more then, on the 21st of December,

they set out upon their wayfaring, with newly excited spirits. Two other Indians accompanied their guide, who led them immediately back to Snake river, which they followed down for a short distance, in search of some Indian rafts made of reeds, on which they might cross. Finding none, Mr. Hunt caused a horse to be killed, and a canoe to be made out of its skin. Here, on the opposite bank, they saw the thirteen men of Mr. Crooks's party, who had continued up along the river. They told Mr. Hunt, across the stream, that they had not seen Mr. Crooks, and the two men who had remained with him, since the day that he had separated from them.

The canoe proving too small, another horse was killed, and the skin of it joined to that of the first. Night came on before the little bark had made more than two voyages. Being badly made, it was taken apart and put together again, by the light of the fire. The night was cold; the men were weary and disheartened with such varied and incessant toil and hardship. They crouched, dull and drooping,

around their fires; many of them began to express a wish to remain where they were for the winter. The very necessity of crossing the river dismayed some of them in their present enfeebled and dejected state. It was rapid and turbulent, and filled with floating ice, and they remembered that two of their comrades had already perished in its waters. Others looked forward with misgivings to the long and dismal journey through lonesome regions that awaited them, when they should have passed this dreary flood.

At an early hour of the morning, December 23d, they began to cross the river. Much ice had formed during the night, and they were obliged to break it for some distance on each shore. At length they all got over in safety to the west side; and their spirits rose on having achieved this perilous passage. Here they were rejoined by the people of Mr. Crooks, who had with them a horse and a dog, which they had recently procured. The poor fellows were in the most squalid and emaciated state. Three of them were so completely

prostrated in strength and spirits, that they expressed a wish to remain among the Snakes. Mr. Hunt, therefore, gave them the canoe, that they might cross the river, and a few articles, with which to procure necessaries, until they should meet with Mr. Crooks. There was another man, named Michael Carriere, who was almost equally reduced, but he determined to proceed with his comrades, who were now incorporated with the party of Mr. Hunt. After the day's exertions they encamped together on the banks of the river. This was the last night they were to spend upon its borders. More than eight hundred miles of hard travelling, and many weary days had it cost them; and the sufferings connected with it, rendered it hateful in their remembrance, so that the Canadian voyageurs always spoke of it as "*La maudite rivière enragée*"—the accursed mad river: thus coupling a malediction with its name.

CHAPTER XIX.

DEPARTURE FROM SNAKE RIVER—MOUNTAINS TO THE NORTH—
WAYWORN TRAVELLERS—AN INCREASE OF THE DORION FA-
MILY—A CAMP OF SHOSHONEES—A NEW YEAR FESTIVAL AMONG
THE SNAKES—A WINTRY MARCH THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS—
A SUNNY PROSPECT, AND MILDER CLIMATE—INDIAN HORSE
TRACKS—GRASSY VALLEYS — A CAMP OF SCIATOGAS — JOY OF
THE TRAVELLERS—DANGERS OF ABUNDANCE—HABITS OF THE
SCIATOGAS—FATE OF CARRIERE—THE UMATALLA—ARRIVAL AT
THE BANKS OF THE COLUMBIA—TIDINGS OF THE SCATTERED
MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITION—SCENERY ON THE COLUMBIA—
TIDINGS OF ASTORIA—ARRIVAL AT THE FALLS.

On the 24th of December, all things being arranged, Mr. Hunt turned his back upon the disastrous banks of Snake river, and struck his course westward for the mountains. His party, being augmented by the late followers of Mr. Crooks, amounted now to thirty-two white men, three Indians, and the squaw and two children

of Pierre Dorion. Five jaded, half-starved horses were laden with their luggage, and, in case of need, were to furnish them with provisions. They travelled painfully about fourteen miles a day, over plains and among hills, rendered dreary by occasional falls of snow and rain. Their only sustenance was a scanty meal of horse flesh once in four and twenty hours.

On the third day the poor Canadian, Carriere, one of the famished party of Mr. Crooks, gave up in despair, and lying down upon the ground declared he could go no further. Efforts were made to cheer him up, but it was found that the poor fellow was absolutely exhausted and could not keep on his legs. He was mounted, therefore, upon one of the horses, though the forlorn animal was in little better plight than himself.

On the 28th, they came upon a small stream winding to the north, through a fine level valley; the mountains receding on each side. Here their Indian friends pointed out a chain of woody mountains to the left, running north and south, and covered with snow; over which they would have to pass. They kept along the

valley for twenty-one miles on the 29th, suffering much from a continued fall of snow and rain, and being twice obliged to ford the icy stream. Early in the following morning the squaw of Pierre Dorion, who had hitherto kept on without murmuring or finching, was suddenly taken in labour, and enriched her husband with another child. As the fortitude and good conduct of the poor woman had gained for her the good will of the party, her situation caused concern and perplexity. Pierre, however, treated the matter as an occurrence that could soon be arranged and need cause no delay. He remained by his wife in the camp, with his other children and his horse, and promised soon to rejoin the main body, who proceeded on their march.

Finding that the little river entered the mountains, they abandoned it and turned off for a few miles among hills. Here another Canadian, named La Bonté gave out, and had to be helped on horseback. As the horse was too weak to bear both him and his pack, Mr. Hunt took the latter upon his own shoulders.

Thus, with difficulties augmenting at every step, they urged their toilsome way among the hills half famished, and faint at heart, when they came to where a fair valley spread out before them of great extent, and several leagues in width, with a beautiful stream meandering through it. A genial climate seemed to prevail here, for though the snow lay upon all the mountains within sight, there was none to be seen in the valley. The travellers gazed with delight upon this serene sunny landscape, but their joy was complete on beholding six lodges of Shoshonies pitched upon the borders of the stream, with a number of horses and dogs about them. They all pressed forward with eagerness and soon reached the camp. Here their first attention was to obtain provisions. A rifle, an old musket, a tomahawk, a tin kettle, and a small quantity of ammunition soon procured them four horses, three dogs, and some roots. Part of the live stock was immediately killed, cooked with all expedition, and as promptly devoured. A hearty meal restored every one to good spirits. In the course of

the following morning the Dorion family made its reappearance. Pierre came trudging in the advance, followed by his valued, though skeleton steed, on which was mounted his squaw with the new born infant in her arms, and her boy of two years old, wrapped in a blanket and slung at her side. The mother looked as unconcerned as if nothing had happened to her; so easy is nature in her operations in the wilderness, when free from the enfeebling refinements of luxury, and the tamperings and appliances of art.

The next morning ushered in the new year (1812). Mr. Hunt was about to resume his march, when his men requested permission to celebrate the day. This was particularly urged by the Canadian voyageurs, with whom new year's day is a favourite festival; and who never willingly give up a holiday, under any circumstances. There was no resisting such an application; so the day was passed in repose and revelry; the poor Canadians contrived to sing and dance in defiance of all their hard-

ships; and there was a sumptuous new year's banquet of dog's meat and horse flesh.

After two days of welcome rest, the travellers addressed themselves once more to their painful journey. The Indians of the lodges pointed out a distant gap through which they must pass in traversing the ridge of mountains. They assured them that they would be but little incommoded by snow, and in three days would arrive among the Sciatogas. Mr. Hunt, however, had been so frequently deceived by Indian accounts of routes and distances, that he gave but little faith to this information.

The travellers continued their course due west for five days, crossing the valley and entering the mountains. Here the travelling became excessively toilsome, across rough stony ridges, and amidst fallen trees. They were often knee deep in snow, and sometimes in the hollows between the ridges sank up to their waists. The weather was extremely cold; the sky covered with clouds, so that for days they had not a glimpse of the sun. In traversing the highest ridge

they had a wide but chilling prospect over a wilderness of snowy mountains.

On the 6th of January, however, they had crossed the dividing summit of the chain, and were evidently under the influence of a milder climate. The snow began to decrease; the sun once more emerged from the thick canopy of clouds, and shone cheerfully upon them, and they caught a sight of what appeared to be a plain, stretching out in the west. They hailed it as the poor Israelites hailed the first glimpse of the promised land, for they flattered themselves that this might be the great plain of the Columbia, and that their painful pilgrimage might be drawing to a close.

It was now five days since they had left the lodges of the Shoshonies, during which they had come about sixty miles, and their guide assured them that in the course of the next day they would see the Sciatogas.

On the following morning, therefore, they pushed forward with eagerness, and soon fell upon a small stream which led them through a deep, narrow defile, between stupendous ridges.

Here among the rocks and precipices they saw gangs of that mountain-loving animal, the black-tailed deer, and came to where great tracks of horses were to be seen in all directions, made by the Indian hunters.

The snow had entirely disappeared, and the hopes of soon coming upon some Indian encampment induced Mr. Hunt to press on. Many of the men, however, were so enfeebled that they could not keep up with the main body, but lagged, at intervals, behind; and some of them did not arrive at the night encampment. In the course of this day's march the recently born child of Pierre Dorion died.

The march was resumed early next morning, without waiting for the stragglers. The stream which they had followed throughout the preceding day was now swollen by the influx of another river; the declivities of the hills were green and the valleys were clothed with grass. At length the jovial cry was given of "An Indian camp!" It was yet in the distance, in the bosom of the green valley, but they could perceive that it consisted of numerous lodges,

and that hundreds of horses were grazing the grassy meadows around it. The prospect of abundance of horse flesh diffused universal joy, for by this time the whole stock of travelling provisions was reduced to the skeleton steed of Pierre Dorion, and another wretched animal, equally emaciated, that had been repeatedly relieved during the journey.

A forced march soon brought the weary and hungry travellers to the camp. It proved to be a strong party of Sciatogas and Tus-che-pas. There were thirty-four lodges, comfortably constructed of mats; the Indians too were better clothed than any of the wandering bands they had hitherto met on this side of the Rocky mountains. Indeed they were as well clad as the generality of the wild hunter tribes. Each had a good buffalo or deer skin robe; and a deer skin hunting shirt and leggins. Upwards of two thousand horses were ranging the pastures around their encampment; but what delighted Mr. Hunt was, on entering the lodges, to behold brass kettles, axes, copper tea kettles, and various other articles of civilized manufac-

ture, which showed that these Indians had an indirect communication with the people of the sea-coast who traded with the whites. He made eager inquiries of the Sciatogas, and gathered from them that the great river (the Columbia), was but two days' march distant, and that several white people had recently descended it; who he hoped might prove to be M'Lellan, M'Kenzie and their companions.

It was with the utmost joy and the most profound gratitude to Heaven, that Mr. Hunt found himself and his band of weary and famishing wanderers, thus safely extricated from the most perilous part of their long journey, and within the prospect of a termination of their toils. All the stragglers who had lagged behind arrived, one after another, excepting the poor Canadian voyageur, Carriere. He had been late in the preceding afternoon, riding behind a Snake Indian, near some lodges of that nation, a few miles distant from the last night's encampment, and it was expected that he would soon make his appearance.

The first object of Mr. Hunt was to obtain

provisions for his men. A little venison of an indifferent quality, and some roots, were all that could be procured that evening; but the next day he succeeded in purchasing a mare and colt, which were immediately killed, and the cravings of the half-starved people in some degree appeased.

For several days they remained in the neighbourhood of these Indians, reposing after all their hardships, and feasting upon horse flesh and roots, obtained in subsequent traffic. Many of the people ate to such excess as to render themselves sick, others were lame from their past journey; but all gradually recruited in the repose and abundance of the valley. Horses were obtained here much more readily, and at a cheaper rate, than among the Snakes. A blanket, a knife, or a half pound of blue beads would purchase a steed, and at this rate many of the men bought horses for their individual use.

This tribe of Indians, who are represented as a proud-spirited race, and uncommonly cleanly, never eat horses nor dogs, nor would they

permit the raw flesh of either to be brought into their huts. They had a small quantity of venison in each lodge, but set so high a price upon it that the white men, in their impoverished state, could not afford to purchase it. They hunted the deer on horseback; "ringing," or surrounding them, and running them down in a circle. They were admirable horsemen, and their weapons were bows and arrows, which they managed with great dexterity. They were altogether primitive in their habits, and seemed to cling to the usages of savage life, even when possessed of the aids of civilization. They had axes among them, yet they generally made use of a stone mallet wrought into the shape of a bottle, and wedges of elk horn, in splitting their wood. Though they might have two or three brass kettles hanging in their lodges, yet they would frequently use vessels made of willow, for carrying water, and would even boil their meat in them, by means of hot stones. Their women wore caps of willow neatly worked and figured.

As Carriere, the Canadian straggler, did not

make his appearance for two or three days after the encampment in the valley, two men were sent out on horseback in search of him. They returned, however, without success. The lodges of the Snake Indians near which he had been seen, were removed, and they could find no trace of him. Several days more elapsed, yet nothing was seen or heard of him, or of the Snake horseman, behind whom he had been last observed. It was feared, therefore, that he had either perished through hunger and fatigue, had been murdered by the Indians, or, being left to himself, had mistaken some hunting tracks for the trail of the party, and been led astray and lost.

The river on the banks of which they were encamped, emptied into the Columbia, was called by the natives the Eu-o-tal-la, or Umatalla, and abounded with beaver. In the course of their sojourn in the valley which it watered, they twice shifted their camp, proceeding about thirty miles down its course, which was to the west. A heavy fall of rain caused the river to overflow its banks, dislodged them from their

encampment, and drowned three of their horses, which were tethered in the low ground.

Further conversation with the Indians satisfied them that they were in the neighbourhood of the Columbia. The number of the white men who they said had passed down the river, agreed with that of M'Lellan, M'Kenzie, and their companions, and increased the hope of Mr. Hunt that they might have passed through the wilderness with safety.

These Indians had a vague story that white men were coming to trade among them; and they often spoke of two great men named Ke-Koosh and Jacquean, who gave them tobacco, and smoked with them. Jacquean, they said, had a house somewhere upon the great river. Some of the Canadians supposed they were speaking of one Jacquean Finlay, a clerk of the North-west Company, and inferred that the house must be some trading post on one of the tributary streams of the Columbia. The Indians were overjoyed when they found this band of white men intended to return and trade with them. They promised to use all diligence

in collecting quantities of beaver skins, and no doubt proceeded to make deadly war upon that sagacious, but ill-fated animal, who, in general, lived in peaceful insignificance among his Indian neighbours, before the intrusion of the white trader. On the 20th of January, Mr. Hunt took leave of these friendly Indians, and of the river on which they were encamped, and continued westward.

At length, on the following day, the way-worn travellers lifted up their eyes and beheld before them the long sought waters of the Columbia. The sight was hailed with as much transport as if they had already reached the end of their pilgrimage; nor can we wonder at their joy. Two hundred and forty miles had they marched, through wintry wastes and rugged mountains, since leaving Snake river; and six months of perilous wayfaring had they experienced since their departure from the Aricara village on the Missouri. Their whole route by land and water from that point, had been, according to their computation, seventeen hundred and fifty-one miles, in the course of which

they had endured all kinds of hardships. In fact, the necessity of winding the dangerous country of the Blackfeet, had obliged them to make a bend to the south, and to traverse a great additional extent of unknown wilderness.

The place where they struck the Columbia was some distance below the junction of its two great branches, Lewis, and Clarke rivers, and not far from the influx of the Wallah-Wallah. It was a beautiful stream, three quarters of a mile wide, totally free from trees; bordered in some places with steep rocks, in others with pebbled shores.

On the banks of the Columbia they found a miserable horde of Indians, called Akai-chies, with no clothing but a scanty mantle of the skins of animals, and sometimes a pair of sleeves of wolf's skin. Their lodges were shaped like a tent, and very light and warm, being covered with mats of rushes; beside which they had excavations on the ground, lined with mats, and occupied by the women, who were even more slightly clad than the men. These people subsisted chiefly by fishing;

having canoes of a rude construction, being merely the trunks of pine trees split and hollowed out by fire. Their lodges were well stored with dried salmon, and they had great quantities of fresh salmon trout, of an excellent flavour, taken at the mouth of the Umatalla; of which the travellers obtained a most acceptable supply.

Finding that the road was on the north side of the river, Mr. Hunt crossed, and continued five or six days travelling rather slowly down along its banks, being much delayed by the straying of the horses, and the attempts made by the Indians to steal them. They frequently passed lodges, where they obtained fish and dogs. At one place the natives had just returned from hunting, and had brought back a large quantity of elk and deer meat, but asked so high a price for it as to be beyond the funds of the travellers, so they had to content themselves with dog flesh. They had by this time, however, come to consider it very choice food, superior to horse flesh, and the minutes of the

expedition speak rather exultingly now and then, of their having made a "famous repast," where this viand happened to be unusually plenty.

They again learnt tidings of some of the scattered members of the expedition, supposed to be M'Kenzie, M'Lellan and their men, who had preceded them down the river, and had overturned one of their canoes, by which they lost many articles. All these floating pieces of intelligence of their fellow adventurers, who had separated from them in the heart of the wilderness, they received with eager interest.

The weather continued to be temperate, marking the superior softness of the climate on this side of the mountains. For a great part of the time, the days were delightfully mild and clear, like the serene days of October, on the Atlantic borders. The country in general, in the neighbourhood of the river, was a continual plain, low near the water, but rising gradually; destitute of trees, and almost without shrubs or plants of any kind, excepting a few willow

bushes. After travelling about sixty miles, they came to where the country became very hilly and the river made its way between rocky banks, and down numerous rapids. The Indians in this vicinity were better clad and altogether in more prosperous condition than those above, and, as Mr. Hunt thought, showed their consciousness of ease by something like sauciness of manner. Thus prosperity is apt to produce arrogance in savage as well as in civilized life. In both conditions, man is an animal that will not bear pampering.

From these people Mr. Hunt for the first time received vague, but deeply interesting intelligence of that part of the enterprise which had proceeded by sea to the mouth of the Columbia. The Indians spoke of a number of white men who had built a large house at the mouth of the great river, and surrounded it with palisades. None of them had been down to Astoria themselves; but rumours spread widely and rapidly from mouth to mouth among the Indian tribes, and are carried to the heart

of the interior, by hunting parties, and migratory hordes.

The establishment of a trading emporium at such a point, also, was calculated to cause a sensation to the most remote parts of the vast wilderness beyond the mountains. It, in a manner, struck the pulse of the great vital river, and vibrated up all its tributary streams.

It is surprising to notice how well this remote tribe of savages had learnt through intermediate gossips, the private feelings of the colonists at Astoria; it shows that Indians are not the incurious and indifferent observers that they have been represented. They told Mr. Hunt that the white people at the large house had been looking anxiously for many of their friends, whom they had expected to descend the great river; and had been in much affliction, fearing that they were lost. Now, however, the arrival of him and his party would wipe away all their tears, and they would dance and sing for joy.

On the 31st of January, Mr. Hunt arrived

at the falls of the Columbia, and encamped at the village of Wish-ram, situated at the head of that dangerous pass of the river called "the long narrows."

CHAPTER XX.

THE VILLAGE OF WISH-RAM — ROGUERY OF THE INHABITANTS—
THEIR HABITATIONS—TIDINGS OF ASTORIA—OF THE TONQUIN
MASSACRE—THIEVES ABOUT THE CAMP—A BAND OF BRAGGARTS
— EMBARCATION—ARRIVAL AT ASTORIA—A JOYFUL RECEPTION—
OLD CONRADES — ADVENTURES OF REED, M'LELLAN, AND
M'KENZIE, AMONG THE SNAKE RIVER MOUNTAINS—REJOICING
AT ASTORIA.

OF the village of Wish-ram, the aborigines' fishing mart of the Columbia, we have given some account in an early chapter of this work. The inhabitants held a traffic in the productions of the fisheries of the falls, and their village was the trading resort of the tribes from the coast and from the mountains. Mr. Hunt found the inhabitants shrewder and more intelligent than any Indians he had met with. Trade had

sharpened their wits, though it had not improved their honesty; for they were a community of arrant rogues and freebooters. Their habitations comported with their circumstances, and were superior to any the travellers had yet seen west of the Rocky mountains. In general, the dwellings of the savages on the Pacific side of that great barrier, were mere tents and cabins of mats, or skins, or straw, the country being destitute of timber. In Wish-ram, on the contrary, the houses were built of wood, with long sloping roofs. The floor was sunk about six feet below the surface of the ground, with a low door at the gabel end, extremely narrow and partly sunk. Through this it was necessary to crawl, and then to descend a short ladder. This inconvenient entrance was probably for the purpose of defence; there were loopholes also under the eaves, apparently for the discharge of arrows. The houses were larger, generally containing two or three families. Immediately within the door were sleeping places, ranged along the walls, like berths in a ship; and furnished with pallets of matting. These extended

along one-half of the building; the remaining half was appropriated to the storing of dried fish.

The trading operations of the inhabitants of Wish-ram had given them a wider scope of information, and rendered their village a kind of head quarters of intelligence. Mr. Hunt was able, therefore, to collect more distinct tidings concerning the settlement of Astoria and its affairs. One of the inhabitants had been at the trading post established by David Stuart on the Oakinagan, and had picked up a few words of English there. From him, Mr. Hunt gleaned various particulars about that establishment, as well as about the general concerns of the enterprise. Others repeated the name of Mr. M'Kay, the partner who perished in the massacre on board of the Tonquin, and gave some account of that melancholy affair. They said, Mr. M'Kay was a chief among the white men, and had built a great house at the mouth of the river, but had left it, and sailed away in a large ship to the northward, where he had been attacked by bad Indians in canoes. Mr. Hunt was startled by

this intelligence, and made further inquiries. They informed him that the Indians had lashed their canoes to the ship, and fought until they killed him and all his people. This is another instance of the clearness with which intelligence is transmitted from mouth to mouth among the Indian tribes. These tidings, though but partially credited by Mr. Hunt, filled his mind with anxious forebodings. He now endeavoured to procure canoes, in which to descend the Columbia, but none suitable for the purpose were to be obtained above the narrows; he continued on, therefore, the distance of twelve miles, and encamped on the bank of the river. The camp was soon surrounded by loitering savages, who went prowling about, seeking what they might pilfer. Being baffled by the vigilance of the guard, they endeavoured to compass their ends by other means. Towards evening, a number of warriors entered the camp in ruffling style; painted and dressed out as if for battle, and armed with lances, bows and arrows, and scalping knives. They informed Mr. Hunt that a party of thirty or forty braves were coming up

from a village below to attack the camp and carry off the horses, but that they were determined to stay with him, and defend him. Mr. Hunt received them with great coldness, and, when they had finished their story, gave them a pipe to smoke. He then called up all hands, stationed sentinels in different quarters, but told them to keep as vigilant an eye within the camp as without.

The warriors were evidently baffled by these precautions, and, having smoked their pipe, and vapoured off their valour, took their departure. The farce, however, did not end here. After a little while, the warriors returned, ushering in another savage, still more heroically arrayed. This they announced as the chief of the belligerent village, but as a great pacificator. His people had been furiously bent upon the attack, and would have doubtless carried it into effect, but this gallant chief had stood forth as the friend of white men, and had dispersed the throng by his own authority and prowess. Having vaunted this signal piece of service, there was a significant pause; all

evidently expecting some adequate reward. Mr. Hunt again produced the pipe, smoked with the chieftain and his worthy compeers ; but made no further demonstrations of gratitude. They remained about the camp all night, but at daylight returned, baffled and crest-fallen, to their homes, with nothing but smoke for their pains.

Mr. Hunt now endeavoured to procure canoes, of which he saw several about the neighbourhood, extremely well made, with elevated stems and sterns, some of them capable of carrying three thousand pounds weight. He found it extremely difficult, however, to deal with these slippery people, who seemed much more inclined to pilfer. Notwithstanding a strict guard maintained round the camp, various implements were stolen, and several horses carried off. Among the latter, we have to include the long cherished steed of Pierre Dorion. From some wilful caprice, that worthy pitched his tent at some distance from the main body, and tethered his invaluable steed beside it, from whence it was abstracted

in the night, to the infinite chagrin and mortification of the hybrid interpreter.

Having, after several days' negotiation, procured the requisite number of canoes, Mr. Hunt would gladly have left this thievish neighbourhood, but was detained until the 5th of February, by violent head winds, accompanied by snow and rain. Even after he was enabled to get under way, he had still to struggle against contrary winds and tempestuous weather. The current of the river, however, was in his favour; having made a portage at the grand rapid, the canoes met with no further obstruction, and, on the afternoon of the 15th of February, swept round an intervening cape, and came in sight of the infant settlement of Astoria. After eleven months' wandering in the wilderness, a great part of the time over trackless wastes, where the sight of a savage wigwam was a rarity, we may imagine the delight of the poor weatherbeaten travellers, at beholding the embryo establishment, with its magazines, habitations, and picketed bulwarks, seated on a high point of

land, dominating a beautiful little bay, in which was a trimbuilt shallop riding quietly at anchor. A shout of joy burst from each canoe at the long wished for sight. They urged their canoes across the bay, and pulled with eagerness for shore, where all hands poured down from the settlement to receive and welcome them. Among the first to greet them on their landing, were some of their old comrades and fellow-sufferers, who, under the conduct of Reed, M'Lellan, and M'Kenzie, had parted from them at the Caldron Linn. These had reached Astoria nearly a month previously, and, judging from their own narrow escape from starvation, had given up Mr. Hunt and his followers as lost. Their greeting was the more warm and cordial. As to the Canadian voyageurs, their mutual felicitations, as usual, were loud and vociferous, and it was almost ludicrous to behold these ancient "comrades" and "confrères" hugging and kissing each other on the river bank.

When the first greetings were over, the different bands interchanged accounts of their

several wanderings, after separating at Snake river; we shall briefly notice a few of the leading particulars. It will be recollected by the reader, that a small exploring detachment had proceeded down the river, under the conduct of Mr. John Reed, a clerk of the company: that another had set off under M'Lellan, and a third in a different direction, under M'Kenzie. After wandering for several days without meeting with Indians, or obtaining any supplies, they came together fortuitously among the Snake river mountains, some distance below that disastrous pass or strait, which had received the appellation of the Devil's Scuttle Hole.

When thus united, their party consisted of M'Kenzie, M'Lellan, Reed, and eight men, chiefly Canadians. Being all in the same predicament, without horses, provisions, or information of any kind, they all agreed that it would be worse than useless to return to Mr. Hunt and encumber him with so many starving men, and that their only course was to extricate themselves as soon as possible from this land

of famine and misery, and make the best of their way for the Columbia. They accordingly continued to follow the downward course of Snake river; clambering rocks and mountains, and defying all the difficulties and dangers of that rugged defile, which subsequently, when the snows had fallen, was found impassable by Messrs. Hunt and Crooks.

Though constantly near to the borders of the river, and for a great part of the time within sight of its current, one of their greatest sufferings was thirst. The river had worn its way in a deep channel through rocky mountains, destitute of brooks or springs. Its banks were so high and precipitous, that there was rarely any place where the travellers could get down to drink of its waters. Frequently they suffered for miles the torments of Tantalus; water continually in sight, yet fevered with the most parching thirst. Here and there they met with rain water collected in the hollows of the rocks, but more than once they were reduced to the utmost extremity: and some of the men had recourse to the last expedient to avoid perishing.

Their sufferings from hunger were equally severe. They could meet with no game, and subsisted for a time on strips of beaver skin, broiled on the coals. These were doled out in scanty allowances, barely sufficient to keep up existence, and at length failed them altogether. Still they crept feebly on, scarce dragging one limb after another, until a severe snow storm brought them to a pause. To struggle against it, in their exhausted condition, was impossible, so cowering under an impending rock at the foot of a steep mountain, they prepared themselves for that wretched fate which seemed inevitable.

At this critical juncture, when famine stared them in the face, McLellan casting up his eyes, beheld an ahsahta, or bighorn, sheltering itself under a shelving rock on the side of the hill above them. Being in more active plight than any of his comrades, and an excellent marksman, he set off to get within shot of the animal. His companions watched his movements with breathless anxiety, for their lives depended upon his success. He made a cautious circuit; scrambled up the hill with the utmost silence,

and at length arrived, unperceived, within a proper distance. Here levelling his rifle he took so sure an aim, that the bighorn fell dead on the spot; a fortunate circumstance, for, to pursue it, if merely wounded, would have been impossible in his emaciated state. The declivity of the hill enabled him to roll the carcass down to his companions, who were too feeble to climb the rocks. They fell to work to cut it up; yet exerted a remarkable self-denial for men in their starving condition, for they contented themselves for the present with a soup made from the bones, reserving the flesh for future repasts. This providential relief gave them strength to pursue their journey, but they were frequently reduced to almost equal straits, and it was only the smallness of the party, requiring a small supply of provisions, that enabled them to get through this desolate region with their lives.

At length, after twenty-one days of toil and suffering, they got through these mountains, and arrived at a tributary stream of that branch of the Columbia called Lewis river, of which Snake river forms the southern fork. In this neighbourhood

they met with wild horses, the first they had seen west of the Rocky mountains. From hence they made their way to Lewis river, where they fell in with a friendly tribe of Indians, who freely administered to their necessities. On this river they procured two canoes, in which they dropped down the stream to its confluence with the Columbia, and then down that river to Astoria, where they arrived haggard and emaciated, and perfectly in rags.

Thus, all the leading persons of Mr. Hunt's expedition were once more gathered together, excepting Mr. Crooks, of whose safety they entertained but little hope, considering the feeble condition in which they had been compelled to leave him in the heart of the wilderness.

A day was now given up to jubilee, to celebrate the arrival of Mr. Hunt and his companions, and the joyful meeting of the various scattered bands of adventurers at Astoria. The colours were hoisted; the guns, great and small, were fired; there was a feast of fish, of beaver, and venison, which relished well with men who had so long been glad to revel on horse flesh and

dogs' meat; a genial allowance of grog was issued, to increase the general animation, and the festivities wound up, as usual, with a grand dance at night, by the Canadian voyageurs.*

* The distance from St. Louis to Astoria, by the route travelled by Hunt and M'Kenzie, was upwards of thirty-five hundred miles, though in a direct line, it does not exceed eighteen hundred.

CHAPTER XXI.

SCANTY FARE DURING THE WINTER—A POOR HUNTING GROUND
—THE RETURN OF THE FISHING SEASON—THE UTHLECAN OR
SMELT—ITS QUALITIES—VAST SHOALS OF IT—STURGEON—
INDIAN MODES OF TAKING IT—THE SALMON—DIFFERENT SPE-
CIES—NATURE OF THE COUNTRY ABOUT THE COAST—FORESTS
AND FOREST TREES—A REMARKABLE FLOWERING VINE—ANI-
MALS—BIRDS—REPTILES—CLIMATE WEST OF THE MOUNTAINS
—MILDNESS OF THE TEMPERATURE—SOIL OF THE COAST AND
THE INTERIOR.

THE winter had passed away tranquilly at Astoria. The apprehensions of hostility from the natives had subsided; indeed, as the season advanced, the Indians for the most part had disappeared from the neighbourhood, and abandoned the sea coast, so that, for want of their aid, the colonists had at times suffered

considerably for want of provisions. The hunters belonging to the establishment made frequent and wide excursions, but with very moderate success. There were some deer and a few bears to be found in the vicinity, and elk in great numbers; the country, however, was so rough, and the woods so close and entangled, that it was almost impossible to beat up the game. The prevalent rains of winter, also, rendered it difficult for the hunter to keep his arms in order. The quantity of game, therefore, brought in by the hunters was extremely scanty, and it was frequently necessary to put all hands on very moderate allowance. Towards spring, however, the fishing season commenced,—the season of plenty on the Columbia. About the beginning of February, a small kind of fish, about six inches long, called by the natives the *uthlecan*, and resembling the smelt, made its appearance at the mouth of the river. It is said to be of delicious flavour, and so fat as to burn like a candle, for which it is often used by the natives. It enters the river in immense shoals, like solid columns, often

extending to the depth of five or more feet, and is scooped up by the natives with small nets at the end of poles. In this way they will soon fill a canoe, or form a great heap upon the river banks. These fish constitute a principal article of their food; the women drying them and stringing them on cords.

As the uthlecan is only found in the lower part of the river, the arrival of it soon brought back the natives to the coast; who again resorted to the factory to trade, and from that time furnished plentiful supplies of fish.

The sturgeon makes its appearance in the river shortly after the uthlecan, and is taken in different ways, by the natives; sometimes they spear it; but oftener they use the hook and line, and the net. Occasionally, they sink a cord in the river by a heavy weight, with a buoy at the upper end, to keep it floating. To this cord several hooks are attached by short lines, a few feet distant from each other, and baited with small fish. This apparatus is often set towards night, and by the next morning several sturgeon will be found hooked by it; for

though a large and strong fish, it makes but little resistance when insnared.

The salmon, which are the prime fish of the Columbia, and as important to the piscatory tribes as are the buffaloes to the hunters of the prairies, do not enter the river until towards the latter part of May, from which time, until the middle of August, they abound, and are taken in vast quantities, either with the spear or seine, and mostly in shallow water. An inferior species succeeds, and continues from August to December. It is remarkable for having a double row of teeth, half an inch long and extremely sharp, from whence it has received the name of the dog-toothed salmon. It is generally killed with the spear in small rivulets, and smoked for winter provision. We have noticed in a former chapter the mode in which the salmon are taken and cured at the falls of the Columbia, and put up in parcels for exportation. From these different fisheries of the river tribes, the establishment at Astoria had to derive much of its precarious supplies of provisions.

A year's residence at the mouth of the Columbia, and various expeditions in the interior, had now given the Astorians some idea of the country. The whole coast is described as remarkably rugged and mountainous ; with dense forests of hemlock, spruce, white and red cedar, cotton-wood, white oak, white and swamp ash, willow, and a few walnut. There is likewise an undergrowth of aromatic shrubs, creepers, and clambering vines, that render the forests almost impenetrable ; together with berries of various kinds, such as gooseberries, strawberries, raspberries, both red and yellow, very large and finely flavoured whortleberries, cranberries, serviceberries, blackberries, currants, sloes, and wild and choke cherries.

Among the flowering vines is one deserving of particular notice. Each flower is composed of six leaves or petals, about three inches in length, of a beautiful crimson, the inside spotted with white. Its leaves, of a fine green, are oval, and disposed by threes. This plant climbs upon the trees without attaching itself to them ; when it has reached the topmost

branches, it descends perpendicularly, and as it continues to grow, extends from tree to tree, until its various stalks interlace the grove like the rigging of a ship. The stems or trunks of this vine are tougher and more flexible than willow, and are from fifty to one hundred fathoms in length. From the fibres, the Indians manufacture baskets of such close texture as to hold water.

The principal quadrupeds that had been seen by the colonists in their various expeditions, were the stag, fallow deer, hart, black and grizzly bear, antelope, ahsakta or bighorn, beaver, sea and river otter, muskrat, fox, wolf, and panther, the latter extremely rare. The only domestic animals among the natives were horses and dogs.

The country abounded with aquatic and land birds, such as swans, wild geese, brant, ducks of almost every description, pelicans, herons, gulls, snipes, curlews, eagles, vultures, crows, ravens, magpies, woodpeckers, pigeons, partridges, pheasants, grouse, and a great variety of singing birds.

There were few reptiles; the only dangerous kinds were the rattlesnake, and one striped with black, yellow, and white, about four feet long. Among the lizard kind was one about nine or ten inches in length, exclusive of the tail, and three inches in circumference. The tail was round, and of the same length as the body. The head was triangular, covered with small square scales. The upper part of the body was likewise covered with small scales, green, yellow, black, and blue. Each foot had five toes, furnished with strong nails, probably to aid it in burrowing, as it usually lived underground on the plains.

A remarkable fact, characteristic of the country west of the Rocky mountains, is the mildness and equability of the climate. That great mountain barrier seems to divide the continent into different climates, even in the same degrees of latitude. The rigorous winters and sultry summers, and all the capricious inequalities of temperature prevalent on the Atlantic side of the mountains, are but little felt on their western declivities. The countries between

them and the Pacific are blest with milder and steadier temperature, resembling the climates of parallel latitudes in Europe. In the plains and valleys, but little snow falls throughout the winter, and usually melts while falling. It rarely lies on the ground more than two days at a time, except on the summits of the mountains. The winters are rainy rather than cold. The rains for five months, from the middle of October to the middle of March, are almost incessant, and often accompanied by tremendous thunder and lightning. The winds prevalent at this season are from the south and southeast, which usually bring rain. Those from the north to the southwest are the harbingers of fair weather and a clear sky. The residuc of the year, from the middle of March to the middle of October, an interval of seven months, is serene and delightful. There is scarcely any rain throughout this time, yet the face of the country is kept fresh and verdant by nightly dews, and occasionally by humid fogs in the mornings. These are not considered prejudicial to health, since both the

natives and the whites sleep in the open air with perfect impunity. While this equable and bland temperature prevails throughout the lower country, the peaks and ridges of the vast mountains by which it is dominated, are covered with perpetual snow. This renders them discernible at a great distance, shining at times like bright summer clouds, at other times assuming the most aerial tints, and always forming brilliant and striking features in the vast landscape. The mild temperature prevalent throughout the country is attributed by some to the succession of winds from the Pacific ocean, extending from latitude twenty degrees to at least fifty degrees north. These temper the heat of summer, so that in the shade no one is incommoded by perspiration; they also soften the rigours of winter, and produce such a moderation in the climate, that the inhabitants can wear the same dress throughout the year.

The soil in the neighbourhood of the sea coast is of a brown colour, inclining to red, and generally poor; being a mixture of clay and

gravel. In the interior, and especially in the valleys of the Rocky mountains, the soil is generally blackish; though sometimes yellow. It is frequently mixed with marl and with marine substances, in a state of decomposition. This kind of soil extends to a considerable depth, as may be perceived in the deep cuts made by ravines, and by the beds of rivers. The vegetation in these valleys is much more abundant than near the coast; in fact, it is in these fertile intervals, locked up between rocky sierras, or scooped out from barren wastes, that population must extend itself, as it were, in veins and ramifications, if ever the regions beyond the mountains should become civilized.

CHAPTER XXII.

NATIVES IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF ASTORIA—THEIR PERSONS AND CHARACTERISTICS—CAUSES OF DEFORMITY—THEIR DRESS—THEIR CONTEMPT OF BEARDS—ORNAMENTS—ARMOUR AND WEAPONS—MODE OF FLATTENING THE HEAD—EXTENT OF THE CUSTOM—RELIGIOUS BELIEF—THE TWO GREAT SPIRITS OF THE AIR AND OF THE FIRE—PRIESTS OR MEDICINE MEN—THE RIVAL IDOLS—POLYGAMY A CAUSE OF GREATNESS—PETTY WARFARE—MUSIC DANCING, GAMBLING—THIEVING A VIRTUE—KEEN TRADERS—INTRUSIVE HABITS—ABHORRENCE OF DRUNKENNESS—ANECDOTE OF COMCOMLY.

A BRIEF mention has already been made of the tribes or hordes existing about the lower part of the Columbia at the time of the settlement; a few more particulars concerning them may be acceptable. The four tribes nearest to Astoria, and with whom the traders had most intercourse, were, as has heretofore been observed, the Chinooks, the Clatsops, the Wakh-

iacums, and the Cathlamets. The Chinooks resided chiefly along the banks of a river of the same name, running parallel to the sea coast, through a low country studded with stagnant pools, and emptying itself into Baker's bay, a few miles from Cape Disappointment. This was the tribe over which Comcomly, the one-eyed chieftain, held sway; it boasted two hundred and fourteen fighting men. Their chief subsistence was on fish, with an occasional regale of the flesh of elk and deer, and of wild fowl from the neighbouring ponds.

The Clatsops resided on both sides of Point Adams; they were the mere reliques of a tribe which had been nearly swept off by the small-pox, and did not number more than one hundred and eighty fighting men.

The Wahkiacums, or Waak-i-cums, inhabited the north side of the Columbia, and numbered sixty-six warriors. They and the Chinooks were originally the same; but a dispute arising about two generations previous to the time of the settlement between the ruling chief and his brother Wahkiacum; the latter se-

ceded, and, with his adherents, formed the present horde which continues to go by his name. In this way new tribes or clans are formed, and lurking causes of hostility engendered.

The Cathlemets lived opposite to the lower village of the Wahkiacums, and numbered ninety-four warriors.

These four tribes, or rather clans, have every appearance of springing from the same origin, resembling each other in person, dress, language and manners. They are rather a diminutive race, generally below five feet, five inches, with crooked legs and thick ankles; a deformity caused by their passing so much of their time sitting or squatting upon the calves of their legs, and their heels, in the bottom of their canoes; a favourite position, which they retain, even when on shore. The women increase the deformity by wearing tight bandages round the ankles, which prevent the circulation of the blood, and cause a swelling of the muscles of the leg.

Neither sex can boast of personal beauty.

Their faces are round, with small, but animated eyes. Their noses are broad and flat at top, and fleshy at the end, with large nostrils. They have wide mouths, thick lips, and short, irregular, and dirty teeth. Indeed, good teeth are seldom to be seen among the tribes west of the Rocky mountains, who live chiefly on fish.

In the early stages of their intercourse with white men, these savages were but scantily clad. In summer time the men were entirely naked; in the winter and in bad weather, the men wore a small robe, reaching to the middle of the thigh, made of the skins of animals, or of the wool of the mountain sheep. Occasionally, they wore a kind of mantle of matting, to keep off the rain; but, having thus protected the back and shoulders, they left the rest of the body naked.

The women wore similar robes, though shorter, not reaching below the waist; beside which, they had a kind of petticoat, or fringe, reaching from the waist to the knee, formed of the fibres of cedar bark, broken into strands,

or a tissue of silk grass twisted and knotted at the ends. This was the usual dress of the women in summer; should the weather be inclement, they added a vest of skins, similar to the robe.

The men carefully eradicated every vestige of a beard, considering it a great deformity. They looked with disgust at the whiskers and well furnished chins of the white men, and in derision called them Longbeards. Both sexes, on the other hand, cherished the hair of the head, which with them is generally black and rather coarse. They allowed it to grow to a great length, and were very proud and careful of it, sometimes wearing it plaited, sometimes wound round the head in fanciful tresses. No greater affront could be offered to them than to cut off their treasured locks.

They had conical hats with narrow rims, neatly woven of bear grass or of the fibres of cedar bark, interwoven with designs of various shapes and colours; sometimes merely squares and triangles, at other times rude representa-

tions of canoes, with men fishing and harpooning. These hats were nearly water-proof, and extremely durable.

The favourite ornaments of the men were collars of bears' claws, the proud trophies of hunting exploits; while the women and children wore similar decorations of elks' tusks. An intercourse with the white traders, however, soon effected a change in the toilets of both sexes. They became fond of arraying themselves in any article of civilized dress which they could procure, and often made a most grotesque appearance. They adapted many articles of finery, also, to their own previous tastes. Both sexes were fond of adorning themselves with bracelets of iron, brass, or copper. They were delighted, also, with blue and white beads, particularly the former, and wore broad tight bands of them round the waist and ankles; large rolls of them round the neck, and pendants of them in the ears. The men, especially, who, in savage life carry a passion for personal decoration further than the females, did not think their gala equipments complete,

unless they had a jewel of haiqua, or wampum, dangling at the nose. Thus arrayed, their hair besmeared with fish oil, and their bodies be-daubed with red clay, they, they considered themselves irresistible.

When on warlike expeditions, they painted their faces and bodies in the most hideous and grotesque manner, according to the universal practice of American savages. Their arms were bows and arrows, spears, and war clubs. Some wore a corslet, formed of pieces of hard wood, laced together with bear grass, so as to form a light coat of mail, pliant to the body; and a kind of casque of cedar bark, leather, and bear grass, sufficient to protect the head from an arrow or a war club. A more complete article of defensive armour was a buff jerkin or shirt of great thickness, made of doublings of elk skin, and reaching to the feet, holes being left for the head and arms. This was perfectly arrow proof; add to which, it was often endowed with charmed virtues, by the spells and mystic ceremonials of the medicine man, or conjurer.

Of the peculiar custom, prevalent among

these people, of flattening the head, we have already spoken. It is one of those instances of human caprice, like the crippling of the feet of females in China, which are quite incomprehensible. This custom prevails principally among the tribes on the sea-coast, and about the lower parts of the rivers. How far it extends along the coast we are not able to ascertain. Some of the tribes, both north and south of the Columbia, practise it; but they all speak the Chinook language, and probably originated from the same stock. As far as we can learn, the remoter tribes, which speak an entirely different language, do not flatten the head. This absurd custom declines, also, in receding from the shores of the Pacific; few traces of it are to be found among the tribes of the Rocky mountains, and after crossing the mountains it disappears altogether. Those Indians, therefore, about the head waters of the Columbia, and in the solitary mountain regions, who are often called Flat-heads, must not be supposed to be characterized by this deformity. It is an appellation often given by the hunters east of the mountain

chain, to all the western Indians, excepting the Snakes.

The religious belief of these people was extremely limited and confined; or rather, in all probability, their explanations were but little understood by their visitors. They had an idea of a benevolent and omnipotent spirit, the creator of all things. They represent him as assuming various shapes at pleasure, but generally that of an immense bird. He usually inhabits the sun, but occasionally wings his way through the aerial regions, and sees all that is doing upon earth. Should any thing displease him, he vents his wrath in terrific storms and tempests, the lightning being the flashes of his eyes, and the thunder the clapping of his wings. To propitiate his favour they offer to him annual sacrifices of salmon and venison, the first fruits of their fishing and hunting.

Besides this aerial spirit they believe in an inferior one, who inhabits the fire, and of whom they are in perpetual dread, as, though he possesses equally the power of good and evil, the evil is apt to predominate. They endeavour,

therefore, to keep him in good humour by frequent offerings. He is supposed also to have great influence with the winged spirit, their sovereign protector and benefactor. They implore him, therefore, to act as their interpreter and procure them all describable things, such as success in fishing and hunting, abundance of game, fleet horses, obedient wives, and male children.

These Indians have likewise their priests, or conjurers, or medicine men, who pretend to be in the confidence of the deities, and the expounders and enforcers of their will. Each of these medicine men has his idols carved in wood, representing the spirits of the air and of the fire, under some rude and grotesque form of a horse, a bear, a beaver, or other quadruped, or that of a bird or fish. These idols are hung round with amulets and votive offerings, such as beavers' teeth, and bears' and eagles' claws.

When any chief personage is on his death bed, or dangerously ill, the medicine men are sent for. Each brings with him his idols, with which he retires into a canoe to hold a consul-

tation. As the doctors are prone to disagree, so these medicine men have now and then a violent altercation as to the malady of the patient, or the treatment of it. To settle this they beat their idols soundly against each other ; whichever first loses a tooth or a claw is considered as confuted, and his votary retires from the field.

Polygamy is not only allowed, but considered honourable, and the greater number of wives a man can maintain, the more important is he in the eyes of the tribe. The first wife, however, takes rank of all the others, and is considered mistress of the house. Still the domestic establishment is liable to jealousies and cabals, and the lord and master has much difficulty in maintaining harmony in his jangling household.

In the manuscript from which we draw many of these particulars, it is stated, that he who exceeds his neighbours in the number of his wives, male children, and slaves, is elected chief of the village ; a title to office which we do not recollect ever before to have met with.

Feuds are frequent among these tribes, but are not very deadly. They have occasionally pitched battles, fought on appointed days, and at specified places, which are generally the banks of a rivulet. The adverse parties post themselves on the opposite sides of the stream, and at such distances that the battles often last a long while before any blood is shed. The number of killed and wounded seldom exceed half a dozen. Should the damage be equal on each side, the war is considered as honourably concluded; should one party lose more than the other, it is entitled to a compensation in slaves or other property, otherwise hostilities are liable to be renewed at a future day. They are much given also to predatory inroads into the territories of their enemies, and sometimes of their friendly neighbours. Should they fall upon a band of inferior force, or upon a village, weakly defended, they act with the ferocity of true poltroons, slaying all the men and carrying off the women and children as slaves. As to the property, it is packed upon horses which they bring with them for the purpose.

They are mean and paltry as warriors, and altogether inferior in heroic qualities to the savages of the buffalo plains on the east side of the mountains.

A great portion of their time is passed in revelry, music, dancing and gambling. Their music scarcely deserves the name; the instruments being of the rudest kind. Their singing is harsh and discordant, the songs are chiefly extempore, relating to passing circumstances, the persons present, or any trifling object that strikes the attention of the singer. They have several kinds of dances, some of them lively and pleasing. The women are rarely permitted to dance with the men, but form groups apart, dancing to the same instrument and song.

They have a great passion for play, and a variety of games. To such a pitch of excitement are they sometimes roused, that they gamble away every thing they possess, even to their wives and children. They are notorious thieves, also, and proud of their dexterity. He who is frequently successful, gains much applause and popularity; but the clumsy

thief, who is detected in some bungling attempt, is scoffed at and despised, and sometimes severely punished.

Such are a few leading characteristics of the natives in the neighbourhood of Astoria. They appear to us inferior in many respects to the tribes east of the mountains, the bold rovers of the prairies; and to partake much of the Esquimaux character; elevated in some degree by a more genial climate, and more varied style of living.

The habits of traffic engendered at the cataraacts of the Columbia, have had their influence along the coast. The Chinooks and other Indians at the mouth of the river, soon proved themselves keen traders, and in their early dealings with the Astorians, never hesitated to ask three times what they considered the real value of an article. They were inquisitive also, in the extreme, and impertinently intrusive; and were prone to indulge in scoffing and ridicule, at the expense of the strangers.

In one thing, however, they showed superior judgment and self-command, to most of their

race; this was, in their abstinence from ardent spirits, and the abhorrence and disgust with which they regarded a drunkard. On one occasion, a son of Comcomly had been induced to drink freely at the factory, and went home in a state of intoxication, playing all kinds of mad pranks, until he sank into a stupor, in which he remained for two days. The old chieftain repaired to his friend, M'Dougal, with indignation flaming in his countenance, and bitterly reproached him for having permitted his son to degrade himself into a beast, and to render himself an object of scorn and laughter to his slaves.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SPRING ARRANGEMENTS AT ASTORIA—VARIOUS EXPEDITIONS SET OUT—THE LONG NARROWS—PILFERING INDIANS—THIEVISH TRIBE AT WISH-RAM—PORTAGE AT THE FALLS—PORTAGE BY MOONLIGHT—AN ATTACK, A ROUT, AND A ROBBERY—INDIAN CURE FOR COWARDICE—A PARLEY AND COMPROMISE—THE DESPATCH PARTY TURN BACK—MEET CROOKS AND JOHN DAY—THEIR SUFFERINGS—INDIAN PERFDY—ARRIVAL AT A-TOKIA.

As the spring opened, the little settlement of Astoria was in agitation, and prepared to send forth various expeditions. Several important things were to be done. It was necessary to send a supply of goods to the trading post of Mr. David Stuart, established in the preceding autumn on the Oakinagan. The cache, or secret deposit made by Mr. Hunt at the Calderon Linn, was likewise to be visited, and the

merchandise and other effects left there to be brought to Astoria. A third object of moment was to send despatches overland to Mr. Astor at New York, informing him of the state of affairs at the settlement, and the fortunes of the the several expeditions.

The task of carrying supplies to Oakinagan was assigned to Mr. Robert Stuart, a spirited and enterprising young man, nephew to the one who had established the post. The cache was to be sought out by two of the clerks, named Russell Farnham and Donald M'Gilles, conducted by a guide, and accompanied by eight men, to assist in bringing home the goods.

As to the despatches, they were confided to Mr. John Reed, the clerk, the same who had conducted one of the exploring detachments of Snake river. He was now to trace back his way across the mountains by the same route by which he had come, with no other companions or escort than Ben Jones, the Kentucky hunter, and two Canadians. As it was still hoped that Mr. Crooks might be in existence, and that Mr. Reed and his party might meet

with him in the course of their route, they were charged with a small supply of goods and provisions, to aid that gentleman on his way to Astoria.

When the expedition of Reed was made known, Mr. McLellan announced his determination to accompany it. He had long been dissatisfied with the smallness of his interest in the copartnership, and had requested an additional number of shares; his request not being complied with, he resolved to abandon the company. McLellan was a man of a singularly self-willed and decided character, with whom persuasion was useless; he was permitted, therefore, to take his own course without opposition.

As to Reed, he set about preparing for his hazardous journey with the zeal of a true Irishman. He had a tin case made, in which the letters and papers addressed to Mr. Astor were carefully soldered up. This case he intended to strap upon his shoulders, so as to bear it about with him, sleeping and waking, in all

changes and chances, by land or by water, and never to part with it but with his life!

As the route of these several parties would be the same for nearly four hundred miles up the Columbia, and within that distance would lie through the piratical pass of the rapids, and among the freebooting tribes of the river, it was thought advisable to start about the same time, and to keep together. Accordingly, on the 22d of March, they all set off, to the number of seventeen men, in two canoes ;—and here we cannot but pause to notice the hardihood of these several expeditions, so insignificant in point of force, and severally destined to traverse immense wildernesses, where larger parties had experienced so much danger and distress. When recruits were sought in the preceding year among experienced hunters and voyageurs at Montreal and St. Louis, it was considered dangerous to attempt to cross the Rocky mountains with less than sixty men ; and yet here we find Reed ready to push his way across those barriers with merely three companions.

Such is the fearlessness, the insensibility to danger, which men acquire by the habitude of constant risk. The mind, like the body, becomes callous by exposure.

The little associated band proceeded up the river, under the command of Mr. Robert Stuart, and arrived early in the month of April at the Long Narrows, that notorious plundering place. Here it was necessary to unload the canoes, and to transport both them and their cargoes to the head of the Narrows by land. Their party was too few in number for the purpose. They were obliged, therefore, to seek the assistance of the Cathlasco Indians, who undertook to carry the goods on their horses. Forward then they set, the Indians with their horses well freighted, and the first load convoyed by Reed and five men, well armed; the gallant Irishman striding along at the head, with his tin case of despatches glittering on his back. In passing, however, through a rocky and intricate defile, some of the freebooting vagabonds turned their horses up a narrow path and galloped off, carrying with them two bales of

goods, and a number of smaller articles. To follow them was useless; indeed, it was with much ado that the convoy got into port with the residue of the cargoes; for some of the guards were pillaged of their knives and pocket handkerchiefs, and the lustrous tin case of Mr. John Reed, was in imminent jeopardy.

Mr. Stuart heard of these depredations, and hastened forward to the relief of the convoy, but could not reach them before dusk, by which time they had arrived at the village of Wishram, already noted for its great fishery, and the knavish propensities of its inhabitants. Here they found themselves benighted in a strange place, and surrounded by savages bent on pilfering, if not upon open robbery. Not knowing what active course to take, they remained under arms all night, without closing an eye, and at the very first peep of dawn, when objects were yet scarce visible, every thing was hastily embarked, and, without seeking to recover the stolen effects, they pushed off from shore; "glad to bid adieu," as they said, "to this abominable nest of miscreants."

The worthies of Wish-ram, however, were not disposed to part so easily with their visitors. Their cupidity had been quickened by the plunder which they had already taken, and their confidence increased by the impunity with which their outrage had passed. They resolved, therefore, to take further toll of the travellers, and, if possible, to capture the tin case of despatches; which shining conspicuously afar off, and being guarded by John Reed with such especial care, must, as they supposed, be "a great medicine."

Accordingly, Mr. Stuart and his comrades had not proceeded far in the canoes, when they beheld the whole rabble of Wish-ram stringing in groups along the bank, whooping and yelling, and gibbering in their wild jargon, and when they landed below the falls, they were surrounded by upwards of four hundred of these river ruffians, armed with bows and arrows, war clubs, and other savage weapons. These now pressed forward, with offers to carry the canoes and effects up the portage. Mr. Stuart declined forwarding the goods, alleging the lateness of

the hour; but to keep them in good humour, informed them that, if they conducted themselves well, their offered services might probably be accepted in the morning; in the mean while, he suggested that they might carry up the canoes. They accordingly set off with the two canoes on their shoulders, accompanied by a guard of eight men well armed.

When arrived at the head of the falls, the mischievous spirit of the savages broke out, and they were on the point of destroying the canoes, doubtless with a view to impede the white men from carrying forward their goods, and laying them open to further pilfering. They were with some difficulty prevented from committing this outrage by the interference of an old man, who appeared to have authority among them; and, in consequence of his harangue, the whole of the hostile band, with the exception of about fifty, crossed to the north side of the river, where they lay in wait, ready for further mischief.

In the mean time, Mr. Stuart, who had remained at the foot of the falls with the goods,

and who knew that the proffered assistance of the savages was only for the purpose of having an opportunity to plunder, determined, if possible, to steal a march upon them, and defeat their machinations. In the dead of the night, therefore, about one o'clock, the moon shining brightly, he roused his party, and proposed that they should endeavour to transport the goods themselves, above the falls, before the sleeping savages could be aware of their operations. All hands sprang to the work with zeal, and hurried it on in the hope of getting all over before daylight. Mr. Stuart went forward with the first loads, and took his station at the head of the portage, while Mr. Reed and Mr. McLellan remained at the foot to forward the remainder.

The day dawned before the transportation was completed. Some of the fifty Indians who had remained on the south side of the river, perceived what was going on, and, feeling themselves too weak for an attack, gave the alarm to those on the opposite side, upwards of a hundred of whom embarked in several large canoes. Two loads of goods yet remained to be brought

up. Mr. Stuart despatched some of the people for one of the loads, with a request to Mr. Reed to retain with him as many men as he thought necessary to guard the remaining load, as he suspected hostile intentions on the part of the Indians. Mr. Reed, however, refused to retain any of them, saying that M'Lellan and himself were sufficient to protect the small quantity that remained. The men accordingly departed with the load, while Reed and M'Lellan continued to mount guard over the residue. By this time a number of the canoes had arrived from the opposite side. As they approached the shore, the unlucky tin box of John Reed, shining afar like the brilliant helmet of Euryalus, caught their eyes. No sooner did the canoes touch the shore, than they leaped forward on the rocks, set up a war-whoop, and sprang forward to secure the glittering prize. Mr. M'Lellan, who was at the river bank, advanced to guard the goods, when one of the savages attempted to hoodwink him with his buffalo robe with one hand, and to stab him with the other. M'Lellan sprang back just far

enough to avoid the blow, and raising his rifle, shot the ruffian through the heart.

In the mean time, Reed, who with the want of forethought of an Irishman, had neglected to remove the leathern cover from the lock of his rifle, was fumbling at the fastenings, when he received a blow on the head with a war club that laid him senseless on the ground. In a twinkling he was stripped of his rifle and pistols, and the tin box, the cause of all this onslaught, was borne off in triumph.

At this critical juncture, Mr. Stuart, who had heard the war-whoop, hastened to the scene of action with Ben Jones, and seven others, of the men. When he arrived, Reed was weltering in his blood, and an Indian standing over him and about to despatch him with a tomahawk. Stuart gave the word, when Ben Jones levelled his rifle, and shot the miscreant on the spot. The men then gave a cheer, and charged upon the main body of the savages, who took to instant flight. Reed was now raised from the ground, and borne senseless and bleeding to the upper end of the portage. Preparations

were made to launch the canoes and embark in all haste, when it was found that they were too leaky to be put in the water, and that the oars had been left at the foot of the falls. A scene of confusion now ensued. The Indians were whooping and yelling, and running about like fiends. A panic seized upon the men, at being thus suddenly checked, the hearts of some of the Canadians died within them, and two young men actually fainted away. The moment they recovered their senses, Mr. Stuart ordered that they should be deprived of their arms, their under garments taken off, and that a piece of cloth should be tied round their waist, in imitation of a squaw; an Indian punishment for cowardice. Thus equipped, they were stowed away among the goods in one of the canoes. This ludicrous affair excited the mirth of the bolder spirits, even in the midst of their perils, and roused the pride of the wavering. The Indians having crossed back again to the north side, order was restored, some of the hands were sent back for the oars, others set to work to calk and launch the canoes, and in a little

while all were embarked and were continuing their voyage along the southern shore.

No sooner had they departed, than the Indians returned to the scene of action, bore off their two comrades, who had been shot, one of whom was still living, and returned to their village. Here they killed two horses; and drank the hot blood to give fierceness to their courage. They painted and arrayed themselves hideously for battle; performed the dead dance round the slain, and raised the war song of vengeance. Then mounting their horses, to the number of four hundred and fifty men, and brandishing their weapons, they set off along the northern bank of the river, to get ahead of the canoes, lie in wait for them, and take a terrible revenge on the white men.

They succeeded in getting some distance above the canoes without being discovered, and were crossing the river to post themselves on the side along which the white men were coasting, when they were fortunately descried. Mr. Stuart and his companions were immediately on the alert. As they drew near to the place

where the savages had crossed, they observed them posted among steep and overhanging rocks, close along which the canoes would have to pass. Finding that the enemy had the advantage of the ground, the whites stopped short when within five hundred yards of them, and discharged and reloaded their pieces. They then made a fire, and dressed the wounds of Mr. Reed, who had received five severe gashes in the head. This being done, they lashed the canoes together, fastened them to a rock at a small distance from the shore, and there awaited the menaced attack.

They had not been long posted in this manner, when they saw a canoe approaching. It contained the war-chief of the tribe, and three of his principal warriors. He drew near, and made a long harangue, in which he informed them that they had killed one and wounded another of his nation; that the relations of the slain cried out for vengeance, and he had been compelled to lead them to the fight. Still he wished to spare unnecessary bloodshed, he proposed, therefore, that Mr. Reed, who, he ob-

served, was little better than a dead man, might be given up to be sacrificed to the manes of the deceased warrior. This would appease the fury of his friends; the hatchet would then be buried, and all thenceforward would be friends. The answer was a stern refusal and a defiance, and the war-chief saw that the canoes were well prepared for a vigorous defence. He withdrew, therefore, and returning to his warriors among the rocks, held long deliberations. Blood for blood is a principle in Indian equity and Indian honour; but though the inhabitants of Wish-ram were men of war, they were likewise men of traffic, and it was suggested that honour for once might give way to profit. A negotiation was accordingly opened with the white men, and after some diplomacy, the matter was compromised for a blanket to cover the dead, and some tobacco to be smoked by the living. This being granted, the heroes of Wish-ram crossed the river once more, returned to their village to feast upon the horses whose blood they had so vaingloriously drunk, and the travellers pursued their voyage without further molestation.

The tin case, however, containing the important despatches for New York, was irretrievably lost; the very precaution taken by the worthy Hibernian to secure his missives, had, by rendering them conspicuous, produced their robbery. The object of his over-land journey, therefore, being defeated, he gave up the expedition. The whole party repaired with Mr. Robert Stuart to the establishment of Mr. David Stuart, on the Oakinagan river. After remaining here two or three days, they all set out on their return to Astoria, accompanied by Mr. David Stuart. This gentlemen had a large quantity of beaver skins at his establishment, but did not think it prudent to take them with him, fearing the levy of "black mail" at the falls.

On their way down, when below the forks of the Columbia, they were hailed one day from the shore in English. Looking around, they descried two wretched men, entirely naked. They pulled to shore; the men came up and made themselves known. They proved to be Mr. Crooks and his faithful follower, John Day.

The reader will recollect, that Mr. Crooks, with Day and four Canadians, had been so reduced by famine and fatigue, that Mr. Hunt was obliged to leave them, in the month of December, on the banks of the Snake river. Their situation was the more critical, as they were in the neighbourhood of a band of Shoshonies, whose horses had been forcibly seized by Mr. Hunt's party for provisions. Mr. Crooks remained here twenty days, detained by the extremely reduced state of John Day, who was utterly unable to travel, and whom he would not abandon, as Day had been in his employ on the Missouri, and had always proved himself most faithful. Fortunately the Shoshonies did not offer to molest them. They had never before seen white men, and seemed to entertain some superstitions with regard to them, for, though they would encamp near them in the day time, they would move off with their tents in the night; and finally disappeared, without taking leave.

When Day was sufficiently recovered to travel they kept feebly on, sustaining themselves as

well as they could, until in the month of February, when three of the Canadians, fearful of perishing with want, left Mr. Crooks on a small river, on the road by which Mr. Hunt had passed in quest of Indians. Mr. Crooks followed Mr. Hunt's track in the snow for several days, sleeping as usual in the open air, and suffering all kinds of hardships. At length, coming to a low prairie, he lost every appearance of the "trail," and wandered during the remainder of the winter in the mountains, subsisting sometimes on horse meat, sometimes on beavers and their skins, and a part of the time on roots.

About the last of March, the other Canadian gave out, and was left with a lodge of Shoshonies; but Mr. Crooks and John Day still kept on, and finding the snow sufficiently diminished, undertook, from Indian information, to cross the last mountain ridge. They happily succeeded, and afterwards fell in with the Wallah-Wallahs, a tribe of Indians inhabiting the banks of a river of the same name, and reputed as being frank, hospitable, and sincere. They

proved worthy of the character, for they received the poor wanderers kindly, killed a horse for them to eat, and directed them on their way to the Columbia. They struck the river about the middle of April, and advanced down it one hundred miles, until they came within about twenty miles of the falls.

Here they met with some of the "chivalry" of that noted pass, who received them in a friendly way, and set food before them; but, while they were satisfying their hunger, perfidiously seized their rifles. They then stripped them naked and drove them off, refusing the entreaties of Mr. Crooks for a flint and steel of which they had robbed him; and threatening his life if he did not instantly depart.

In this forlorn plight, still worse off than before, they renewed their wanderings. They now sought to find their way back to the hospitable Wallah-Wallahs, and had advanced eighty miles along the river, when fortunately, on the very morning that they were going to leave the Columbia, and strike inland, the canoes of Mr. Stuart hove in sight.

It is needless to describe the joy of these poor men at once more finding themselves among countrymen and friends, or of the honest and hearty welcome with which they were received by their fellow adventurers. The whole party now continued down the river, passed all the dangerous places without interruption, and arrived safely at Astoria on the 11th of May.

CHAPTER XXIV.

COMPREHENSIVE VIEWS—TO SUPPLY THE RUSSIAN FUR ESTABLISHMENT—AN AGENT SENT TO RUSSIA—PROJECT OF AN ANNUAL SHIP—THE BEAVER FITTED OUT—HER EQUIPMENT AND CREW—INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CAPTAIN—THE SANDWICH ISLANDS—RUMOURS OF THE FATE OF THE TONQUIN—PRECAUTIONS AT REACHING THE MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA.

HAVING traced the fortunes of the two expeditions by sea and land to the mouth of the Columbia, and presented a view of affairs at Astoria, we will return for a moment to the master spirit of the enterprise, who regulated the springs of Astoria, at his residence in New York.

It will be remembered, that a part of the plan of Mr. Astor was to furnish the Russian fur establishment on the north-west coast with regular supplies, so as to render it independent of those casual vessels which cut up the trade and

supplied the natives with arms. This plan had been countenanced by our own government, and likewise by Count Pahlen, the Russian minister at Washington. As its views, however, were important and extensive, and might eventually affect a wide course of commerce, Mr. Astor was desirous of establishing a complete arrangement on the subject with the Russian American Fur Company, under the sanction of the Russian government. For this purpose, in March, 1811, he despatched a confidential agent to St. Petersburg, fully empowered to enter into the requisite negotiations. A passage was given to this gentleman by the government of the United States, in the John Adams, one of its armed vessels, bound to a European port.

The next step of Mr. Astor was, to despatch the annual ship contemplated on his general plan. He had as yet heard nothing of the success of the previous expeditions, and had to proceed upon the presumption that every thing had been affected according to his instructions. He accordingly fitted out a fine ship of four hundred and ninety tons, called the Beaver,

and freighted her with a valuable cargo destined for the factory, at the mouth of the Columbia the trade along the coast, and the supply of the Russian establishment. In this ship embarked a reinforcement, consisting of a partner, five clerks, fifteen American labourers, and six Canadian voyageurs. In choosing his agents for his first expedition, Mr. Astor had been obliged to have recourse to British subjects experienced in the Canadian fur trade; henceforth it was his intention, as much as possible, to select Americans, so as to secure an ascendancy of American influence in the management of the company, and to make it decidedly national.

Accordingly, Mr. John Clarke, the partner who took the lead in the present expedition, was a native of the United States, though he had passed much of his life in the northwest, having been employed in the fur trade since the age of sixteen. Most of the clerks were young gentlemen of good connexions in the American cities, some of whom embarked in the hope of gain, others through the mere spirit of adventure incident to youth.

The instructions given by Mr. Astor to Cap-

tain Sowle, the commander of the *Beaver*, were, in some respects, hypothetical, in consequence of the uncertainty resting upon the previous steps of the enterprise.

He was to touch at the Sandwich islands, inquire about the fortunes of the *Tonquin*, and whether an establishment had been formed at the mouth of the *Columbia*. If so, he was to take as many Sandwich islanders as his ship would accommodate, and proceed thither. On arriving at the river, he was to observe great caution, for even if an establishment should have been formed, it might have fallen into hostile hands. He was, therefore, to put in as if by casualty or distress, to give himself out as a coasting trader, and to say nothing about his ship being owned by Mr. Astor, until he had ascertained that every thing was right. In that case, he was to land such part of his cargo as was intended for the establishment, and to proceed to New Archangel with the supplies intended for the Russian post at that place where he could receive peltries in payment. With these he was to return to Astoria; take in the furs collected there, and, having com-

pleted his cargo by trading along the coast, was to proceed to Canton. The captain received the same injunctions that had been given to Captain Thorn of the Tonquin, of great caution and circumspection in his intercourse with the natives, and that he should not permit more than one or two to be on board at a time.

The Beaver sailed from New York on the 10th of October, 1811, and reached the Sandwich islands without any occurrence of moment. Here a rumour was heard of the disastrous fate of the Tonquin. Deep solicitude was felt by every one on board for the fate of both expeditions, by sea and land. Doubts were entertained whether any establishment had been formed at the mouth of the Columbia, or whether any of the company would be found there. After much deliberation, the captain took twelve Sandwich islanders on board, for the service of the factory, should there be one in existence, and proceed on his voyage.

On the 6th of May he arrived off the mouth of the Columbia, and running as near as possible, fired two signal guns. No answer was returned, nor was there any signal to be

descried. Night coming on, the ship stood out to sea, and every heart drooped as the land faded away. On the following morning they again ran in within four miles of the shore, and fired other signal guns, but still without reply. A boat was then despatched, to sound the channel, and attempt an entrance; but returned without success, there being a tremendous swell, and breakers. Signal guns were fired again in the evening, but equally in vain, and once more the ship stood off to sea for the night. The captain now gave up all hope of finding any establishment at the place, and indulged in the most gloomy apprehensions. He feared his predecessors had been massacred before they had reached their place of destination; or if they should have erected a factory, that it had been surprised and destroyed by the natives.

In this moment of doubt and uncertainty, Mr. Clarke announced his determination, in case of the worst, to found an establishment with the present party, and all hands bravely engaged to stand by him in the undertaking. The next morning the ship stood in for the

third time, and fired three signal guns, but with little hope of reply. To the great joy of the crew, three distinct guns were heard in answer. The apprehensions of all but Captain Sowle were now at rest. That cautious commander recollected the instructions given him by Mr. Astor, and determined to proceed with great circumspection. He was well aware of Indian treachery and cunning. It was not impossible, he observed, that these cannon might have been fired by the savages themselves. They might have surprised the fort, massacred its inmates; and these signal guns might only be decoys to lure him across the bar, that they might have a chance of cutting him off, and seizing his vessel.

At length a white flag was descried hoisted as a signal on cape Disappointment. The passengers pointed to it in triumph, but the captain did not yet dismiss his doubts. A beacon fire blazed through the night on the same place, but the captain observed that all these signals might be treacherous.

On the following morning, May 9th, the vessel came to anchor off cape Disappointment,

outside of the bar. Towards noon an Indian canoe was seen making for the ship, and all hands were ordered to be on the alert. A few moments afterwards, a barge was perceived following the canoe. The hopes and fears of those on board of the ship were in tumultuous agitation, as the boat drew nigh that was to let them know the fortunes of the enterprise, and the fate of their predecessors. The captain, who was haunted with the idea of possible treachery, did not suffer his curiosity to get the better of his caution, but ordered a party of his men under arms, to receive the visitors. The canoe came first alongside, in which were Comcomly and six Indians; in the barge were M'Dougal, M'Lellan, and eight Canadians. A little conversation with these gentlemen dispelled all the Captain's fears, and the Beaver crossing the bar under their pilotage, anchored safely in Baker's bay.

END OF VOL. II.

