

F
593
O11

OAKLY

EXPEDITION TO OREGON

BANCROFT
LIBRARY

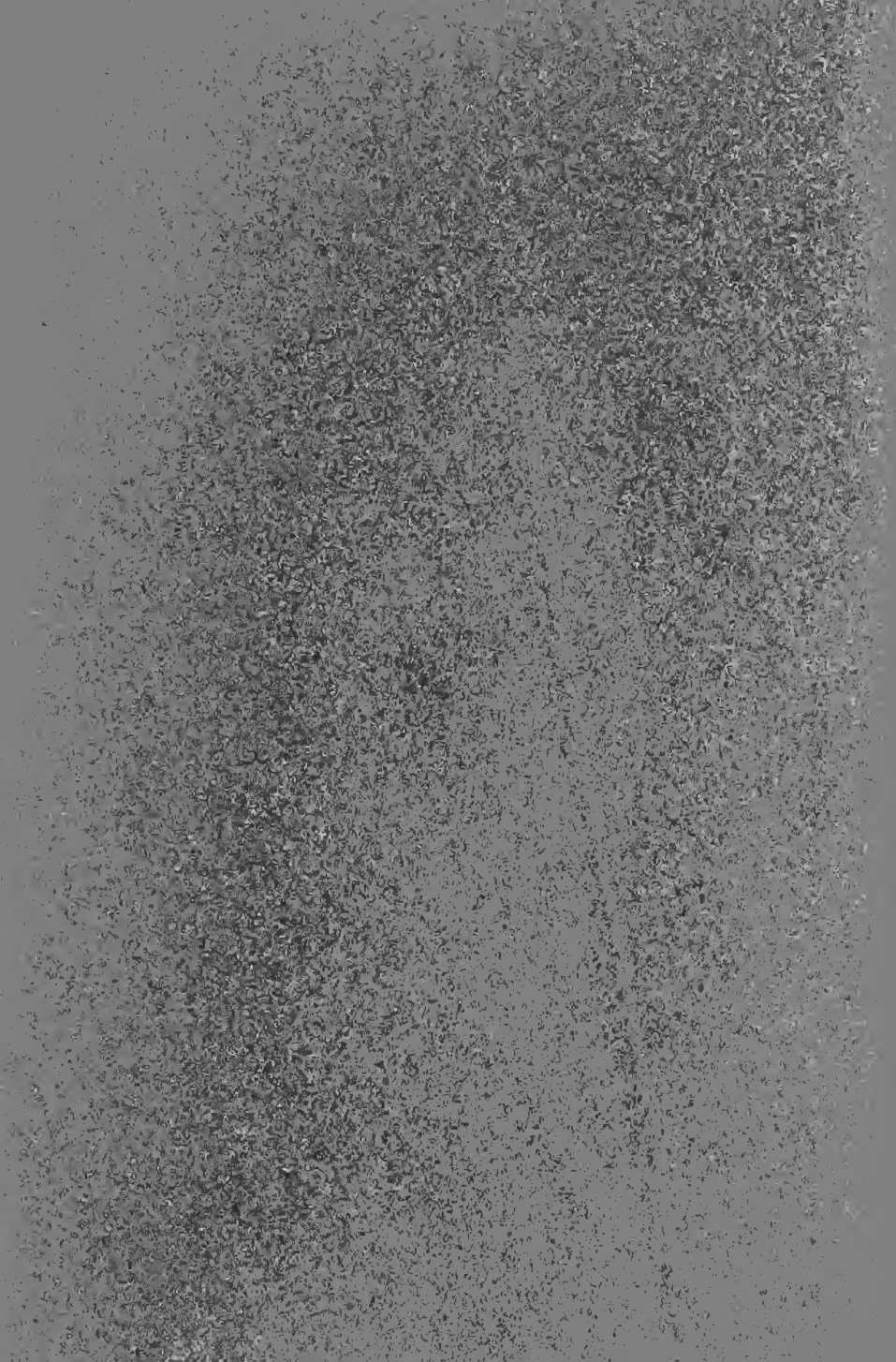


BANCROFT
LIBRARY



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

**The Oregon Expedition
of
Obadiah Oakly**

Expedition to Oregon

Obadiah Oakly



Reprinted from the Peoria Register
New York, 1914



(From the *Peoria Register*.)

The Oregon Expedition

Mr. Obadiah Oakley, one of the party who left Peoria in May for Oregon, returned home on Sunday last, having separated from his companions in the Rocky Mountains. From a conversation with him we have gathered the following outline of his journey and adventures.

The company, it will be remembered, consisted, on leaving Peoria, of 15 members. At Quincy they were joined by another; all of whom reached Independence, Mo., the 20th of May, 20 days after leaving Peoria. We presented in July a letter from Mr. Farnham, the commander of the party, written about this time, and another from Mr. Smith, one of the company. The narrative now given will commence where the other left off.

At Independence, two more joined the company, one of whom, Mr. Shortess, had been once before to the Mountains, and now offered to act as guide. He was about 45 years of age, and soon proved himself to be of a reckless and unprincipled character. The other was a young man named Pritchard, recently from one of the eastern states. Before leaving Independence they exchanged their wagon and some of their horses for other horses and pack mules. Where these are purchased the prices are from 60 to 65 dollars. They bought also a quantity of articles, such as knives, lead, vermilion, and a few trinkets, with which to trade with the Indians. One mule, which belonged to the party in common, carried their tent, two kegs of powder, and a few other articles. The other mules, of which each member, for the most part, owned one, carried the provisions, clothing and other property of each. The provisions amounted to 200 lbs. of flour and 150 lbs. of bacon, be-

sides sugar, coffee, tea, and minor groceries. Upon their riding horses they carried their rifles, blankets, and some extra clothing.

Thus mounted and provisioned, the company, 18 in number, left Independence the 29th of May, on the Sante Fe road, which is a distinct wagon track. The first adventure they met with was the loss of two horses the following night, while they were encamped five miles from Independence. The owners returned to that town the next day, and recovered them, though this ill luck was but the precursor of worse that was to follow, as will appear in the sequel.

Ten miles further, and 15 from Independence, brought them to the western boundary line of Missouri, where Mr. Fitzhugh resides in a log cabin, and this was the last house they saw until they reached some of the posts of the American Fur Company.

A day or two afterwards, when they had reached Elm Grove, 40 miles from Independence, and had there encamped for the night, they discovered that two other horses were missing. As they had doubtless returned to Independence, the owners started in pursuit, while the remainder of the company, after halting a day at the grove, continued on leisurely, so that the absentees might sooner overtake them. This they did, with the recovered horses, about a day and a half afterwards, and the company met with no further delays from this source. Their practice at night, after unlading the horses, was to *stake* them in the prairie, i. e., to drive notched stakes into the ground, to which they would fix one end of the halter, giving the animals sufficient play to enable them to feed in abundance. The ground thus far had been soft and mellow, so that the stakes were easily drawn by the horses; but afterwards had become harder and firmer, so as effectually to secure them.

At the Osage river, about 100 miles from Independence, they were agreeably surprised at meeting a returning party who had passed along a few days before them to assist Capt.

Kelly's Santa Fe company, bound to the latter place, over the worst part of the road. It consisted of seven wagons, with a proportionate number of men. They had assisted the company to Council Grove, 50 miles beyond, and were now on their return. Though our adventurers had been but a week from Independence, during which they had not seen a human being, the sight of a fellow countryman now kindled the feelings of the warmest sympathy in their hearts, and three of them resolved at once to return. They were Orin Garrett and Wm. Picket of Peoria, and young Moore of Quincy. Here also two Caw Indians, the first of any tribe they had seen, came to the camp, and received from the party some trifling presents. On the next day they saw 30 or 40 of the same tribe, all of whom were very peaceable. They were returning from a hunting excursion, and were entirely ignorant of our language.

The Osage river is here about 30 yards wide, and about knee deep. It was consequently forded with ease and safety, and on returning, Mr. Oakley found it nearly dry. The face of the country thus far was a rolling prairie, with no timber save a very few small groves at a distance from the road on the right and left. Two or three inconsiderable streams had been crossed, but they also were for the most part destitute of timber.

Parting with the Santa Fe escort next day, the party continued on to Council Grove, 50 miles further, which they had reached on the 9th of June, 10 days from Independence. The distance is 150 miles. They had consequently traveled, including stoppages, 15 miles a day. Here they rested a day to repair their pack saddles, and other damages.

On the 12th, while pursuing their journey, they were overtaken by a tremendous storm, more awful than anything they had ever before seen or read of. The thunder was petrifying and the lightning appalling beyond description. How they escaped with their lives seemed a miracle. Mr. Oakley's gun, which he held in his hand, was struck from him, and he nearly

thrown from his horse. The others were more or less affected by the subtle element. Mr. Oakley thinks more rain fell in fifteen minutes than he had ever known to fall here in the severest storm during a day. The effect of this deluge in swelling the streams which the party had to cross, will be seen hereafter.

The same evening they overtook Capt. Kelley's company, bound for Santa Fe, to which reference has already been had. It numbered 14 wagons and 29 men. With them our adventurers were invited to camp for the night, an offer which they gladly accepted, as they had no wood, nor was a tree to be seen. The wagons, however, were plentifully supplied, having brought it with them. No water was to be had save that which had fallen a few hours before, which they scooped up from pools in the prairie.

By this time the provisions obtained at Independence were nearly exhausted, and they had met with no game to shoot. It became, therefore, necessary that the party should divide, by choosing hunters to go ahead and procure a supply. Messrs. Oakley, Shortess, Jordan and Fletcher, were chosen accordingly, and they set out on the following morning. As this portion of his story most abounds in incident, we shall give in brief each day's progress.

June 13. The four hunters, leaving with the main party all the provisions, set out, themselves destitute, in search of game. They soon saw some elk, two of which they wounded, but they afterwards escaped. At 4 in the afternoon, when within 8 miles of Little Arkansas river, they met a trading company, consisting of 30 odd men, and 10 wagons, loaded with peltries from the Rocky Mountains, under the command of Mr. Bent, who resides at Bent's fort, on the Arkansas river. With it were also 200 sheep, bound for a lower market. By this company the hunters were kindly treated and feasted for the night. Capt. Bent informed them that he had lost from his caravan since he left home, 30 mules and 7 horses, which had

strayed away, and requested if they found them, to take them in charge and leave them at his fort as they passed it. He also said they would find plenty of buffalo meat the next day at Cow creek. To-night another rain visited the company, but little less severe than that already spoken of.

14. Separating from the company just mentioned, the hunters continued on, and in 8 miles reached the Little Arkansas. Though about such a stream as the Osage, between 30 and 40 yards wide, it was now prodigiously swollen, being at least 15 feet deep, and running with great velocity. As it was impracticable to cross it, the hunters planted themselves leisurely upon its bank, took out their fishing lines, and commenced fishing. In a little while they caught 12 catfish, "fat yellow fellows,"—who proved to be of excellent flavor. They made a fire on the spot, and proceeded to roast one on the coals, and though they had no seasoning, the meal was a very grateful one. While thus engaged, three men of Capt. Bent's company, who had been left behind to hunt for the stray mules and horses, appeared on the opposite side of the river after an unsuccessful search. As they were destitute of food, and the surest resource lay in overtaking the company they had left, the river was to them a feeble obstacle. Immediately on reaching it, they drove in their horses, who swam directly across, then stripped themselves and followed their example! One of them, a Spaniard, whom familiarity with the water had rendered half amphibious, took the saddle from his horse and held it in one hand, while he swam across with the other. They had eat nothing for three days. Another fish was consequently laid on the coals and speedily devoured. After spending the night together, the hunters sent by the strangers some fish to Capt. Bent, and after leaving three of the largest in the water for their comrades, when they came up, and to which their attention was directed by a signal, they prepared to cross the river.

15. The passage across the river was effected in this way:—the halters were taken from the horses and tied into a line, which was found to be in length double the width of the river. The horses were then driven across; after which two of the men swam over, carrying one end of the line with them. Those who remained tied the luggage in a bundle to the rope on the edge of the shore, then holding the rope behind the bundle, and letting it slip through their hands as those on the opposite side pulled, both parties keeping the rope so well stretched as to hold it above the water, the bundle was conveyed safely over. The next minute the two remaining men were over and all soon under way again. During this day five other streams were swam and waded. Nothing escaped being thoroughly drenched except the powder, which was carried in small canisters high on the body. The musketoes were “dreadful.” Camped at night on Big Cow creek, where Capt. Bent had said they would find buffalo, though they did not.

16. As a supply of meat became more and more desirable, the hunters determined to leave their baggage at the spot where they had camped, and go forth unencumbered in pursuit of buffalo. After riding seven miles and finding none, it was arranged that two should go back for the baggage, and take it on to a point named,—Walnut creek grove,—while the other two should sweep the country, and meet the others at sundown. Oakley and Jordan went back for the baggage, and Shortess and Fletcher continued the hunt. As the former, in prosecuting their journey, approached the grove about sundown, Jordan said he saw the glister of a gun barrel, and that there must be Indians. They stopped to consult, when Jordan was for returning; but Oakley said that would be useless, as the Indians, if such, must have seen them first, and would speedily overtake them. He was therefore for going boldly forward and meeting the worst. As they advanced they saw oxen, and soon discovered the party to be a company of traders. They were bound for Santa Fe, and numbered 93 men and 53 wagons.

Our adventurers met with a severe reprimand from them for traveling in the exposed manner they did, subject to be met almost hourly by Indians, who would prove hostile or friendly, just as their inclination or their wants might prompt them. After dark, Shortess and Fletcher arrived, without having killed anything. The four had been three days with but one meal of catfish to eat. With the Santa Fe company, however, they once more fared sumptuously. They here discovered the reason why they had found no buffalo on and around Big Cow creek, as Capt. Bent had told them they would. The Caw Indians, who hovered around and in front of the company, had driven them off, that they might enhance their value, and by killing them themselves, sell the meat at a good price to the traders.

17, Traveled along with the Santa Fe company and proceeded only 8 miles. They saw no game during the day save one hare, which they shot at and wounded. Camped to-night on a prairie without wood.

18. The four hunters, being somewhat in advance of the company, saw seven buffalo bulls and gave chase. They were seen by the company about the same time, and some of their best men started also in pursuit; but Jordan and Fletcher, having the best horses, kept ahead. The bulls, as the pursuit continued, separated, and fled in different directions; but one was run down after a chase of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles by the two hunters named, and easily killed. He weighed about 900 lbs. After taking the *fleece*, i. e. the most fleshy parts, weighing about 300 lbs., and leaving the carcass, they loaded their horses and returned to the company. This was the first buffalo they had killed, and they found the meat superior in flavor to any they had ever eaten. The bulls are far before our domestic cattle, and the cows, as they afterwards proved, as much excel them as the meat of a tame heifer exceeds that of the male in our markets. The flesh now obtained the "jerked," and it lasted 5 or 6 days.

19. Two of the hunters went back with a portion of the buffalo to meet their comrades, from whom they had now been separated 6 days. They found them 8 miles back, with nothing to eat, having in this interval killed but one antelope. They had found the fish also, and had previously met Capt. Bent's company. They also had found his stray mules and horses, and now had them in company. (On leaving them afterwards at Bent's fort, Capt. B.'s brother generously presented the company. With two of the mules and 200 lbs. of flour for their trouble.) The same day the whole party overtook the Santa Feans, who had proceeded but 6 miles from where the two hunters separated from them. All encamped that night at Pawnee fork. The Caw Indians, before spoken of, had killed 62 buffaloes, so that provisions were most abundant; but their mode of jerking it was any thing but cleanly, and none of Capt. Farnham's party, as they had plenty of their own, partook of it.

20. Both companies continued on together. Capt. Farnham's hunters killed another buffalo; and while stopping to jerk the meat, some Caw Indians came up, to whom they sold a few articles for money, of which they seemed to have plenty. The price of a common butcher knife, for which the company paid 25 cents at Independence, was out here \$1.50. Other articles were in proportion.

21. A most dreadful accident occurred this morning. While the tent was being struck, and the company preparing to depart, Mr. Smith, in drawing his gun towards him, the muzzle forward, permitted the trigger to come in contact with some protuberance on his saddle, when it went off immediately in the direction of the bottom of the chest. The ball struck one of his waistband buttons and glanced to the left, penetrating the flesh and severing two of his ribs. He was caught, while in the act of falling, by Mr. Oakley, who, on removing his clothing, found the flesh to be dreadfully lacerated and the ball lodged near the spine. The Santa Fe company, in which

was a surgeon,—Dr. Walworth, one of the owners,—was about five miles ahead, and thither Mr. O. hastened for assistance. Dr. W. returned in his carry-all with a bed, and after extracting the ball and dressing the wound, put Smith in the carriage, in which he was taken onward with comparative comfort.—This disaster detained the company till noon, and to make up for the detention they travelled till midnight without being able to overtake the Santa Feans. At night their progress was greatly retarded by the herds of buffalo which lined the road and covered the plain. They were as thick as sheep were ever seen in a field, and moved not until the caravan was within ten feet of them. They would then rise and flee at random, greatly affrighted, and snorting and bellowing to the equal alarm of the horses and mules. Supposing, from their not overtaking the advance company, that they had mistaken the road, the party resolved, at the hour above mentioned, to encamp.

22. At daylight they discovered that they had during the night taken a wrong road, and by turning off in the proper direction soon came in sight of and joined the advance party. To-day, for the first time, they used the dung of the buffalo for fuel, and found it to burn like tinder. The plains were covered with these animals as far as the eye could reach, and they appeared to be as countless as the stars for multitude. The noise proceeding from them was unremitting, and more nearly resembled the low growl of a lion in a cage than any thing else it could be compared to. They appeared not to be sensible of the distant approach of the travellers by the usual sense of seeing, but seemed only governed by that of smelling. If the traveller had “the wind of them,” as it is termed, he might approach within 30 yards, but from an opposite direction a near approach was impossible. For the two succeeding days nothing of interest occurred.

25. Another tremendous storm to-night. The wind blew a hurricane, breaking the tent poles in two, and prostrating

every thing before it. The travellers were consequently drenched.

26. The clothes of every man were saturated with water, yet the two companies set off, and soon reached the Arkansas river, 40 miles below the Santa Fe crossings.

28. Reached the crossings this afternoon. The distance is computed to be 450 miles from Independence, and one month had just been consumed in the journey. Here it became necessary that the two companies should separate, the larger to continue the plain beaten road to Mexico—the other to penetrate the trackless wilderness to the mouth of the Columbia. In view of the latter prospect, three of the company became discouraged and determined to join the Santa Fe party. They were Q. A. Jordan, Chauncey Wood, and young Pritchard. The others maintained stout hearts, and responded to the motto of their leader 'OREGON OR THE GRAVE.' Thus far, since his dreadful accident, Smith had been brought on in the carryall; but as he was now to part with this, it became necessary to provide other means for his conveyance. At first a litter was constructed and placed upon two mules; but as it was not properly made, it could not be used. Other modes were resorted to, with equal ill success; and as a last resource he was compelled to be placed upon his horse, and thus pursue the journey. Every step of the animal seemed to rend his vitals, yet he bore it with manly firmness. Capt. Farnham duly commiserated his condition and sought by every means in his power to render him more comfortable. Most of the others partook of his spirit; but some there were who looked upon the almost dying man as a burden which they would gladly get rid of, and strenuously urged his being left with a week's provision and his rifle, either to die, as they believed he must, or to regain his health and seek other adventures. For the honor of the company this proposition was advocated by three only, while the others determined to stand by, and, if need be, perish with him. They waited on him with the utmost fidelity, helping him every few

minutes from his horse, and sitting by him while he rested on the prairie, and as their companions would thus get some miles in advance during the day, they would by late travelling gain the camp at night. Bancroft Library

The next prominent point after leaving the Santa Fe crossings on the Arkansas river, is Bent's fort, 160 miles further up that stream. The route is along a tolerably distinct wagon track, and they reached the fort on the 5th of July, six days after leaving the crossings. Here Smith obtained rest and good quarters, and in a week was sufficiently recovered to resume the journey with tolerable convenience. On the way, in consequence of the mutinous and diabolical spirit manifested by a few of the company, growing out of the deplorable condition of Smith, Captain Farnham threw up the command, and thenceforward abjured all control. Thus they arrived at the fort without a leader. The fort is an enclosure of about a quarter of an acre, with several rooms attached to the walls, capable of accommodating 100 men. It contains 1000 stand of arms and one brass cannon, the force being intended to intimidate the surrounding Indians and keep the hostile in check.

The Arkansas river is about as wide as the Missouri, and the water of the same color, though far less deep and rapid.

After spending six days at the fort, the party prepared to leave, when it appeared that the spirit of disaffection, to which reference has been made, had resulted in a division of the company into two parties. One, and the largest, was composed of Shortess, Moore, Fletcher, Fash, Kilburn, Yates, Homer, and Cook with Shortess for their leader. The two first named had been most instrumental in the inhumanity practised towards Smith and *their* separation was a matter of rejoicing to his friends. The other was composed of Farnham, Oakley, Smith, Wood, Blair, Kelly and Osa, with Kelly for their leader and guide. He was a Kentuckian, who had been in the Mountains for eleven years, and who here joined the party. Blair had joined at the Santa Fe crossings, and Osa

was a Spaniard, who had for some time resided at the fort or in the neighborhood.

Both parties left the fort on the 11th of July, with the design of reaching the Columbia river,—Shortess's for Bent and Sublette's fort on the south fork of Platte river, 220 miles distant, by a plain wagon road,—and Kelly's for Brown's Hole in the Rocky Mountains, a route estimated to be 200 miles nearer. The tent was left at Bent's, and such a division made of the other property held in common as could be agreed upon. This history will detail the progress of Kelly's party, though it will be seen that reference is had in the sequel to that of the other.

On leaving the fort the party took only a small quantity of flour, with some sugar and coffee, depending, as before, upon game for their chief subsistence. The face of the country was similar to that before passed over, being nearly destitute of timber. At night each man would lie upon the ground within his buffalo robe, with his saddle for a pillow, and the heavens for a canopy. In a little while they got accustomed to this mode of lodging, and suffered no inconvenience from the loss of their tent. For nine days they were unable to procure any meat, having in this time seen only one antelope and a grisly bear, which were too wild to approach within shooting distance of. We now resume the diary.

July 18. At 10 o'clock entered the Rocky Mountains by a ravine, and were soon saluted by a tremendous hail storm. The heights around were covered with snow, and the atmosphere indicated a degree of cold about equal to freezing. For some nights past, whenever the weather was clear and still, there had been sharp frosts.

19. No game seen to-day, and provisions entirely exhausted.

20. Killed a buffalo bull, an antelope, and a mountain hen, called by the hunters sage cock. While dressing the buffalo, a multitude of others came round, bellowing and pawing as if

they would revenge the murder. The men sprung to their horses and guns, expecting the enraged animals would tear them to pieces. After awhile, however, they retreated. The road to-day was equally rugged with that of the two last, and the Mountains destitute of trees, save here and there a hemlock, pine, balsam or willow. The latter were generally seen on the banks of the streams.

21. Saw several fresh tracks in the sand, which their leader and guide (Kelly) pronounced to be those of Indians. As these were to have been expected, the event produced no other change than to cause the party to keep a better look-out. Encamped to-night in a beautiful valley, called Bayou Selard, 28 miles from the head of the south fork of the Platte. It is a level prairie, 30 miles long and 3 wide, and was covered with a thick growth of flax, which every year springs up spontaneously.

22. Made between 18 and 20 miles, in the course of which they crossed a branch of the south fork of Platte.

23. Crossed the dividing ridge between the stream just mentioned and Grand river, the first western water, and emptying into the Gulf of California. They were consequently upon the *back bone of the western continent*, and descending towards the Pacific ocean.

26. One of the horses died from poison, by eating, as was believed, wild parsnips. Found to-day, the clearest and best water they had ever drank.

28. Killed another buffalo, by which the stock of meat, which had been nearly exhausted, was plentifully supplied. Camped to-night on one of the branches of the Grand river.

30. Swam the main branch of Grand river, a stream nearly as large as the Illinois, and very rapid.

31. Very rough traveling to-day, through and over fallen pine timber. Though constant diligence was used, the company were unable to overcome more than four miles.

August 1. Crossed the dividing ridge between Grand and little Bear rivers, the latter emptying into Green river, one of

the branches of the Columbia. Country exceedingly rough, approaching to precipitous.

2. Met three trappers belonging to a company of ten, who had with them their Indian wives and children. Their names were Charles Warfield, —— Burrows, and —— Ward, all from St. Louis. Warfield recognized in Smith an old acquaintance, whom he approached with "How do you do, Mr. Carroll? I am very glad to see you."—Carroll, alias Smith, took him aside for a few moments, and Warfield was afterwards careful to call him Smith. Burrows and Ward, with the wife of one, continued with the party four days, during which nothing material occurred, except that the party killed an elk, and the trappers in one night caught two beaver.

6. Soon after the parting with the trappers just named, met four others (French) at the forks of Bear river. Killed to-day two grizzly bears for sport, the flesh being too fat to eat. Some of these animals are of enormous weight, reaching, as the hunters say, 900 pounds. One killed during the journey, a year old, exceeded 600.

7. First pleasant day since entering the mountains. For the last twenty-one, it had either rained, hailed, or snowed on each. The antelopes seemed inclined to improve it, and were grazing and sporting about in great numbers. Continued down Bear river, along its untrodden bank. There was no vestige of footsteps, except here and there a buffalo trail, which the party would follow so long as it continued in the proper direction, but when it diverged therefrom they would leave it.

9. The meat was entirely exhausted. Expecting to find buffalo wherever they desired, the men had been improvident in its use, and now began to entertain fearful forbodings of the future.

13. Arrival at Brown's Hole, the men nearly famished, having been without food for four days. This is a trapper's fort in the mountains, on the east branch of Green river, belonging to Claig & ——, and affords shelter and accommodation for

30 men when all are present. All were now out on trapping excursions but two, and these were without any provisions except dog meat, which they obtained from the Indians. Some Indians passing with dogs shortly after, a bargain was struck for three or four, the dogs being valued at \$15 apiece, and the articles given for them as follows; powder \$4 a pint, vermilion \$1 a paper of 1½ oz., tobacco \$5 a pound, and lead and knives at corresponding prices. They found the dog meat excellent, much better than our domestic beef and next to buffalo.

Here the party remained for six days, when, as they were preparing to resume their journey, a company of five persons appeared in sight, travelling from the west. They proved to be a party which had a few weeks previous escorted to Fort Hall, in the Nez Perces or Flat Head country, about 300 miles further, two missionaries, viz. Rev. Messrs. Monger and Griffeth with their wives. The party were Paul Richardson, (leader,) Dr. Wislizenus, Eugene —, Mr. Koontz, and Charles Kline. Capt. Richardson had spent two years in the Oregon country, had been to the mouth of the Columbia; was well acquainted at Fort Vancouver, and had visited the Methodist Missionary station at Wilhamet. To meet and converse with him was therefore a matter of the deepest interest to our adventurers. The prosecution of the journey was deferred, and all gathered around the speaker to listen to his relation. With an air of truth that demanded implicit confidence, he represented the country as undesirable in all its aspects. In the richest portions, about Vancouver and Wilhamet, not more than 15 bushels of wheat could be raised to the acre. The rainy season continued five months, and this was followed by six months of drought, in consequence of which, neither corn nor potatoes ever came to maturity. The ears of the former sprouted from the stalk at the ground, and after a sickly growth were invariably cut off by the frost, and the latter seldom exceeded the size of a walnut. In point of health the picture was equally gloomy, the Indians labouring under fever

and ague the year round. These representations were not without their effect upon the minds of two of the party, Oakley and Wood, who determined to abandon the enterprise and return.

On the second day after the arrival of the party just spoken of, they resumed their journey homeward, joined by Oakley and Wood. Capt. Richardson, who knew the country well, proposed taking a route different from that pursued by Kelly, viz. : by the way of Bent & Sublett's fort, on the south fork of the Platte, and which he represented to be several day's journey nearer.

Leaving Capt. Kelly with Farnham, Smith, Blair, and Osa, at Brown's Hole, where they determined to remain till the arrival of some party bound to Oregon, with which they would unite, the homeward bound party set out on the 18th of August for the south fork of Platte. For the first five days they were without food. On the 6th day they killed an elk and subsequently a buffalo, which supplied them till they reached the post spoken of. On their way they met with a remarkable adventure which had nearly cost them their lives. This was their coming suddenly upon a Sioux village, containing, as they were informed, 1200 lodges; each numbering 9 souls, giving a total population of 10,800. Finding it impossible to retreat, they yielded themselves prisoners, and were detained three days. A council was held to decide whether they should be killed or not; and during its progress, the young Indians, between 12 and 15 years old, would come up to them, and drawing their bows, would shoot the arrows into the ground, looking with savage grimaces into the faces of the captives, and crying *tab-babo* (white man,) signifying thereby that their fathers were then deciding thus to shoot them. The appearance of 400 friendly Chians, who interposed in their favour, broke up the council and saved their lives. A Chian chief immediately came to them and advised their instant departure. As they were saddling their horses the young Sioux would come around them and endeavor to prevent it. To secure their guns they were

compelled to stand firmly upon them, while three or four of the men would keep off the Indians while another was securing the saddle on the animal. The old Chians at length came to their aid, and when fairly mounted, they pushed on with all the speed in their power, outstripping, if purused, their followers. No other adventure worth mentioning occurred on the way to the Platte, which they reached on the 3d of September. Here they found Shortess's party, where they had been 42 days. All their horses had been stolen at night by the Indians some time previous, while out on a buffalo hunt, and they were unable consequently to continue their journey. They intended remaining there till Mr. Craig went out to Brown's Hole, and would there winter.

After remaining here three days, the homeward bound party resumed their journey, and in eight more reached Bent's fort on the Arkansas, which Oakley and Wood had left two months and three days before. Here they rested two days, and then retraced their steps homeward by the route they went out, except that they struck the Missouri line at Westport, 12 miles west of Independence.

NOTE.—It will be seen from this narrative that Capt. Farnham was left at Brown's Hole, in the Rocky Mountains, on the 18th of August. Though abandoned by all of his original companions but one, he yet maintained the same unyielding firmness, never for once wavering in his purpose of reaching "OREGON OR THE GRAVE!"

**The original from which this is reprinted is undated, however The Peoria Register was published under this name only during the years 1842-1845.





