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A BRIEF HISTORY OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN EXPLORATION

WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE EXPEDITION OF LEWIS AND CLARK

BY

REUBEN GOLD THWAITES

AUTHOR OF DANIEL BOONE, FATHER MARQUETTE, ON THE STORIED OHIO THE COLONIES, ETC.; EDITOR OF JESUIT RELATIONS, CHRONICLES OF BORDER WARFARE, HENNEPIN'S NEW DISCOVERY, ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN EXPLORATION

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GATES OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

So called by Lewis and Clark, who passed them July 19, 1805. The Missouri River is here confined by a spur of the Big Belt Mountains.

To

JOHN JOHNSTON, LL. D.

FOR TWELVE YEARS PRESIDENT OF THE WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AND SOMETIME PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, THIS LITTLE BOOK OF WESTERN ADVENTURE IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY HIS FRIEND

THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

It is a long stretch of fruitful years, from Balboa's crossing in Darien to the completion of the transcontinental railways in the United States. Adequately to treat of Rocky Mountain Exploration as a whole would require a series of bulky volumes. When, therefore, one is asked to tell of the multitude of adventurous expeditions incident to the scaling of the continental divide, within the limits of one small book, the task largely resolves itself into the recitation of a bead-roll of principal events.

And yet the story seems worth telling, even with such restrictions. The records of most, if not all, of the enterprises herein related are somewhere accessible in print, and some of them have been given a popular dress. But nowhere else, so far as I know, has the entire range been treated in connected form

within the covers of a single volume. It is sincerely hoped that this catalogue of events may prove sufficiently readable, to inspire youth with adequate appreciation of what has been dared and done for them by their predecessors upon the stage. The deeds of Lewis and Clark, Pike, Long, Frémont, and their compeers, will always stir the blood of those who love to read of noble adventure in the public cause. Hardly less thrilling and inspiring are the daring exploits of those eminent Canadian explorers, Vérendrye, McKenzie, Thompson, and Fraser.

Far more space within this book is devoted to the experiences of Lewis and Clark than to those of any others in the roll of American explorers. There is appropriateness in this. Their expedition was the first to cross the continent under the auspices of the United States Government; in many ways it was, considering both the occasion and the result, the most important of all—other expeditions but continuing and broadening the work of the men who broke the path. It has seemed proper, upon the eve of the centennial celebration of their crossing,

to dwell in as much detail as space would allow, upon an event fraught with momentous consequence in the Expansion of the Republic.

R. G. T.

Madison, Wisconsin,
December, 1903.

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN EXPLORATION

CHAPTER I

EXPLORATION OF THE NORTHWEST COAST

Amid the prayers and the plaudits of Spain, Columbus set sail from the little port of Palos, seeking not a new world, but the shores of old India. It was from the Indus that Europe obtained her silks and gold, her spices and her precious stones; while of the wealth of ancient China and Japan, the "Sunrise Land," travelers like Marco Polo had brought glowing though vague accounts. When the Spanish admiral furled his sails in the palm-girt harbor of Cat Island, he was convinced that he had reached but an outlying portion of those coveted lands; to him, this was indeed the West Indies. Columbus went to his grave probably unconscious of the fact that he had discovered a new continent; and the belief that America was merely a

projection of Asia was long after persisted in by geographers. It was two and a half centuries later (1741) before Vitus Bering, sailing from the Pacific to the Arctic Ocean, proved to the world that America was insulated.

Another time-worn geographical theory regarding North America—a theory the origin of which is lost in obscurity—did not die until a half century later: that a waterway somewhere extended through the heart of the continent between the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific, or South Sea, as it was then named. The Spanish conquerors of Mexico, while vainly seeking for gold among the pueblos of our Southwest and along the gloomy shores of the Gulf of California, were early searchers for that transcontinental waterway which was to give them a short route from Europe to India. So, too, the adventurous French of Canada, while penetrating the heart of the continent by means of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi, were seeking to pierce the elusive mystery of the South Sea. John Smith, of Virginia, confidently thought to find it by ascending the James; other Englishmen, little knowing the

breadth of the continent, made similar trials by way of the Potomac and the Roanoke. Hendrik Hudson thought at first that the great river of New York might lead him into a passage to the Western Ocean, and still later fancied he had found it in Hudson Strait and Bay. Transcontinental exploration in North America was for nearly three centuries largely stimulated by this search for a mythic waterway. It is therefore necessary that we familiarize ourselves with the history of the long and fruitless quest.

In 1513, a hundred and seven years before the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, Balboa scaled the continental back-bone at Darien and unfurled the flag of Spain by the waters of the Pacific. With wondrous zeal did Spanish explorers beat up and down the western shore of the Gulf of Mexico, seeking for an opening through. Cortez had no sooner secured possession of Mexico, after his frightful slaughter of the Aztecs, than he began pushing out to the west and northwest—along the "upper coasts of the South Sea"—in search of the strait which Montezuma told him existed.

Rocky Mountain Exploration

It is unlikely that Montezuma's knowledge of North American geography was much greater than that of his conqueror. But in every age and land aborigines have first ascertained what visiting strangers most sought, whether it be gold or waterways, and assured them that somewhere beyond the neighboring horizon these objects were to be found in plenty. Spanish, French, and English have each in their turn chased American rainbows that existed only in the brains of imaginative tribesmen who had little other thought than a childish desire to gratify their guests.

Cortez undertook, at his own charge, several of these expensive exploring expeditions to discover the strait of which Montezuma had spoken, and one of them he conducted in person. In 1528—the year he visited Spain to meet his accusers—we find him despatching Maldonado northward along the Pacific coast for three hundred miles; and five years later Grijalva and Jimenez were claiming for Spain the southern portion of Lower California. A full hundred years before Jean Nicolet related to the French authorities at their feeble outpost on the rock of Quebec the

story of his daring progress into the wilds of the upper Mississippi Valley, and the rumors he had there heard of the great river which flowed into the South Sea, Spanish officials in the halls of Montezuma were receiving the tales of their adventurers, who had penetrated to strange lands laved by the waters of this selfsame ocean.

It was about the year 1530 when the Spaniards in Mexico first received word, through an itinerant monk, Marcos de Niza, of certain powerful semi-civilized tribes dwelling some six hundred miles north of the capital of the Aztecs. These strange people were said to possess in great store domestic utensils and ornaments made of gold and silver; to be massed in seven large cities composed of houses built with stone; and to be proficient in many of the arts of the Europeans. The search for "the seven cities of Cibola," as these reputed communities came to be called by the Spaniards, was at once begun.

Guzman, just then at the head of affairs in New Spain, zealously set forth at the head of four hundred Spanish soldiers and a large following of Indians, to search for this mar-

velous country. But the farther north the army marched the more distant became Cibola in the report of the natives whom they met on the way; until at last the invaders became involved in the pathless deserts of New Mexico and the intricate ravines of the foothills beyond. The soldiers grew mutinous, and Guzman returned crestfallen to Mexico.

In April, 1528, three hundred enthusiastic young nobles and gentlemen from Spain landed at Tampa Bay, under the leadership of Narvaez, whom Cortez had supplanted in the conquest of Mexico. Narvaez had been given a commission to hold Florida, with its supposed wealth of mines and precious stones, and to become its governor. Led by the customary fables of the natives, who told only such tales as they supposed their Spanish tormentors wished most to hear, the brilliant company wandered hither and thither through the vast swamps and forests, wasted by fatigue, famine, disease, and frequent assaults of savages. At last, after many distressing adventures, but four men were left—Cabeza de Vaca, treasurer of the expedition, and three others. For eight long years did these

bruised and ragged Spaniards wearily roam across the region now divided into Texas, Indian Territory, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona—through tangled forests, across broad rivers, morasses, and desert stretches beset by wild beasts and men; but ever spurred on by vague reports of a colony of their countrymen to the southwest. At last (May, 1536) the miserable wanderers, first to make the transcontinental trip in northern latitudes, reached the Gulf of California, where they met some of their fellow countrymen, who bore them in triumph to the City of Mexico as the guests of the province.

In that golden age of romance travelers were expected to gild their tales, and in this respect seldom failed to meet the popular demand. The Spanish conquistadores, in particular, lived in an atmosphere of fancy. They looked at American savages and their ways through Spanish spectacles; and knowing nothing of the modern science of ethnology, quite misunderstood the import of what they saw. Beset by the national vice of flowery embellishment, they were also pardonably ignorant of savage life and had an

indiscriminating thirst for the marvelous. Thus we see plainly how the Cibola myth arose and grew; and why most official Spanish reports of the conquest of the Aztecs were so distorted by false conceptions of the conquered people as in some particulars to be of slight value as material for history. It was, then, small wonder that Cabeza de Vaca and his fellow adventurers, in the midst of the hero worship of which they were now recipients, should claim themselves to have seen the mysterious seven cities and to have enlarged upon the previous stories.

Coronado, governor of the northern province of New Galicia, was accordingly sent to conquer this wonderful country, which the adventurers had seen but Guzman had failed to find. In 1540, the year when Cortez again returned to meet ungrateful neglect at the hands of the Spanish court, Coronado set out with a well-equipped following of three hundred whites and eight hundred Indians. The Cibola cities were found to be but mud pueblos in Arizona and New Mexico, with the aspect of which we are to-day familiar; while the mild-tempered inhabitants, destitute of

wealth, peacefully practising their crude industries and tilling their irrigated fields, were foemen hardly worthy of Castilian steel.

Disappointed, but still hoping to find the country of gold, Coronado's gallant little army, frequently thinned by death and desertion, for three years beat up and down the southwestern wilderness: now thirsting in the deserts, now penned up in gloomy cañons, now crawling over pathless mountains, suffering the horrors of starvation and of despair, but following this will-o'-the-wisp with a melancholy perseverance seldom seen in man save when searching for some mysterious treasure. Coronado apparently twice crossed the State of Kansas. "Through mighty plains and sandy heaths," says the chronicler of the expedition, "smooth and wearisome and bare of wood. . . . All that way the plains are as full of crookback oxen [buffaloes] as the mountain Serena in Spain is of sheep. . . . They were a great succor for the hunger and want of bread which our people stood in. One day it rained in that plain a great shower of hail as big as oranges, which caused many tears, weaknesses, and vows." The wanderer

ventured as far as the Missouri, and would have gone still farther eastward but for his inability to cross the swollen river. Co-operating parties explored the upper valleys of the Rio Grande and Gila, ascended the Colorado for two hundred and forty miles above its mouth, and visited the Grand Cañon of the same river. Coronado at last returned, satisfied that he had been victimized by the idle tales of travelers. He was rewarded with contumely, and lost his place as governor of New Galicia; but his romantic march stands in history as one of the most remarkable exploring expeditions of modern times.

Meanwhile, explorers did not forget the supposed transcontinental waterway—the "Strait of Anian," as some European geographers now called it; the "Northwest Passage," as it was generally styled by the English. The latter were not long in exploring the inlets of the Atlantic coast south of the St. Lawrence, and in consequence relegating to the extreme north the eastern end of the mythic strait. The Spanish on their part ascended but slowly along the Pacific coast, their successive maps locating the strait

at varying distances northward of the latest exploration; although there were not lacking those who claimed actually to have sailed upon it, their fabrications gaining wide popular acceptance. We have seen that in 1533 they claimed Lower California. Ten years later, one of Cabrillo's ships reached Cape Mendocino; but it was long before this record was broken—indeed, the well-equipped expedition of Vizcaino, which came to anchor in Monterey Bay in 1602–03, was little more than a repetition of Cabrillo's, and Oregon was still practically an undiscovered country.

In fact, now that India was found to be so far away, and large Spanish interests had become established in the Philippines and elsewhere in the South Seas, concern in the American north quickly waned; save that it was deemed important to find a port of refuge on the American coast, in the interest of the Manila traders, which was in part the occasion of Vizcaino's voyage. As regarded the much-sought-for strait, it came to be recognized that a short route from Europe to India through the American continent might well prove a positive disad-

vantage to Spain, by making it more convenient for rivals to reach her markets and prey upon her commerce; although many argued that in that event it would be well for Spain herself to discover the strait in order to close it to others. Now that English piratical cruisers, officered by Drake (1579) and Cavendish (1587), had rounded Cape Horn and enriched themselves with the spoils of her galleons, Spain's plight might have been serious indeed had the Pacific been also accessible through Hudson Bay. As it was, a hundred and seventy years elapsed after Vizcaino's enterprise, with practically nothing discovered by Spanish sailors north of the Gulf of California.

During this long period of inaction in maritime discovery, New Spain exhibited a certain degree of enterprise within the interior. In 1582, some forty years after Coronado's march, two Franciscan friars ascended the valley of the Rio Grande, and went down the valley of the Gila, making a transcontinental tour, and securing a temporary renewal of interest in the pueblos. Sixteen years later, near the close of the sixteenth

century, Juan de Oñate invaded what is now New Mexico, and Santa Fé was established as the seat of Spanish power in the north. In 1604–05 Oñate made extensive explorations among the Zuñi and Moqui towns, and descended the Colorado to the sea; while about the same time several *entradas* were planted among the Texan tribes far to the east. By 1630 the Roman Catholics had fifty missions in New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas, administering religious instruction to ninety pueblos. This was the high-water mark of Spanish power in our Southwest. In 1680 the natives, rendered desperate by the harsh rule of their military taskmasters, drove them from the land of Cibola; but by the close of the century the Spaniards were again in possession.

In 1697–1702 the Jesuits Kino and Salvatierra, worthily imitating the deeds of their French brethren in Canada, founded missions along the Gila and Colorado Rivers—connecting links between New Mexico and the western coast. The Spaniards moved more slowly than the French, and it was nearly a century after Kino's notable expedition be-

fore an attempt was made to extend Indian missions into Upper or Alta California. But they were then pushed vigorously by the Franciscans, headed by Father Junipero Serra, at favorable points along the shore—San Diego in 1769, Monterey the following year, San Francisco in 1776, until by the end of the century there were eighteen missions, with forty priests, and 13,500 Indians living at the convert villages.

It has been the fashion to charge the Spanish fathers with having practically enslaved their dusky neophytes, in order to enrich themselves from their labor. This conclusion is not warranted by the facts. Like the French Jesuits in Canada, the Spanish missionaries soon found it impracticable to succeed in the work of religious training and oversight so long as their parishioners were semi-nomads. Villages or compounds were therefore formed in New Spain as in New France, wherein it was thought the converts might become accustomed to communal life, and by continuous though moderate labor also secure freedom from the taunts and temptations of the unconverted. While the Spanish

army was undoubtedly cruel to the natives, the laws of both Church and State were models of benevolence toward these dependent people. The sanitation in the convert villages was inadequate, as it also was in the towns of Spain, and the death-rate was excessive; the Indians chafed under sustained labor in the communal fields; they sometimes rebelled against the modest tribute required of them to meet the common expenses; and the minute rules and observances of the Church, with corporal punishment meted out at the sanctuary door to all offenders, were not always to their liking. But these conditions were such as Spaniards lived under at home in that period when modern science was unknown, when superstition prevailed, and the Church ruled with the discipline of a stern parent. The Indian, however, was less prepared for this sort of thing than the European. We may now properly adjudge these missionary methods as in some particulars inapt, but they were born of the best Spanish thought of their day, and were intended to be philanthropic. That a mere handful of priests could for so long a period firmly hold

in hand and to an appreciable degree soften the fierce temper of so large a population of sturdy savages, is an evidence that their rule was not altogether that of the taskmaster.

In 1773, alarmed by the reports of Russian coast explorations in the far north, Spain sent out Juan Perez, who, doubtless first of white men, examined the shore as far up as latitude 55°. In 1774–75, Heceta, Perez, and Cuadra explored the whole extent of the Northwest Coast from 42° to about 58°—the latter near the modern Sitka. On July 17th of the latter year Heceta's ship was buffeted by the strong cross-currents of the bay which forms the mouth of the Columbia; but no landing was made, and the existence of the river was only surmised. Meanwhile, exploration of the interior was not wholly neglected by the Spaniards, for in 1776–77 Fathers Dominguez and Escalante journeyed from New Mexico to Utah Lake, in the Great Basin, which Father Font also visited in 1777.

Captain James Cook, the famous English navigator, was, in 1778, on his third and final voyage, searching the coast to the north of Vizcaino's discoveries for the Northwest

Passage, and in the course of his voyage explored between latitude 43° and 50°. The following year, Cook's discoveries having become widely known, Heceta and Cuadra conducted extensive explorations as far up as Alaska, and Spain now regarded the entire Northwest Coast as her own; indeed, further voyages of discovery were the following year forbidden by the king, although within a few years the order was abrogated.

In 1786, a famous French navigator and scientist, Count de la Pérouse, visited these shores and gave to the world its first definite knowledge of the California missions. Within the next three years several English fur-trading vessels were operating along the coast, but added nothing to the record of discoveries. Two and three years later there were new Spanish expeditions to watch the Russians, who were contemplating establishments in the north, also the adventurous English, whose movements were alike suspicious; for while ostensibly only engaged in carrying American furs to China, where they were bartered for teas, silks, spices, and other Oriental goods, the British captains

were suspected of entertaining designs of permanent settlement on the American shore. Irritation over the presence of small English settlements at Nootka Sound occasioned a diplomatic flurry between the two nations. In 1789 Spanish naval officers seized at Nootka two English trading vessels and their crews, alleging trespass. After a long and spirited controversy, which led almost to war, Spain in 1795 agreed to abandon Nootka and substantially all of the shore lying north of the Columbia; thus enabling English and American fur-traders to obtain a firm hold upon the Northwest Coast.[1]

[1] Nootka Sound is on the west coast of Vancouver Island, now Canadian territory. In August, 1903, upon the shore of Friendly Cove, the Washington University State Historical Society erected "a fine monument of native granite" bearing this inscription: "Vancouver and Quadra met here in August, 1792, under the treaty between Spain and Great Britain of October, 1790. Erected by the Washington University State Historical Society, August, 1903." The address of presentation was made by Prof. Edmond S. Meany, of Washington University; that of acceptance by Sir Henri Joly de Lotbinière, Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia. A picture of the monument appears in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer for August 30, 1903. During his visit Professor Meany exhumed numerous "flat Spanish bricks" used in the foundations of the old Spanish fort. For a half century after the meeting the island bore the name, "Quadra and Vancouver's Island."

American Coast Traders

American fur-trading vessels, chiefly from New England, appeared upon the scene within the year following the treaty with England under which the United States was recognized as a nation. Like the English, they sought to secure furs from the Pacific Coast Indians and trade them in China and India for goods salable in the Atlantic towns. The leaders in this venture were a company of Boston merchants who had read the reports of Cook's voyages. In 1788 they sent out the Columbia and Lady Washington, small vessels with cargoes of blankets, gaily colored cloths, beads, hatchets, and other articles commonly used in traffic with the aborigines; and thereafter New England navigators were visitors frequently seen upon the shores of what are now California, Oregon, and Washington.

Upon the eleventh of May, 1792, Captain Robert Gray, commanding the Columbia, entered the mouth of the great river to which he gave the name of his vessel, a stream destined to play a conspicuous part in the romantic story of Rocky Mountain exploration. In this same year some thirty vessels visited the

Northwest Coast—French, Portuguese, English, and American—most of them engaged in trafficking for furs with the natives, others upon errands either of diplomacy or exploration. Most prominent of the English captains was George Vancouver, probably the best equipped navigator who had yet visited the region. His surveys and reports did much to open the way to subsequent English claims in this quarter.

Owing to the fact that the East India Company enjoyed practically a monopoly of English trade upon the Pacific, especially that with China and India, nearly all the vessels of independent English traders had by the close of the century abandoned the Northwest Coast. Thus the Americans were for nearly twenty years left almost alone in this important trade, an opportunity not neglected by our adventurous marines. Leaving some New England port with a diversified store of "Yankee notions" for bartering with Polynesians and Indians, a skipper would stop en route at the West Indies and the South Sea islands. There he would pick up molasses, sugar, shells, cocoanuts, and other articles

suitable for traffic, with them proceeding to the Northwest Coast, perhaps making Nootka his chief port, where he quickly acquired a stock of furs from the natives. Running down with his peltries to the Sandwich Islands at the close of the season, he would leave them to be dressed on land by the greater part of his ship's company, engage a fresh crew of islanders, and return to Nootka for another cargo of furs. Adding enough sandalwood at Hawaii to make a full cargo, he would now sail for China, to exchange his holdings for teas, silks, and Oriental cloths, with which he would return to the Atlantic coast after a profitable absence of three or four years.

It will be seen in the course of this narrative that the desire to cultivate the fur-trade was, under the American régime, an important factor in Rocky Mountain exploration.

CHAPTER II

FRENCH EXPLORATIONS FROM THE EAST

In common with the English colonists upon the Atlantic slope, the men of New France had no conception of the immense breadth of the North American continent. When, probably in 1634, Champlain's agent, Jean Nicolet, penetrated to the far-away wilds of Wisconsin, he hoped to meet Chinamen upon the shores of Green Bay. Before landing at the principal Indian village there, he robed himself in a gorgeous damask gown decorated with gaily colored birds and flowers, a ceremonial garment with which he had taken care to provide himself at Quebec, expecting to meet mandarins similarly attired. In the name La Chine, as applied to the settlement at the great rapids of the St. Lawrence just above Montreal, we have a memorial of the hope entertained by La Salle that the road to

China lay in this direction. These incidents amuse us now. But we have seen that it was somewhat over a century after Nicolet's visit before Bering established the fact that America was insulated and not a part of Asia; and still another half century of spasmodic exploration was required before the facts relative to the width of the continent were at last known.

Although the hope that Asiatics might be found in the Mississippi Valley does not appear to have been long entertained, the old theory of a short-cut transcontinental waterway was held by the French throughout their occupancy of North America. Jolliet, Marquette, and La Salle, as had many explorers before them, thought at first that the Mississippi itself might pour into the South Sea. When they found this untrue, it was thereafter the dream of adventurers to discover some stream flowing westerly to the Pacific, which might prove a convenient waterway for the portable craft then used by the explorers of the interior.

For a long period the French were satisfied not to penetrate far beyond Lakes Superior

and Nepigon, a region wherein Du Luth was for many years the principal trader. The Indians were able to draw fairly correct maps either on birch-bark or with a stick upon the sand, and were fond of dilating upon the size and length of the lakes and rivers by which they had journeyed. Thus, from them, the traders, settled in their little waterside forts of logs, became in a general way well acquainted with the interior; but they did not at first care to explore it to any great depth, for the natives, eager for trade, brought in furs from far-distant regions.

With the revival of European interest in the Northwest Passage, some of the officials of New France became imbued with an ambition to foster the search, and here and there among the hardy Western forest traders were men who expressed eagerness to undertake it. The court at Paris, however, looked askance at any scheme to divert public money to Canada. If the colony across seas were not to be a source of revenue, it at least must not, if possible to prevent, prove a burden to the motherland. When in 1719 Vaudreuil, then Governor of New France, was authorized

to establish a line of posts through the country to the west of Lake Superior, it was expressly stipulated by the court that they must be planted "without any expense to the king —as the person establishing them would be remunerated by the trade." Thus Canadian explorers under the French régime were, as a rule, expected to turn fur-traders en route, and support themselves from the country through which they passed, being armed with the often doubtful privilege of throttling the trade of competitors in the field. Under such conditions it is small wonder that some exploring parties soon developed into mere tyrannous trade monopolies, operating through wide districts, and maintaining their grasp by corrupt manipulation of court favorites; while others, honestly bent on discovery, were in the long absences of their leaders from home ruined by enemies at court and in trade, and came to sad ends.

In 1720 the Jesuit historian and traveler Father Charlevoix was sent to New France on a tour of observation, to inform the Council of the Marine at Paris relative to a suitable route to the Pacific. He made two sug-

gestions: either to send an expedition up the Missouri to its source, and then explore to the westward, exactly what Jefferson planned in the two closing decades of the century, or to establish a line of fur-trade posts among the Sioux, and thus gradually creep into and across the interior. The second of these propositions, which he reported to be the less expensive and perhaps more certain, was chosen by the French authorities.

It was, nevertheless, several years before the resolution was carried into effect. Fort Beauharnois, a stockaded trading station, was built (1727) upon the Minnesota shore of Lake Pepin, on the upper Mississippi, with René Boucher de la Perrière in charge, and the Jesuits Guignas and De Gonnor to look after the missionary field; for in New France the service of the Church went hand in hand with that of the king. A fresh uprising of the Foxes in Wisconsin — they gave the French no end of trouble in those days — caused the abandonment of the post, where little but discouragement had been heard concerning the Western Sea.

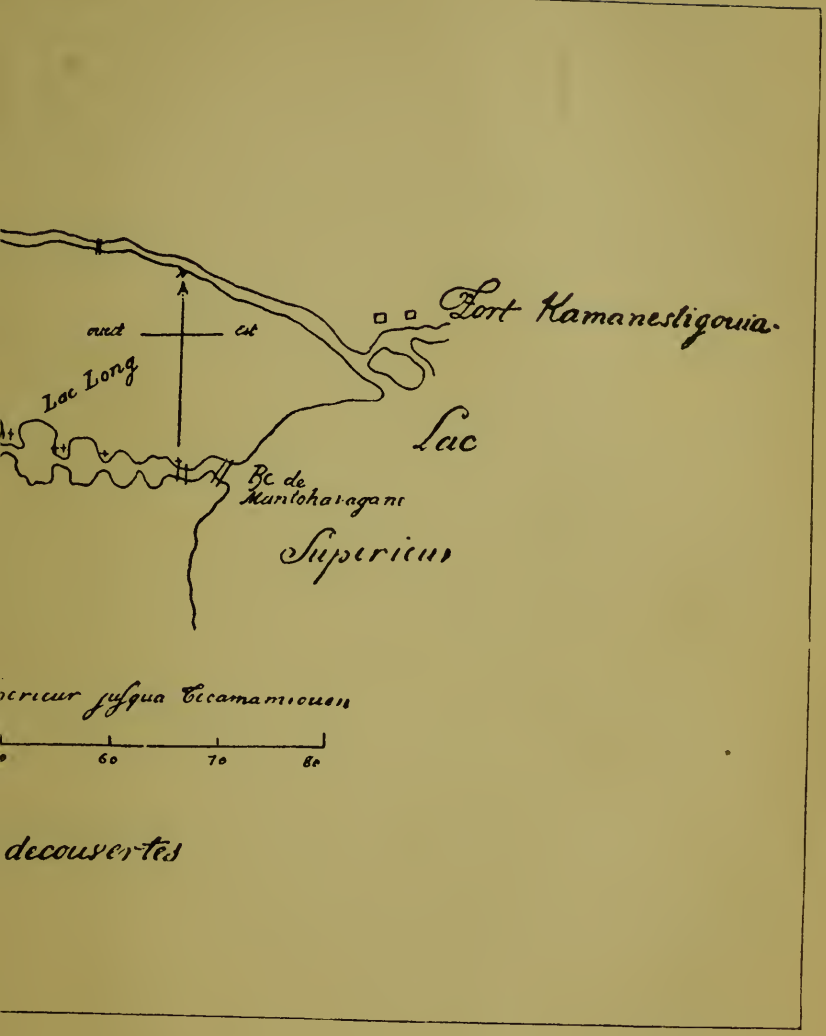
Soon after De Gonnor's return to Quebec,

there arrived at the little capital of New France one the remainder of whose life was to be spent in searching for the Pacific Ocean from the east—Pierre Gaultier de Varennes de la Vérendrye. Son of the governor of the colony of Three Rivers, on the St. Lawrence, Vérendrye had had early experience as a fur-trader. Upon the opening of the War of the Spanish Succession (1702–13) he went to France and obtained a lieutenant's commission in the royal army. Left for dead on the bloody field of Malplaquet, where he was wounded by both shots and saber cuts, he recovered, and returning to Canada re-entered the woods as a trader, a pursuit then enlisting the services of the most daring spirits in New France.

Obtaining the command of the French outpost on Lake Nepigon, and there also conducting a fur-trade on his own behalf, Vérendrye had opportunity for meeting Indians representing many widely differing tribes, scattered throughout a vast wilderness; for this was the headquarters of the extensive trade which was conducted in opposition to that of the great English company on Hudson Bay.

From these Indians he heard many strange tales of adventure and geography. One chief, in particular, told him of a certain river flowing westward out of a great lake which the narrator had himself descended until he came to a tide which so terrified him that he turned back; also of a salt lake with many villages upon it. Warming with his story, Ochagach drew on birch-bark a rude map of the route to these regions, and set Vérendrye's heart afire with a yearning to discover the long-sought sea.

Acting upon the impulse of this desire, he descended to Quebec in his birch canoe—a long and dangerous journey, but one which these Western traders undertook almost yearly, in order to keep in touch with the Government and the fur market. He there laid before the governor, Beauharnois, this Indian map and his scheme for reaching the Pacific by way of the network of northern lakes and rivers—chiefly Pigeon River, Lake of the Woods, Rainy Lake and River, Lake Winnipeg, and the Assiniboin. De Gonnor, being convinced that the route thither was not through the Sioux country, indorsed his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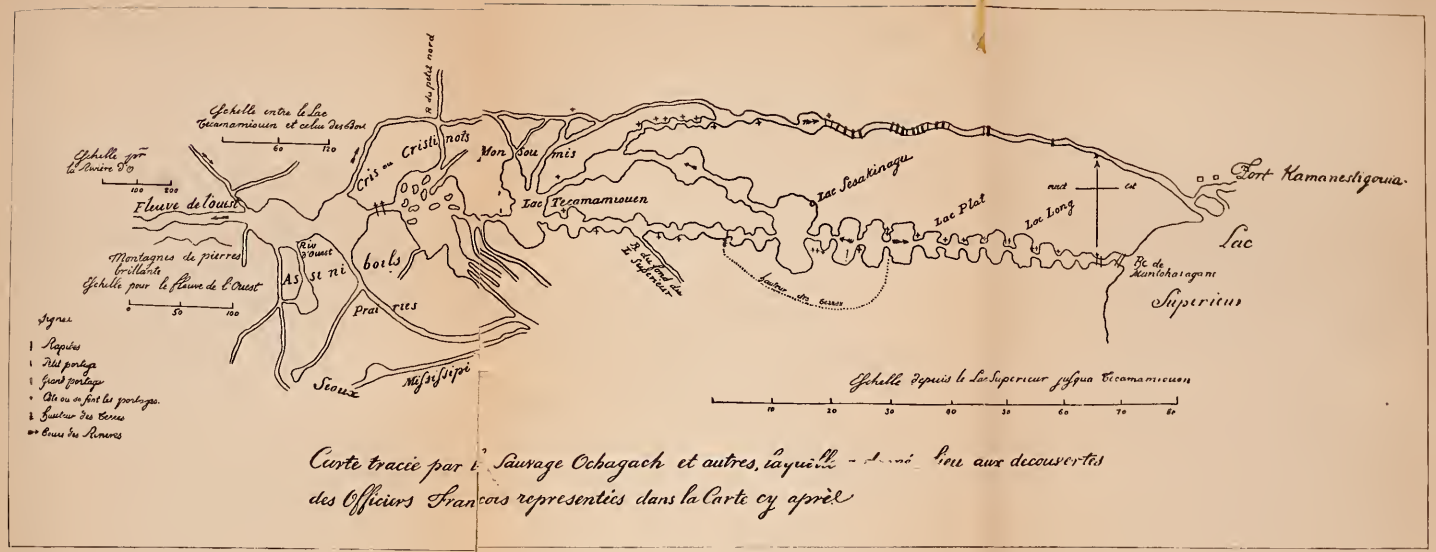

MAP DRAWN BY THE INDIAN OCHAGACH.

Facsimile of manuscript preserved in Dominion Parliamentary Library, Ottawa.

friend's theory as at least probable. The chief engineer of New France, Chaussegros de Léry, an official of high repute, also thought well of Vérendrye's belief that by this path he could find the ocean within five hundred leagues from Lake Superior.

Having won the powerful backing of these officers, the adventurous commandant asked the king for a military force of a hundred men, with canoes, arms, and provisions; but, as usual, the ministry would give nothing further than a parchment with a great seal, granting him a monopoly of the fur-trade north and west of Lake Superior, upon the supposed profits of which he was to reimburse himself. Possessing but small capital, he was now chiefly dependent on what credit he could obtain on the strength of his monopoly. Quebec merchants appear to have had some doubts of the cash value of trade privileges, and granted goods and equipment to the expedition only on terms highly disadvantageous to Vérendrye. With these, however, he set forth upon his quest (June 8, 1731) in good heart, accompanied by his three sons and his nephew La Jemeraye. At

Mackinac the Jesuit Father Charles Michel Mesaiger joined the expedition, and at the close of the season Vérendrye built his first fort, St. Pierre, three miles above the falls of Rainy River. The earthwork which supported the palisade of this establishment is still to be seen.

The following year the explorers built their second fort, St. Charles, upon the southwest shore of the Lake of the Woods, where they hoped to reap profits from the trade of the Sioux, who visited this region in considerable numbers for fishing and intertribal barter. A year later the expedition reached Lake Winnipeg. By this time Vérendrye's finances were in sad condition. The expenses of his enterprise, in which the cost of maintaining the posts was a large item, had so far outweighed the receipts of the uncertain fur-trade that he had lost the then large sum of 43,000 livres. La Jemeraye returned to Quebec to report the situation to the governor, who represented to the king that the expedition must stop if unaided. As usual, the court gave an unfavorable reply, merely reiterating its proffer of the fur-trade monopoly.

Vérendrye rallied, notwithstanding, and in 1734 built a post at the mouth of Winnipeg River, Fort Maurepas, named after the French Prime Minister, whose favor he vainly courted. The year following, while awaiting the result of a second appeal for help, the time of the explorers was spent in an extended traffic with the savages between Lakes Superior and Winnipeg, and in taking cargoes of furs to Mackinac in exchange for goods in demand among the Indians.

The year 1736 was marked by successive disasters, culminating in a tragedy. Vérendrye's eldest son, together with a Jesuit missionary, Jean Pierre Aulneau, and twenty others, were surprised and massacred by Sioux upon an island in the Lake of the Woods, five leagues from St. Charles. Vérendrye was now beset by creditors, who pestered him with lawsuits, and necessitated his journeying several times to Montreal. But during these years of adversity the penniless though undaunted adventurer somehow contrived to push his explorations. By 1738 he had a chain of six fortified posts reaching westward from Lake Superior—St. Pierre on

Rainy Lake, St. Charles on Lake of the Woods, Maurepas at the mouth of the Winnipeg, Bourbon on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg, La Reine at Portage la Prairie on the Assiniboin, and Dauphin on Lake Manitoba. Fort Rouge, on the site of the present city of Winnipeg, and another post at the mouth of the Saskatchewan, were occupied for a short time. Most of these were small stockades, flanked by log blockhouses, and built and manned with great difficulty; while others were merely winter stations, hastily erected.

In 1738 he determined to make his long-projected journey in search of the Pacific. Leaving Fort La Reine in October, with a party of about fifty persons, French and Indians, he was lured on by the false tales of the natives, who sent him thither and yon, seeking some band which might conduct him to the ocean. At last he determined to visit the Mandans, on the upper Missouri, the tribe among whom Lewis and Clark spent the winter sixty-six years later. On December 3d the wanderers reached the central Mandan town, situated 250 miles from Portage la Prairie. Vérendrye was much impressed by

the physiognomy of the Mandans, whom he found to be quite different in appearance from the Indians with whom he was familiar; among them he saw many with light complexions, and some of the women had flaxen hair. Their village fortifications were new to him, and many of their customs were alike strange. Explorers of a later date ascribed these peculiarities to a supposed Welsh origin, a theory now exploded. Vérendrye would have passed the winter among these interesting people, but his Assiniboin guide and interpreter would not stay, and a return march was necessitated. Fort La Reine was reached February 11th, after many hardships, during which the leader became, he tells us in his journal, "greatly fatigued and very ill."

After another year of lawsuits and jealous opposition, Vérendrye made (1741) an unsuccessful journey towards the Mandans. The next year, his eldest surviving son, Pierre, later called the Chevalier de la Vérendrye, set out upon the same quest, in company with his brother and two other men. Reaching the Mandans in three weeks from La Reine, the adventurers pushed their way farther and far-

ther southwestward, enticed by the usual fairy-tales of the tribesmen. All summer and autumn and through the early winter they wearily plodded on, now and then joining native war-parties, occasionally taking wide detours for hunting, but ever seeking news of the Western Sea.

Upon New Year's day, 1743, they, doubtless first of all white men, saw the Rocky Mountains from the east—probably the Bighorn Range, a hundred and twenty miles east of Yellowstone Park—and it is thought that they pushed on until sighting the Wind River Range. Finding their pathway to the ocean thus blocked—although little suspecting that nearly a thousand miles of these dreary mountains lay between them and the sea—they returned to La Prairie, which they reached upon the second of July, to their father's great joy, for he had almost given them up for lost.

The elder Vérendrye was now given a captaincy in the colonial troops and decorated by the Cross of the Order of St. Louis, but he died at Montreal, December 6, 1745, when he was again about to start for the West. His

sons added to their record by ascending the Saskatchewan River to its forks and making known other wide tracts of country. Beauharnois and his successor, Galissonière, who were stanch friends of the family, had, however, been succeeded (1749) by the corruptionist La Jonquière, and the claims of the Vérendryes were not only ignored, but their goods were seized, their posts and property turned over to Legardeur St. Pierre, and they reduced to poverty. The unscrupulous St. Pierre, who was in collusion with the intendant Bigot, built a small post, La Jonquière, near the mountains on the upper Saskatchewan, not far from the site of the modern Calgary; but after three years of hardship, in which his little party sometimes lacked sufficient food and were attacked by hostile Indians, he was compelled to abandon the enterprise.

Although St. Pierre had left the country, others carried on the work, the chain of posts from Lake Superior to La Jonquière being collectively styled in the official reports "Post of the Western Sea," a name expressing the dream of Vérendrye, which Englishmen were

to realize a generation later. Two years before the downfall of New France a report upon these posts describes them as "forts built of stockades . . . that can give protection only against the Indians . . . and trusted generally to the care of one or two officers, seven or eight soldiers, and eighty *engagés*. From them the English movements can be watched," and "the discovery of the Western Sea may be accomplished; but to make this discovery it will be necessary that the travelers give up all view of personal interest."

In the collapse of French dominion Rocky Mountain exploration suffered a temporary check, for the Western posts beyond Kaministiquia, on Lake Superior, were at once abandoned. The methods of New France were not rapid, but they achieved results more quickly than those of the British, under which a generation passed before her fur-traders succeeded in breaking a path to the Pacific.

CHAPTER III

ENGLISH EXPLORATIONS FROM THE EAST

As a result of explorations made by two daring French adventurers—Pierre d'Esprit, Sieur Radisson, and Médard Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers, who probably were the first white men to discover Lake Superior and possibly Hudson Bay—there was organized in London in 1667 one of the most powerful trading corporations known to history, "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson Bay." The redoubtable Prince Rupert headed the list of stockholders, prominent among whom were the Duke of York and other members of the court. It would have been impossible for a king to have granted to any company a charter more favorable than that with which Charles II endowed this ambitious fur-trading corporation. They were given outright the far-

stretching region drained by all waters either directly or indirectly flowing into and from Hudson Bay—to which they later added great grants upon the Pacific and Arctic slopes. Throughout this vast wilderness, called "Rupert's Land," they were to enjoy the "whole, entire, and only liberty of Trade and Traffick," and the right to seize upon the property and persons of all competitors, whether British or not; they were to make and enforce laws for their wide domain; to administer justice; to build and garrison forts; to maintain ships of war, and to exercise all military as well as civil powers, even to the making of war or peace with other peoples. In short, theirs was as absolute a sway as that of any Oriental monarch.

During the entire term of their government the Hudson's Bay Company sternly exercised these great powers. Their dealings with the Indians were just; their commercial methods, while stern, were honorable; their agents were, as a rule, well selected and judicious; but they insisted upon absolute monopoly, and brooked no violation of the rule, offenders being as severely handled as though guilty

of serious crime. With the advance of years, however, and the general amelioration of governmental methods in England, the company gradually tempered their rule. Two centuries after their organization they surrendered to the public all powers save such as in our time properly appertain to a commercial body.

Keen in trade, the company were long singularly inactive in the matter of interior exploration. The Indians and half-breeds came long journeys to bring their pelts to the well-fortified trading-posts upon the shores of the bay, whence they were loaded directly into ships and transported to England; and with this the merchant adventurers seemed content for about eighty years. It is a question in dispute as to what induced this early apathy —whether hesitancy at spending money, the natural sluggishness of a monopoly which easily made large dividends despite heavy losses from several French military expeditions against the bay forts, timidity of the company's agents, or a serious policy of keeping from both competitors and possible settlers the secrets of the great fur-bearing wilderness. Certain it is that the company's

inaction was in ill accord with the temper of the British people, in whom the love of bold adventure has ever been strong.

Of this indifference toward exploration upon the part of "the old lady of Fenchurch Street" we have seen that the more active French took advantage. The operations of Vérendrye and St. Pierre, and their successors in the long "Post of the Western Sea"—stretching for over twelve hundred miles from Lake Superior to the upper waters of the Saskatchewan—were clearly within the territory so lavishly bestowed upon the great company by King Charles. But for the fall of New France no doubt the Pacific would within a few years have been reached by French agents in the far West. Thus might the British have for a time been checkmated by a system of fortified stations connecting the Western Sea with Lake Superior, and serving as the left wing of that thin line of occupation which already connected Canada and Louisiana by way of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi Valley—the whole an enormous letter T, with its horizontal bar a trans continental system stretching from the Gulf

of St. Lawrence to the Pacific, and its stem commanding the entire length of the Mississippi River and its approaches. It was an ambitious project; although that the entire cordon would eventually have been broken at every point by the slower but steadier British, there is no room to doubt.

The Atlantic coast had been explored in detail at a much earlier date than the Pacific. The early dreams that the mythical transcontinental waterway might be found leading through such rivers as the James, the Roanoke, and the Hudson had soon been shattered. Every opening south of the Gulf of St. Lawrence had been examined in vain; and now the only promise seemed to be that Hudson Strait and Bay would prove to be connected with the Northwest Passage. To find this was for over two hundred years the dream of navigators; indeed, "the discovery of a New Passage into the South Sea" was one of the duties imposed upon the Hudson's Bay Company by its charter. That it failed to do anything for fifty years, awakened severe criticism, which it was sought to mollify in 1719 by a fruitless expedition with two

ships along the west coast of the bay, followed two years later by another; but these enterprises were not regarded by enemies as serious attempts to solve the problem.

About 1735, Arthur Dobbs, a talented and pugnacious Irishman, commenced a vigorous assault on the company, which lasted for some fifteen years. Dobbs was an enthusiast on the subject of the Northwest Passage, and with rare gift of phrase and considerable knowledge of North American conditions, fired the British imagination by painting in heightened colors the beauty and resources of the interior and the great profits which might ensue from this trade and that which would also be developed by a short route to the East Indies. Dobbs bitterly attacked the company for neglecting the exploration and settlement originally expected of it, for abusing the Indians, neglecting their forts, ill-treating their own servants, and encouraging the French. Its replies were not of a character such as wholly to convince the people, whose sympathies were from the first with Dobbs.

In 1736 the company sought to satisfy the

public by despatching two sloops on a voyage to discover the passage, but of course they were unsuccessful, as was also a like expedition the following year. In 1741–42 Captain Christopher Middleton took out two small vessels directly under the supervision of Dobbs, who now had the backing of the lords of the admiralty. But when this search, from which much had been expected, met with equal discouragement, Dobbs accused the navigator of playing into the hands of the company. A bitter dispute ensued, during which numerous and widely read books and pamphlets were published on both sides. Popular interest was so aroused by this agitation that in 1745 Parliament voted a reward of £20,000 to the British navigator who should discover a passage from Hudson Bay to the Pacific Ocean—an offer renewed in 1776. In 1746–47 a committee of Dobbs's friends sent out another expedition under his special direction; but it was quite as unsuccessful as Middleton's, whereupon Dobbs dropped this phase of the discussion.

The opposition now centered upon a plea of "non-user," under which the company's

charter was in 1749 attacked in Parliament. It was shown that at that time it had only four or five forts upon the coast, housing but 120 regular employees. The attempt, however, to secure a charter for a new company, whose promoters promised to explore the interior, crowd out the French, and secure the entire fur-trade for English merchants, failed at this time, and the corporation escaped unscathed. Fortunately for the further peace of the company, Dobbs was soon thereafter (1750) sent out as governor of North Carolina, where he exhibited much ability and broad, liberal views, although his contentious disposition led him into frequent quarrels with the legislature. His interest in the Northwest Passage continued active until death claimed him in 1765.

By the Treaty of Paris (1763), Great Britain obtained control, as against any other European power, of the entire northeast of North America, of the northwest to the Mississippi, and of the country north and west of the sources of the Mississippi as far as the Hudson's Bay Company cared to go. Quebec and Montreal, particularly the latter, soon

began to attract adventurous Englishmen and Scotchmen, many of whom entered the fur-trade as independent operators, none of them over particular as to whether or not they poached on the preserve of the great company. In the employ of these traders were many experienced French agents, while French and half-breed voyageurs found under their new employers quite as lucrative occupation as in the days of the old régime.

One of these Scotchmen, Alexander Henry, was at Mackinac and Sault Ste. Marie as early as 1761, two years after the victory of Wolfe and two before the definitive treaty of peace. In 1765 he enjoyed a monopoly of the Lake Superior trade, and three years later we find him establishing a regular trade route between Kaministiquia and Mackinac. At the close of the century this sturdy pioneer's nephew, also Alexander Henry—of whom we shall hear later—was operating in the Manitoba region; both traders have left us voluminous journals of their experiences, which are interesting if only on the side of romantic adventure.

Thomas Curry, another Scotch merchant,

penetrated in 1766 with his crew of voyageurs and interpreters to one of Vérendrye's old posts on the lower Saskatchewan, and won such gains by his venture in peltries that, says Mackenzie, "he was satisfied never again to return to the Indian country." Another profitable fur-trading journey was made two years later by James Finlay, who reached as high a point on the Saskatchewan as that attained by the Vérendryes.

While unconnected with the search for a transcontinental waterway, these expeditions of the independent traders served to smooth the path toward the Rocky Mountains, and therefore have a place in our narrative. Meanwhile, an enterprising Englishman was directly seeking the waterway in a more southern latitude--through the country of the Sioux, thus unconsciously attempting the venture which Charlevoix had forty-five years before (p. 25) suggested as an alternative to the Missouri River route, and toward which La Perrière had made a feeble start.

Jonathan Carver had served as a captain in a Massachusetts militia regiment—with Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham, and under Amherst

at the capture of Montreal. With the advent of peace, he became possessed of the patriotic desire to "continue still serviceable, and contribute, as much as lay in my power, to make that vast acquisition of territory, gained by Great Britain, in North America advantageous to it." The exploration which he undertook was ambitious in character: "What I chiefly had in view, after gaining a knowledge of the Manners, Customs, Languages, Soil, and natural Productions of the different nations that inhabit the back of the Mississippi, was to ascertain the Breadth of that vast continent;" then to propose to the government the establishment of a post "in some of those parts about the Straits of Annian, which having been first discovered by Sir Francis Drake, of course belong to the English," which "would greatly facilitate the discovery of a North-West Passage, or a communication between Hudson's Bay and the Pacific Ocean."

Leaving Boston in June, 1766, Carver proceeded by way of Albany and Niagara to Mackinac, then the farthest English outpost in the Northwest. Ascending the Fox River

of Green Bay, he descended the Wisconsin and ascended the Mississippi to the Falls of St. Anthony (November 17th), the site of the modern Minneapolis. Here he had expected supplies for which he contracted at Mackinac, intending to push through to the old fur-trade route west of Lake Superior, and eventually reach "the Heads of the river of the West"—by which he meant that he would seek the sources of the Columbia, which elsewhere he calls "the River Oregon, or the River of the West, that falls into the Pacific Ocean at the straits of Annian."

But through somebody's carelessness these supplies never reached him. While waiting for them he explored Elk and Minnesota Rivers—the latter for a distance of two hundred miles, to the Sioux of the plains. Later, in the spring of 1767, he descended to Prairie du Chien, at the junction of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers, and obtained a few supplies from some traders who centered there. Ascending the Chippewa, and later the St. Croix, he portaged over to a stream flowing into Lake Superior, and coasted around the western end of the lake to Grand

Portage, near the mouth of Pigeon River, where he obtained from Indians much valuable information regarding the Winnipeg region. Still unable to procure the goods needed for an extensive journey into the interior, Carver reluctantly returned to Mackinac by the southern shore of the lake, and reached Boston in October, 1768, having been absent about two and a half years and traveled nearly seven thousand miles, much of it through an almost unknown wilderness. The bulky volume of his travels, published in London in 1778, attracted wide attention, being an important contribution to American geography, and it is still held in high regard as a treatise upon the manners and customs of the Indians; for his report is that of an intelligent and discriminating eye-witness.

Carver had brought back most remarkable stories told him by the Indians concerning great beds of gold in the "Shining Mountains," probably those now known as the Black Hills. His hopeful reports concerning the "Straits of Annian" and the "River of the West" were also well calculated to quicken popular interest among Englishmen

who had not yet forgotten the fervid descriptions by Arthur Dobbs. This awakened the Hudson's Bay Company to fresh endeavors.

Samuel Hearne, a trusted servant of the corporation, was sent out in November, 1769, "to clear up the point, if possible . . . respecting a passage out of Hudson Bay into the Western Ocean, as hath lately been represented by 'the American traveler'"—meaning Carver. Abandoned by his native guides, and himself as yet unused to the ways of the wilderness, Hearne was soon obliged to return discomfited to his base, the Prince of Wales Fort, at the mouth of Churchill River. He started afresh the following February, only to be plundered by the Indians, and again returned to the fort, this time after a weary absence of nearly nine months. A third time did the persevering Hearne make the attempt, starting in December, 1770. Joining a great war-party of various bands, whose members had not before seen a white man, the expedition reached Coppermine River the following July, and descended it to the Arctic Ocean.

After witnessing the horrible spectacle of a massacre of Eskimos on the part of his na-

tive companions, Hearne set up a stake and, in the presence of a wondering audience of skin-clad savages, went through the empty ceremony of taking possession of the country for the Hudson's Bay Company. Upon the return he went with the Indians to the north shore of Lake Athabasca, and after sore privations reached his fort upon the last day of June, 1772, having been absent upon this journey nearly nineteen months, and traveled on foot over immense stretches of arctic and subarctic wilderness. The company thanked their courageous servant, and three years later rewarded him with the governorship of Prince of Wales Fort, in which capacity he waged bitter war upon his employers' fur-trade rivals. Hearne deserves a high place in the records of North American exploration; the published account of his remarkable travels shows him to have been a close and enlightened observer, as well as possessed of a remarkable capacity for dealing with savage minds.

The fur-trade of the Northwest suffered a severe blow from the fierce competition which arose among the independent specu-

lators who swarmed the country soon after the cession to Great Britain. The distance from legal restraint led the rivals to exercise a free hand in using every possible means for taking advantage of each other. By presents and misrepresentations, they sought to injure their competitors in the eyes of the Indians; by drinking and carousing with their dusky customers they thought themselves to win favor. Property and credit were wasted with the natives, who soon gained a contempt for the warring whites, and held their own pledges in small regard. This kindling of the worst passions of both races not seldom led to pitiful broils and sometimes murders, while meanwhile the profits of the trade were scattered to the winds.

In the winter of 1783–84 a combination of the majority of the Canadian traders was formed under the name of the North-West Company, a stock corporation which entrusted the management of its business to the two largest houses—Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher and Simon McTavish. A rival establishment, however, was founded by several operators who had been slighted in the alliance.

After a fierce contest, ending in a fight in the Athabasca country, in which one of the independents was killed and some others wounded, the malcontents were at last admitted to the union (1787). Thereafter the Canadian fur-trade was controlled by two organizations only, the Hudson's Bay and the North-West Companies, the former having its chief headquarters at Prince of Wales Fort, and the latter on the island of Mackinac and at Grand Portage near where Pigeon River empties into Lake Superior. Of the life led by the North-West trading chiefs at Grand Portage—the gateway to the far-stretching Winnipeg, Saskatchewan, and Assiniboin water systems—during these palmy days of the fur traffic, Washington Irving has given us a vivid description in his charming Astoria.

A large share of their peltries were shipped to China upon United States vessels, for the reason that, owing to the East India Company's maritime monopoly in the Orient, American captains could traffic in Chinese ports to better advantage than British subjects.[1]

[1] See *ante*, p. 20.

Reducing competition to the two great companies did much to dignify the trade, and profits were greater than under the irresponsible strife of former days. But all along the undefined border-line between the two, each rival freely distributed liquor among the savages, embittered them against the opposition, and indulged in a fierce contention for supremacy which sometimes induced predatory expeditions and not infrequent shedding of blood. This condition of affairs lasted for many years. In 1795 a secession from the North-West Company—long brewing, and apparently fomented by Alexander Mackenzie, of whom we shall presently hear—was brought to a head by the organization of the X Y Company. Rivalry between these two Montreal concerns at once attained a warmth heretofore unknown, which lasted until the death of McTavish in 1804, the year of Lewis and Clark's expedition, when they united.

Mackenzie, a hardy and restless young Highlander, had been a prominent agent of the Montreal Company, which had opposed Frobisher and McTavish. When the union of 1787 was consummated he was given

charge of the Athabasca department. Here he was thrown into communication with Indians who remembered the exploits of Hearne, the Hudson's Bay Company's explorer, and soon Mackenzie was eager to undertake explorations even more extended.

Upon the third of June, 1789, the adventurous agent set out from Fort Chepewyan, on the south shore of Lake Athabasca. His little fleet consisted of four birch-bark canoes —his own, manned by a crew of four Canadians and one German, two of the former being accompanied by their squaws; the second, occupied by the guide and interpreter, English Chief, an Indian who had accompanied Hearne upon the Coppermine River, the chief's two wives, and two young Indians; the third, by the chief's followers; and the fourth, a trading boat, which also contained ammunition, supplies, and presents for the Indians—this craft being in charge of Le Roux, a company clerk, who proceeded as far as Great Slave Lake, where he was ordered to build a fort.

Mackenzie was an experienced woodsman, and well understood the Indian character, so

that his trials were more easily borne than those which befall men less expert in the ways of the forest. Nevertheless, upon the placid pages of the unpretentious journal which he eventually published (1801) it is plainly to be seen that the party experienced much suffering and were subjected to not a few dangers. Mosquitoes, the greatest pest of the northern wilderness, tormented them unceasingly; the portages were numerous, often difficult, and always fatiguing; the savages were fickle, and sought to plunder and desert them at critical stages; and cold and rain, and sometimes shifting ice, added to their miseries.

Skirting Lake Athabasca, they entered Snake River, which was known to them, and on the ninth reached Great Slave Lake. Leaving Le Roux on the twenty-fifth to trade with the natives on this dismal inland sea, the explorer pushed on along the shore to the southwest, and four days later entered a heretofore unknown river, which was henceforth to bear his name. This he descended with his little fleet, until on Sunday, July 12th, he sighted the Arctic Ocean, which was filled

with ice-floes, between which were spouting whales. Two days later, after many annoyances from thievish Eskimos, "I ordered a post to be erected close to our tents, on which I engraved the latitude of the place [69° 14′ N.], my own name, the number of persons which I had with me, and the time we remained there." Four weeks later (September 12th) he was back again at Fort Chepewyan, having "concluded this voyage, which had occupied the considerable space of one hundred and two days."

Mackenzie was quick to put to commercial use his knowledge of the country north and west of Lake Athabasca, and during the next two years extended thither the trade of the North-West Company, which thus flanked its Hudson's Bay rival. His heart was, however, in exploration. Realizing that his knowledge of mathematical and astronomical instruments was too meager for success in this work, he went to London in 1791—a journey of great difficulty from the far northwest — and passed the winter there in the study of these necessary tools of the explorer.

The following autumn (October 10, 1792)

he left Fort Chepewyan with two canoes, again skirted the great lake to Slave River, and then ascended its southwest tributary, Peace River, determined this time to reach the Pacific Ocean. At the falls, whither he had despatched an advance party to erect a palisaded trading house, the party wintered, hunting and trading with the Indians. On the eighth of May six canoes were sent back with furs to Fort Chepewyan, and the following day Mackenzie started up the river with his friend and colleague, Alexander Mackay, six Frenchmen, and two Indian hunters and interpreters. Their conveyance was a birch canoe twenty-five feet long, but "so light, that two men could carry her on a good road three or four miles without resting. In this slender vessel, we shipped provisions, goods for presents, arms, ammunition, and baggage, to the weight of three thousand pounds, and an equipage of ten people."

Thenceforth the expedition met with innumerable "discouragements, difficulties, and dangers." The rapids were numerous, involving toilsome use of setting-poles and towing-lines; the canoe was not infrequently broken;

the frequent portages often involved almost insuperable difficulties; and more than once the voyageurs and Indians of the party, their clothing in shreds, footsore, and fatigued, were in sullen discontent, believing "that there was no alternative but to return." But Mackenzie, with Scotch persistence, would not hear of turning back, and adroitly checked the incipient mutiny.

After laboriously climbing over the mountainous divide and trying several west-flowing waters, the party decided on the turbulent Tacouche Tesse (subsequently called Fraser River), which they descended for many days. Finding, however, that this would be a long and hazardous road, and that the natives reached the sea by an overland trail, Mackenzie left the river on the fourth of July. For fourteen days the little company plodded through the dense forest, sometimes on dizzy trails over snow-clad mountains, until they reached a rapid river, upon which "we embarked, with our small baggage, in two canoes, accompanied by seven of the natives." After portaging around falls and visiting several bands of Indians who had

had dealings with American coast traders, in two days they reached an arm of the sea. "The tide was out, and had left a large space covered with sea-weed. The surrounding hills were involved in fog." The dream of Vérendrye had at last been realized—the continent had been spanned from east to west by the northern route.

Proceeding to the main coast, the explorer was visited by several canoe-loads of the natives, who expressed great astonishment at his astronomical instruments, at the same time freely pilfering from his stores and by their insolence testing his unfailing tact and courage. He makes this triumphant entry in his record: "I now mixed up some vermilion in melted grease, and inscribed, in large characters, on the South-East face of the rock on which we had slept last night, this brief memorial—'Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada by land, the twenty-second of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three.'"

The following day they set forth upon the hazardous return, and on the twenty-fourth of August reached Fort McLeod, their wintering place on Peace River. "Here," says

the modest Mackenzie in his journal, which is as thrilling as well as informing a tale of adventure as has come down to us from those heroic days of Rocky Mountain exploration, "here my voyages of discovery terminate. Their toils and their dangers, their solicitudes and sufferings, have not been exaggerated in my description. On the contrary, in many instances, language has failed me in the attempt to describe them. I received, however, the reward of my labours, for they were crowned with success."

CHAPTER IV

THE MISSOURI A PATH TO THE PACIFIC

From the time of the earliest explorations by white men in the Mississippi Valley there was current a strong belief in the existence of a west-flowing river, lying somewhere beyond a gentle divide, which would, when discovered, afford the canoeist easy access to the Pacific Ocean—provided it were established that the Mississippi itself did not pour its flood into that great sea. Jolliet and Marquette (1673) satisfied themselves that the Mississippi flowed into the Gulf of Mexico (p. 23), but they looked upon the Missouri as the undoubted road to the westering waterway; and the missionary tells us in his journal that he became imbued with a strong desire to carry the gospel to the tribes along its banks.[1]

[1] Marquette's journals and map are in Jesuit Relations (Thwaites's ed Cleveland, 1896–1902), lix.

The Indians, not themselves given to exploration, despite their periodical wanderings upon the hunt and the war-trail, and with geographical knowledge often confined to a comparatively narrow belt of forage, soon discovered that a water-passage to the Pacific was eagerly sought by the whites; and forthwith amused the latter by inventing tales of such streams, myths which found their way into the numerous maps of North America drawn by cartographers at the European capitals. Some of these stories had a long life and led to many curious theories and futile explorations. One chart of 1700 (Lugtenberg's), which antedated Vérendrye's Indian map by some thirty years, showed a waterway from Lake Superior to the western "Straits of Anian." The Baron Lahontan, an imaginative French traveler who in 1703 published a now famous book upon North America, claimed to have himself been upon the sources of the west-flowing stream.

The belief that the Missouri had a branch leading to the Pacific, thus affording a trade route to Japan and China, figures prominently in French despatches in 1717–18. In 1719

two adventurers, La Harpe and Du Tisné, conducted independent explorations of the Missouri, searching for this mythical waterway, but after some two or three hundred miles of futile journeying abandoned their undertakings. Three years later De Bourgmont, acting for the Company of the Indies, established Fort Orleans on the north bank of the Missouri, near the entrance of Grand River, the design being to hold the Missouri Valley against the Spanish traders who were operating from the northwest, and to protect settlers—particularly Germans—who were now coming into the country. In 1739 we read of an expedition led by two Frenchmen named Mallet, who reached the plains of Colorado by way of the southern fork of the Platte; thence traveling overland to the south, they spent the winter at Santa Fé. Half of the party crossed the plains to the Pawnee Indians, while the others descended the Arkansas to the Mississippi. Bienville, then Governor of Louisiana, judged from the reports of this enterprise that the country visited was a part of China—showing how long-lived was the old theory that North

America was an outlying portion of Asia. He accordingly sent a second expedition up the Arkansas, but its members returned without reaching the Orient.

In 1753, at a time when the French still entertained a hope of finding the river flowing westward from the neighborhood of the Missouri, there was published, in Paris, Dumont's Mémoires de la Louisiane, containing a remarkable detailed narrative of exploration, obtained from Le Page du Pratz, subsequently author of a Histoire de la Louisiane, which gave a modified version of the tale. Du Pratz claimed that about 1725 he obtained the relation from an old and garrulous Yazoo Indian named Moncacht-Apé. The story goes, that about the year 1700 this interesting aborigine, bent on gathering knowledge regarding the history of his people, traveled toward the sunrise through the country of the Chickasaws until he reached the Atlantic Ocean, incidentally gaining knowledge of Niagara and the great tides of the Bay of Fundy. Disappointed at not finding the genealogical information desired, he at first returned home and then sought the land of

the setting sun. At first traveling northward, he went to the Ohio River, crossed the Mississippi near the mouth of the Missouri, ascended the latter, wintered among the Missouri Indians, reached the sources of the river, crossed the mountainous divide, and, like Lewis and Clark, descended the Columbia to the sea. Here the natives induced him to join in a deadly attack on a party of bearded white men who came to the coast to trade. The inquisitive savage now journeyed to the north until the days grew longer, and there learning that the land beyond was "cut through from north to south"—wherein we recognize Bering's Strait—he returned to his home on the Mississippi, his thirst for genealogical knowledge still unsatisfied. He was absent upon this fruitless quest, eastward and westward, about five years, but thought he could repeat his travels in thirty-two moons. While it is possible that a journey bearing some distant resemblance to this was once undertaken, no doubt the tale grew largely in the telling, and some of the most important details are now regarded as apocryphal. Nevertheless, it long won wide cre-

dence,[1] and affected the maps of both French and English cartographers until near the close of the eighteenth century.

It will be remembered that the North-West Company was organized at Montreal in 1783. In the same year John Ledyard published an account of Captain Cook's third and last voyage (1778). These two events caused a marked revival of interest in London in the Northwest Passage, or in any transcontinental route which promised an easy path to the Pacific, and thus to China and Japan. Thomas Jefferson was then living in retirement in Virginia, but keenly receptive to all suggestions which aimed at extending the bounds of human knowledge. The fact that the country beyond the Mississippi was practically an unknown land, awakened his curiosity to know more of it. Twenty years before he finally despatched Meriwether Lewis and William Clark upon the errand of breaking a path across the con-

[1] In the Revue d'Anthropologie, in 1881, Quatrefages gives it full credence, on ethnological grounds; but Andrew McFarland Davis's critique on Quatrefages's conclusions (in Proc. American Antiquarian Soc., April, 1883, pp. 321–348) gives us a saner view.

tinent, we find him desirous, although Spain still possessed the trans-Mississippi, of fostering a similar enterprise of exploration. Writing from Annapolis on the 4th of December, 1783, to General George Rogers Clark, the hero of Kaskaskia and Vincennes, and elder brother of the explorer, he says:

"I find they have subscribed a very large sum of money in England for exploring the country from the Missisipi to California. . . . they pretend it is only to promote knoledge. I am afraid they have thoughts of colonising into that quarter. . . some of us have been talking here in a feeble way of making the attempt to search that country, but I doubt whether we have enough of that kind of spirit to raise the money. how would you like to lead such a party? . . . tho I am afraid our prospect is not worth asking the question."[1]

Nothing came of this proposal. It is not known whether Clark even replied to it. Ten years later, that popular idol of the border fell into disgrace through his miserable in-

[1] The original MS. is in the Draper Collection, library of the Wisconsin Historical Society, its press-mark being "52 J 93."

trigue with Genet, of whom we shall presently hear more; twenty years later, his young brother won imperishable renown in doing the very thing which Jefferson had proposed to him.

Jefferson was a persistent man. Three years after his letter to Clark, and while minister to the French court, he made more serious overtures to another adventurer—John Ledyard, a picturesque character, then perhaps the best known of American travelers. Born in the Connecticut town of Groton in 1751, he early developed a fondness for roving. While an undergraduate at Dartmouth he absented himself from college to visit the tribesmen of the Six Nations in New York. Afterward a theological student, he left school before taking orders, to enter as a common sailor on a ship bound for the Mediterranean. At Gibraltar Ledyard enlisted in a British regiment, with which he soon went to the West Indies. In 1778 we find him a corporal of marines under Captain Cook, on that famous mariner's third voyage around the world; and it was his journal of that tour (published in 1783)

which stirred Christendom with news of Cook's great discoveries.

Finally deserting the British naval service, Ledyard, now among his Connecticut friends after eight years' absence, conceived the plan of fitting out a fur-trading expedition to explore the Northwest Coast. Going to Europe in 1784, he found it difficult to raise means for his ambitious project, and when he finally reached Paris was disheartened. The American minister made his acquaintance (1786), and tells us in his autobiography:[1]

"He . . . being out of business, and of a roaming, restless character, I suggested to him the enterprise of exploring the Western part of our continent, by passing thro St. Petersburg to Kamschatka, and procuring a passage thence in some of the Russian vessels to Nootka Sound, whence he might make his way across the continent to America; and I undertook to have the permission of the Empress of Russia [Catherine II] solicited. He eagerly embraced the proposition, and M. de Sémoulin, the Russian Ambassador, and

[1] Ford's Writings of Thomas Jefferson, i, pp. 94–96.

more particularly Baron Grimm, the special correspondent of the Empress, solicited her permission for him to pass thro' her dominions to the Western coast of America . . . the Empress refused permission at once, considering the enterprise as entirely chimerical. But Ledyard would not relinquish it, persuading himself that by proceeding to St. Petersburg he could satisfy the Empress of its practicability and obtain her permission. He went accordingly, but she was absent on a visit to some distant part of her dominions, and he pursued his course to within 200 miles of Kamschatka, where he was overtaken [February, 1788] by an arrest from the Empress, brought back to Poland, and there dismissed."[1]

"Disappointed, ragged, and penniless, but with a whole heart," the unfortunate Ledyard

[1] In a letter by Jefferson to an American correspondent, written at Paris, September 1, 1786 (Ford, iv, pp. 298, 299), he gives this somewhat more detailed account of the project: "A countryman of yours, a Mr. Lediard, who was with Capt. Cook on his last voyage, proposes either to go to Kamschatka, cross from thence to the Western side of America, and penetrate through the Continent to our side of it, or to go to Kentucke, & thence penetrate Westwardly to the South sea, the vent [he went] from hence lately to London, where if he finds a passage

arrived in London, where he was at once befriended by sympathizers in his project, who secured him employment to lead an expedition to the center of Africa, whither he at once set out. He reached Cairo, but died there in January, 1789.[1]

In December, 1789, General Henry Knox, Washington's Secretary of War, secretly wrote to General Josiah Harmar, then commanding the Western frontier at Cincinnati, calling his attention to the desirability of obtaining "official information of all the Western regions," and asking him to "devise some practicable plan for exploring that branch of the Mississippi called the Messouri, up to its

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to Kamschatka or the Western coast of America he would avail himself of it: otherwise he proposes to return to our side of America to attempt that route. I think him well calculated for such an enterprise, & wish he may undertake it."

In another letter, written September 20, 1787 (Ford, v, p. 448), Jefferson adds, relative to Ledyard: "He is a person of ingenuity & information. Unfortunately he has too much imagination. However, if he escapes safely, he will give us new, curious, & useful information."

[1] See his life, in Sparks's American Biography—a thrilling story of adventure, of which we have given but the barest outline. Jefferson's brief account of Ledyard's Russian experiences omits the numerous romantic details of this audacious enterprise.

source," and possibly beyond to the Pacific. After conferring with General Arthur St. Clair, Governor of the Northwest Territory, General Harmar selected for this purpose Captain John Armstrong, then in command at Louisville, and widely known as an explorer and woodsman. The following spring Armstrong, entirely alone, "proceeded up the Missouri some distance above St. Louis," with the intention of eventually crossing the mountains to the Pacific; "but, meeting with some French traders, was persuaded to return in consequence of the hostility of the Missouri bands to each other, as they were then at war, and he could not safely pass from one nation to the other." Knox's proposed expedition, therefore, came to naught.

Jefferson was the next to make a venture in transcontinental exploration. His third trial resulted in an even more dramatic failure than the Ledyard affair. The central figure was André Michaux, a French botanist, born in Versailles in 1746. Michaux had, in the interests of science, visited various countries in Europe and Asia. Returning from Asia in 1785, he was sent by his Govern-

ment to New York, to conduct a botanical nursery from which American trees and shrubs were to be removed to and naturalized in France. After extensive journeys through the new States on the Atlantic slope, Michaux started a nursery near Charleston, S. C., and ascending the Savannah River spent some time among the Southern Indians, among whom he exercised much influence. In the course of his wide range of travel he visited the Bahamas and Florida, and in the summer of 1788 crossed the Alleghanies.

Upon the outbreak of the French Revolution Michaux's official stipend ceased, and his private funds were thenceforth used in continuing the investigation of American flora. In April, 1792, he started upon a long journey into the subarctic region around Hudson Bay, but beyond the Saguenay was deserted by his guides and obliged to retrace his steps, arriving in Philadelphia the following December.

Laying before the American Philosophical Society—then almost the only organization for the encouragement of scientific studies in

America—a plan for conducting an exploration to the Northwest Coast, his project was at once indorsed.[1] Jefferson, now Secretary of State in Washington's Cabinet, and prominent in the councils of the society, was particularly pleased with the thought of having so eminent a scientist enter upon an undertaking which had for a decade been close to his heart. His official co-operation was at once tendered, and preparations were soon under way. The society appears to have become responsible for the funds, but Jefferson assumed some part in the direction of the enterprise.

In the instructions which Jefferson issued to Michaux in January,[2] this versatile statesman gave evidence of a careful study of the conditions which would be met in the course of the exploration. He tells the botanist that the society would procure for him a conveyance to Kaskaskia "in company with the Indians of that town now in Philadelphia."

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[1] The society opened a subscription for this purpose, the sum thus raised being $128.25. Of this Washington subscribed $25, and Jefferson and Hamilton $12.50 each.

[2] Full text in Ford, vi, pp. 158–161.

Michaux is ordered to "cross the Mississippi and pass by land to the nearest part of the Missouri above the Spanish settlements, that you may avoid the risk of being stopped." He is then to "pursue such of the largest streams of that river as shall lead by the shortest way and the lowest latitudes to the Pacific ocean . . . It would seem by the latest maps as if a river called Oregon, interlocked with the Missouri for a considerable distance, and entered the Pacific ocean not far southward of Nootka Sound." But as these maps are "not to be trusted," the explorer is in this respect left to his own devices.

He is enjoined to "take notice of the country you pass through, its general face, soil, rivers, mountains, its productions—animal, vegetable, and mineral"; astronomical observations are to be taken; the aborigines are to be studied in detail; and, "under the head of animal history, that of the mammoth is particularly recommended to your inquiries." Like Washington, in instructing his Ohio River surveyors, the versatile Jefferson descends to such details as telling Michaux how

to write his notes—on skins, and "the bark of the paper-birch, a substance which may not excite suspicions among the Indians, and little liable to injury from wet or other common accidents." He is to return to Philadelphia and report in detail to the society, although privileged himself to publish certain portions of his journal that may be agreed upon between them.

Jefferson furnished the explorer with a letter of introduction to Governor Shelby, of Kentucky, and upon the fifteenth of July Michaux left Philadelphia on his way westward. No doubt the latter had been quite sincere in his proposition to explore the trans-Mississippi country. But Genet had arrived at Charleston in April as the minister of France, charged with the secret mission of forming a filibustering army of American frontiersmen in the Carolinas, Georgia, and Kentucky to attack the Spanish possessions on the Gulf of Mexico and beyond the Mississippi. Michaux was selected as Genet's agent to deal with the Kentuckians, led by George Rogers Clark, who had proposed, under the banner of France, to descend the Mississippi with fifteen

hundred frontiersmen and attack New Orleans. This use of the intending explorer was unofficially confessed to Jefferson by Genet ten days before the former's departure.[1]

Michaux proceeded no farther west than Kentucky, and spent the rest of the year acting as go-between for Clark and Genet. In December we find him in Philadelphia, because Genet had postponed operations until spring, and early in 1794 he was back in Charleston looking after his nursery. Clark is assured in March that Michaux will return to Kentucky by the middle of April. But Washington had by this time taken a firm stand in opposition, troops were sent to the border to prevent the expedition, the now discredited Genet was recalled by his Government, and Michaux's diplomatic services were no longer required.[2]

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[1] See Turner's Correspondence of Clark and Genet, in Report of Historical Manuscripts Commission of American Historical Association for 1896, p. 933; also Turner's The Significance of the Louisiana Purchase, in Review of Reviews for May, 1903.

[2] In his Introduction to Biddle's version of Lewis and Clark's Travels (Philadelphia, 1814), Jefferson would have it appear

Michaux's Later Life

After further botanical explorations among the Kentucky hills, this scientific adventurer sailed for France in August, 1796. The vessel in which he embarked being wrecked off the Holland coast, he lost all save his collections, with which he finally reached France, where the Government and the savants received him with unusual honors. In his long absence, however, the nurseries which he had privately established at Rambouillet, chiefly for the acclimatization of foreign plants, had been ruined by neglect; of the sixty thousand American specimens which he had sent thither few remained. But far from being discouraged, Michaux set himself bravely to the task of repairing his losses, and to the publication of several important works. In 1800 he accompanied an official expedition to Madagascar, and two years later lost his life from fever contracted while breaking ground for a new botanical garden.

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that Michaux had no sooner reached Kentucky than he was recalled and bade "to pursue elsewhere the botanical inquiries on which he was employed." This is not borne out by the documents in the case. Michaux was in active correspondence with the Kentucky conspirators for fully eight months after his arrival among them.

Thus his plans for returning to America for the completion of the botanical discoveries, which had greatly interested him, came to naught. It is fair to presume that had this energetic traveler and scientist not fallen under the malign influence of the Clark-Genet intrigue, and thus wandered from the line of professional duty, he would have succeeded in the great task of transcontinental exploration for which Jefferson had selected him.

CHAPTER V

THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE

Upon the eve of the downfall of New France, when the inevitable was plainly foreseen, Louis XV, in order to prevent England from obtaining them, ceded to Spain (November, 1762) the town and neighborhood of New Orleans and the broad possessions of France west of the Mississippi. The following year, by the Treaty of Paris, she lost to England all of her holdings east of the great river. Spain remained in possession of the trans-Mississippi country until 1800. Napoleon, just then dreaming of another New France in the western half of North America, as well as desiring to check the United States in its development westward, in that year (October 1st) coerced the court of Madrid into a treaty of retrocession. Under this agreement Spain was to receive as recom-

pense the improvised "Kingdom of Etruria," in northern Italy, to be governed by the Duke of Parma, son-in-law of the Spanish king; she was also to retain East and West Florida, which Napoleon had sought, but despite Spanish subserviency could not obtain.[1]

That the great Corsican desired to establish a strong colonial empire to the west of the United States, controlling the Gulf of Mexico and the entire Mississippi Valley, there is now no doubt. Immediately after the retrocession of Louisiana, a large French expedition occupied the island of Santo Domingo, and another corps was destined for New Orleans; but the army in Santo Domingo was at once confronted by a native negro revolution, and the occupation of New Orleans, timed for October, 1802, was accordingly deferred.

These movements naturally alarmed President Jefferson, for New Orleans was the key to the continental interior. James Monroe

[1] See Señor Jerónimo Becker's article in La España Moderna for May, 1903, wherein the Spanish side of the story is given. He says that the tricky Talleyrand promised Spain that the cession was but nominal, and that the latter might still retain possession of Louisiana. As late as 1815 Spain still entertained hopes of regaining the province through English diplomacy.

was sent as a special envoy to Paris (March, 1803) to seek the purchase of New Orleans and the Floridas, with a view of securing to our Western settlers the free navigation of the Mississippi. The denial of this privilege by Spain, and the threatened denial by France, had been the cause of long-continued dissatisfaction among the trans-Alleghany borderers, who at that time cared more for an opening for their surplus products than they did for the Federal union—to them as yet a shadowy thing, controlled by men of the Atlantic slope, unknowing and indifferent, they thought, to the needs of the West.

Jefferson was strongly impressed by the demands of the frontiersmen; but as a man of peace apparently would have been willing, if unable to secure any French territory at the mouth of the river, to accept a free navigation agreement from France, rather than have an armed contest with that power. He appears to have thought that eventually an alliance with England might win still further concessions from Paris. It is not evident that at this time his interest in the country west

of the river went further than a desire to discover within it a path to the Pacific.

Affairs were in this unsatisfactory condition, promising ill for the future of the young nation, when the French minister, Talleyrand, greatly surprised the American minister at Paris, Robert R. Livingston, by proposing (April 11th) that the United States buy all of Louisiana. The reason for this sudden change of heart was, that Napoleon had determined on a new war with England. This ambitious military enterprise required more money than he then possessed; he feared that England's navy might, during the struggle, capture the approaches to Louisiana; by previously disposing of the territory to the United States he would not only obtain funds, but would thwart his enemy, and assist in rearing a formidable rival to her in North America.

Monroe had just arrived at Paris, bearing instructions authorizing Livingston and himself to pay $2,000,000 for New Orleans and the Floridas. This new proposition came to them as unexpectedly as "a bolt from the blue." The only method of communicating

with Washington was by the ocean mails, which were then very slow. The First Consul insisted on haste, for he needed the money at once; war was soon to be declared between France and England, and in brief time the latter might seize the Gulf of Mexico, and thus win Louisiana for herself.

Our envoys were equal to the emergency. Lacking opportunity to consult with the President, they realized that delay might mean defeat, and promptly entered upon negotiations. At the end of a week's discussion, during which his brothers Lucien and Joseph bitterly opposed the sequestration of this vast colonial possession, Napoleon arbitrarily directed his finance minister, Marbois, to sign a treaty (April 30th)[1] with the American representatives, by which Louisiana, with its ill-defined boundaries, was sold to the United States for $15,000,000.[2] Thus was our territory doubled at a few strokes of the pen. When Livingston, the principal American ne-

[1] Such is the date of the document; but the actual signing was on May 2d.

[2] The actual price was $11,250,000, in addition to which the United States agreed to pay certain debts owing our citizens by France, amounting to $3,750,000.

gotiator, rose after signing, he shook hands with his colleague and Marbois, saying: "We have lived long, but this is the noblest work of our lives!"

It was the early days of July before the news of this remarkable diplomatic negotiation reached Washington. Needless to say, it awakened uncommon excitement at the national capital. Captain Meriwether Lewis was in town, obtaining from the President final instructions before starting upon his great exploring expedition to the Pacific, an enterprise which was now placed upon a far different footing from the original intention. When, upon the fifth of the month, he bade farewell to his friends at the White House, and left for the West, he left behind him a partizan squabble upon the issue of which hung the future of the United States as a world power.

In this dispute the Federalists bitterly opposed, while the Republicans favored, the proposed purchase of foreign territory. Jefferson himself, on constitutional grounds, entertained strong scruples against the transaction. He was but slowly won to the theory

that the treaty-making power was sufficient to warrant the purchase, without an amendment to the Constitution.

The treaty itself arrived in Washington the fourteenth of July, and was ratified by Congress on the nineteenth of October following; but it was some time before New England became reconciled, prophetically fearing that the acquisition of so much new territory, which was eventually to be formed into voting States, would result in throwing the balance of political power into the West. There was even some talk in that section of secession, because of this threatened loss of prestige. In the end, however, all concerned became reconciled to the contemplation of a United States extending across the continent. Florida, Texas, and California later followed in natural sequence—not without qualms upon the part of many; but the great struggle had been fought out over the Louisiana Purchase, and the power of territorial expansion accepted as a constitutional doctrine.[1]

[1] "Perhaps most fundamental of all in its effects is the emphasis which the Louisiana Purchase gave to the conception of space in American ideals. The immensity of the area thus

Rocky Mountain Exploration

Although Spain ceded Louisiana to France in October, 1800, and the latter had now sold the territory to the United States, the French Government had not in the meanwhile found it convenient to take formal possession of the region. Spanish officials at New Orleans and St. Louis were still governing the sparse population,[1] consisting chiefly of easy-going French Creoles, with several small groups of American bordermen who had been induced to become Spanish subjects by liberal offers of rich land along the west bank of the Mississippi and the lower reaches of the Missouri. Among these were Daniel Boone and several of his sons and old neighbors in Kentucky and West Virginia. Sighing for elbow-room and broader hunting-grounds, and not a little disgruntled over the restrictions to liberty and the legal technicalities which confronted men in the older settlements, they had established

opened to exploitation has continually stirred the Americans' imagination, fired their energy and determination, strengthened their ability to handle vast designs, and made them measure their achievements by the scale of the prairies and the Rocky Mountains."—Dr. Frederick J. Turner's The Significance of the Louisiana Purchase, in Review of Reviews for May, 1903.

[1] Estimated at 50,000 whites.

themselves not far from the French village of St. Charles.

The fact that Spain had never formally surrendered to France possession of Louisiana, although three years had elapsed since the Treaty of St. Ildefonso, did not disturb the mind of Napoleon. But the court of Spain was of the opinion that that treaty had not been properly observed and that the cession was void, particularly as France had engaged "not to retrocede Louisiana to any other power." The Spanish minister served notice to this effect on the American Government. This merely served to hasten the preparations of the French chargé d'affaires at Washington, who at once forwarded instructions to his colleague in New Orleans, where the message arrived on November 23d. Both French and Spanish commissioners agreed promptly to carry out the programme of cession.

A proper regard for legal forms rendered essential two ceremonies of transfer—of Spain to France, and of France to the United States. At New Orleans, on the thirtieth of November, the Spanish commissioners, with much

formality, surrendered Louisiana to the representative of France, Pierre Clement Laussat. Seventeen days later, the American commissioners, William C. C. Claiborne (appointed to be governor of the new territory) and General James Wilkinson, arrived by ship with a small escort of troops, and camped near the town. Upon the twentieth of December the French representative delivered to the Americans the keys of the capital, and absolved all French residents from their oath of allegiance to France; the tricolor of France was hauled down, after its brief service of twenty days, and the Stars and Stripes replaced it amid salvos of artillery and the playing of a regimental band.

Early in January, Laussat served upon Charles Dehault de Lassus, the lieutenant-governor of Upper Louisiana, at St. Louis, an order from the Spanish commissioners to surrender that region to such person as Laussat might name: that person being Captain Amos Stoddard, of the United States army, detailed to serve as American transfer commissioner, and now stationed at the military post of Kaskaskia, on the east side of the Mississippi.

Stoddard appears to have spent much of the winter in St. Louis, the gay little capital of the region, where he, no doubt, almost daily met Captain Meriwether Lewis, of the Lewis and Clark exploring expedition, then passing the winter at River Dubois, also on the east side opposite the mouth of the Missouri. On the ninth of March the American troops were brought in boats across the river, under the command of Stoddard's adjutant, Lieutenant Stephen Worrell, and escorted Stoddard, Lewis, and other Americans to the government house. Here De Lassus read a proclamation; addressed the villagers as they congregated in the square fronting his residence, releasing them from their oath of fidelity to France; and with Stoddard signed a formal document of transfer, to which Lewis among others placed his signature as witness. Artillery salutes greeted the American flag as it was hoisted on the official staff, and the day closed with expressions of mutual good-will. At last the great purchase had been consummated at all points, and the entire breadth of the continent was now open to American exploitation.

CHAPTER VI.

ORGANIZATION OF LEWIS AND CLARK'S EXPEDITION

We have seen that as early as 1783 Jefferson, then in private life, entertained a hope that he might be able to set on foot an expedition, to be led by George Rogers Clark, for the discovery of a path across the Rocky Mountains, connecting the Missouri River with Pacific tide-water. Nothing coming of this, three years later, while minister to France, he induced the adventurous John Ledyard to attempt to cross from Kamchatka and traverse the North American continent from the west. Because of the jealousy of Russia, this project also failed. Intertribal wars upon the Missouri caused the abandonment of an expedition undertaken in 1790 by direction of General Henry Knox, Washington's secretary of war. As secretary of state, Jefferson returned to the charge, and in 1793—the year of Mackenzie's brilliant exploit—

through the agency of the American Philosophical Society, despatched Michaux, the French botanist, upon a mission similar to the one tentatively proposed to Clark ten years before. But with the miserable ending of the Michaux affair we are familiar.

Ten years now elapsed, with no developments in Rocky Mountain exploration upon the part of Americans. Jefferson had become President in 1800, and was deeply immersed in the multifarious incidents of office. Yet his early yearning for the discovery of an overmountain path to the Pacific had not lessened.

The lapse in the winter of 1802–03 of an "act for establishing trading houses with the Indian tribes," gave him the opportunity sought. In a secret message to Congress (January 18th) the President urges that trade with the Western aborigines be more assiduously cultivated than hitherto, and that they be encouraged to abandon the hunting life in favor of agriculture and the domestic arts. Adroitly he leads up to the desirability of reaching out for the trade of the Indians on the Missouri River, which now is absorbed

by English companies; and then suggests that the friendship of these savages may best be secured through the visit of an exploring party.

"An intelligent officer," he writes, "with ten or twelve chosen men fit for the enterprise and willing to undertake it, taken from posts where they may be spared without inconvenience, might explore the whole line, even to the Western Ocean, have conferences with the natives on the subject of commercial intercourse, get admission among them for our traders as others are admitted, agree on convenient deposits for an interchange of articles, and return with the information acquired in the course of two summers. Their arms and accouterments, some instruments of observation, and light and cheap presents for the Indians would be all the apparatus they could carry, and with an expectation of a soldier's portion of land on their return would constitute the whole expense." The country which he thus proposed to explore was the property of France, although still governed by Spain; but Jefferson thinks that the latter nation would regard the enterprise merely

"as a literary pursuit," and "not be disposed to view it with jealousy, even if the expiring state of its interests there did not render it a matter of indifference."

An estimate of the necessary expenses, drawn by the President's private secretary, Captain Meriwether Lewis, accompanied the message, showing that $2,500 was thought to be sufficient for the purpose. The entire pay of the party being chargeable to the War Department, also their rations previous to leaving United States soil, of course these important items did not enter into the calculation. Jefferson, a born diplomat, proposes that this modest sum be appropriated "for the purpose of extending the external commerce of the United States," it being understood by the Executive that this would signify legislative sanction of his projected exploration. An appropriation so phrased "would cover the undertaking from notice and prevent the obstructions which interested individuals might otherwise previously prepare in its way." Congress acceded to the President's request.

Meriwether Lewis, who now enters upon

the stage of history, was born of good family near Charlottesville, Va., in 1774. From childhood he had been in local repute as a hunter and amateur botanist, and his celebrated neighbor, Thomas Jefferson, evinced great fondness for him. At the age of twenty he served as a private in the Virginia militia, during the Whisky Rebellion in western Pennsylvania, and at the close of the disturbance was employed in the regular army—originally as ensign in the First Infantry, but in two years rising (1797) to a captaincy in the same regiment. While in this last capacity he was regimental paymaster, and as such traveled extensively among the frontier posts in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Kentucky. In 1792, when Jefferson was negotiating with Michaux, Lewis applied for the post of explorer; but his old neighbor evidently thought that a youth of eighteen years, even with such training as his bright young friend possessed, was as yet unfitted for a mission of this magnitude. In 1801 he appointed Captain Lewis as his private secretary, and no doubt from this time forward there were frequent animated conversations at the White

WILLIAM CLARK.

MERIWETHER LEWIS.

After the portraits by Peale, in Independence Hall, Philadelphia.

House table over the exploration of the Missouri route to the Pacific. As early as July, 1802, the prospect of carrying their plans into effect was deemed favorable by the President and his secretary. Lewis again applied for the leadership of the expedition, and this time his ambition was promptly gratified. Thereafter the two friends—Jefferson in his sixtieth year, and Lewis in his twenty-eighth—were the leading spirits in this daring enterprise.

Jefferson has placed on record[1] this generous tribute to Lewis: "I had now had opportunities of knowing him intimately. Of courage undaunted; possessing a firmness and perseverance of purpose which nothing but impossibilities could divert from its direction; careful as a father of those committed to his charge, yet steady in the maintenance of order and discipline; intimate with the Indian character, customs, and principles; habituated to the hunting life; guarded, by exact observation of the vegetables and animals of his own country, against losing time in the description of objects already possessed; honest, disinter-

[1] Introduction to Biddle's edition of the Travels, i, pp. xi, xii.

ested, liberal, of sound understanding, and a fidelity to truth so scrupulous that whatever he should report would be as certain as if seen by ourselves—with all these qualifications, as if selected and implanted by nature in one body for this express purpose, I could have no hesitation in confiding the enterprise to him."

Jefferson fully realized that, connected with a model exploring expedition, there should be trained scientists, to make calculations as to latitude and longitude, to report upon the fauna, flora, and mineralogy of the country, and to make ethnological and philological notes upon the aborigines whom they should meet. But, as he told a correspondent:[1] "We can not in the U. S. find a person who to courage, prudence, habits & health adapted to the woods, & some familiarity with the Indian character, joins a perfect knowledge of botany, natural history, mineralogy & astronomy, all of which would be desirable. To the first qualifications Captain Lewis my secretary adds a great mass of accurate obser-

[1] Dr. Caspar Wistar, of Philadelphia; letter in Ford, viii, p. 192.

vation made on the different subjects of the three kingdoms as existing in these states, not under their scientific forms, but so as that he will readily seize whatever is new in the country he passes thro', and give us accounts of new things only; and he has qualified himself for fixing the longitude & latitude of the different points in the line he will go over."

Congress having proved complaisant, preparations were hurried forward. During April Lewis was engaged at Lancaster, Harper's Ferry, and elsewhere, conferring with military and other authorities upon the West, building boats, and superintending the manufacture and collection of weapons, scientific instruments, and miscellaneous supplies. Some weeks were then spent in Philadelphia, in company with several scientific men whose good offices had been sought by Jefferson; from them Lewis learned the rudimentary methods of taking astronomical observations, and obtained much detailed advice upon the scientific side of the expedition.

Early in May the President submitted to his friend a "rough draft" of detailed instructions, which were afterwards finished

L. of C.

and signed on the twentieth of June. In this important document Jefferson enters with his love of detail into the methods to be adopted by the expedition after leaving United States territory. He sends to Lewis passports from both the Spanish and French ministers, permitting this "literary" party to pass through their territory; and one from the British minister, to insure respect from Canadian traders. Beginning at the mouth of the Missouri, the explorers are to take frequent astronomical observations; note the courses and distances of the rivers traveled upon; seek the fullest possible data of every sort regarding Indians along the path; make record of the soils, minerals, vegetable productions, animal life, and climate; and to ascertain facts relative to the sources of the Mississippi, the position of the Lake of the Woods, and the paths followed by Canadian traders in their intercourse with the Western Indians. Lewis is to cultivate among the savages a desire to trade with Americans, and in every way to conciliate them; if possible, a party should be brought back on a friendly visit to Washington. In order to obtain all the informa-

tion possible, and to guard against the loss of it, the leader is required not only himself to keep detailed journals, but to encourage others of his party to do so; to "put into cypher whatever might do injury if betrayed"; to use, if practicable, "the paper of the birch, as less liable to injury from damp than common paper." If they meet with a superior force representing another nation, they are to return, for "in the loss of yourselves, we should lose also the information you will have acquired . . . by returning safely with that, you may enable us to renew the essay with better calculated means . . . we wish you to err on the side of your safety, & bring back your party safe, even if it be with less information." Upon reaching the Pacific coast, he is to "learn if there be any port within your reach frequented by the sea-vessels of any nation, and to send two of your trusty people back by sea, in such way as shall appear practicable, with a copy of your notes"—or he may, in his judgment, have the entire party "return by sea by way of Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope, as you shall be able." In order that this plan might be carried out,

a "letter of general credit," signed by the President, was forwarded to Lewis, asking "of the Consuls, agents, merchants & citizens of any nation with which we have intercourse or amity to furnish you with those supplies which your necessities may call for, assuring them of honorable and prompt retribution."

Lewis deeming it advisable to have a companion upon the expedition who, while second in command, should be of equal military rank with himself, Jefferson acceded. Thereupon Lewis sent a cordial note of invitation to his boyhood friend William Clark, of Kentucky; but pending a reply, by the President's consent he made an arrangement with another friend, Lieutenant Moses Hooke, of his old regiment, now military agent at Pittsburg, by which he was to go in case Clark declined. The latter, however, agreed to the proposition, and joined the expedition upon its way down the Ohio River.

Like Lewis, William Clark was by birth a Virginian. The Clark and Lewis families were firm friends and neighbors in Caroline County, William having been born on the

old Clark estate in 1770, four years previous to the man with whose name his memory will forever be linked. He was yet a small boy when his older brother, George Rogers, began his brilliant career upon the Western borders. When fourteen years of age, his father, John Clark, moved to Mulberry Hill, on Bear-grass Creek, near Louisville, Ky. This new home soon became a center of hospitality for a wide district, and William grew up in close friendship with the most distinguished Kentuckians of his day, who were frequently guests of the family.

Young Clark was a general favorite. In March, 1791, when in his twenty-first year, he was appointed a lieutenant with General Scott upon special service. A friend conveying this information to one of his elder brothers, wrote concerning him: "William . . . is a youth of solid and promising parts, and as brave as Cæsar." A year later he was a lieutenant of infantry in regular service in Wayne's Western army, and concluded his four years' experience in fighting Indians by participating in the battle of Fallen Timbers (1796), at the head of his company. On two

occasions General Wayne sent Captain Clark upon missions to the Spaniards west of the Mississippi, and he appears to have impressed these gentlemen as an officer deserving of much respect.

Upon the conclusion of the treaty of Greenville, being in ill-health, the young captain resigned from the army and retired to a Kentucky farm, on which he was dwelling when the letter arrived from Lewis, inviting him to join the Western exploring expedition. This letter "offered by the apprb^n of the President," afterward wrote Clark,[1] "to place me in a situation in every respect equal to himself, in rank pretentions &c &c." Clark had expected appointment as captain of engineers; but just before starting up the Missouri the following spring, was disappointed by receiving only the commission of a second lieutenant of artillery. However, Lewis assured him that a commission was needed only as an authority to punish the soldiers in the party if necessary, and that Clark's "command &c, &c, should be equal to his." With this assur-

[1] Letter in Coues's Lewis and Clark, New York (1891), pp. lxxi, lxxii.

ance, he sensibly smothered his pride and said nothing further about the affair. As a matter of fact, the journals of the expedition reveal that Lewis, while nominally in command, consistently regarded Clark as his official equal, both being styled by all connected with the party as "Captain." Throughout all the trying experiences of the three years during which they were united, their respect and friendship for each other but deepened and strengthened—a record far from common among exploring parties.

Parting from Jefferson, at Washington, on the fifth of July—a few days after receipt of the news from Paris announcing the Louisiana Purchase—Lewis had expected to leave Pittsburg for the descent of the Ohio by the last week of that month. But the man who was building his boat "shamefully detained" him, through periodical drunkenness, for a full month after this. The stage of water in the Ohio was the lowest up to that time recorded, and the young explorer was freely advised not to attempt the voyage that season. But, as he wrote the President, he was "determined to get forward though I should

not be able to make a greater distance than a mile p^{r} day." At seven in the morning of the thirty-first of August the boat was ready for the water, and by ten the expedition was under way. He had often, with his small crew, to cut his way through sand-bars and riffles, and in a few cases was obliged to use horses and oxen. "I find them," he writes, "the most efficient sailors in the present state of the navigation of this river."

Word had been sent in advance to the commanders of the military posts on the Ohio and Mississippi—chiefly Southwest Point, Massac, and Kaskaskia—to call for volunteers for the expedition. There was no lack of these, but the qualifications named by Lewis were so exacting that upon his arrival at each station some difficulty was experienced in making suitable selections; so that the business of recruiting added materially to the delay. Finally, he found fourteen soldiers who pleased him; to these he added nine Kentucky frontiersmen of special merit, who were sworn in as privates, for the expedition was organized throughout on a military basis. Of the party, also, was Clark's negro servant,

York, a man of uncommon size and strength, destined to figure prominently in the annals of the exploration. All were young, unmarried, and in robust health.

It had been the original intention of Lewis to go into winter quarters at La Charette, a small French village, the highest settlement on the Missouri—a point which the expedition, the following spring, spent seven days in reaching. But for several reasons this plan was not carried out. The delays on the Ohio had been so numerous that December was a third past before the explorers arrived at River Dubois, a small stream emptying into the Mississippi nearly opposite the mouth of the Missouri. Although the news of the sale of Louisiana to the United States had reached Washington early in July, the Spanish commandant at St. Louis had had no official notification of this event, and the policy of his Government was such that he did not feel authorized to grant permission to the expedition to enter territory still under his charge; moreover, a letter from President Jefferson, dated November 16th, had suggested that the season was now too far advanced to

make much progress up the Missouri, while by encamping on the American side the men could draw their winter rations from the War Department, without entrenching on the special appropriation.

The expedition constructed a winter camp on River Dubois, and spent the succeeding five months in careful preparation for the arduous task which confronted it to the westward.

CHAPTER VII

FROM RIVER DUBOIS TO THE MANDANS

Although as a body the expedition was restricted to its winter's camp on the east side of the Mississippi, the leaders not infrequently visited their military friends at the neighboring American posts of Cahokia and Kaskaskia, and—especially Lewis—were often guests at the houses of leading citizens in the village of St. Louis, on the west side. To Clark, for the most part, appears to have fallen the task of building boats and drilling the men for the forthcoming task; while Lewis purchased supplies and made extended inquiries regarding the Missouri River country, which had been explored as far up as the Mandan villages by many of the French fur-traders and voyageurs who centered at St. Louis. We have already seen that Lewis was one of the official witnesses of

the transfer of Upper Louisiana, upon the ninth of March. During the winter, also, the party received several accessions, chiefly of French Canadians more or less familiar with the Missouri country.

At four in the afternoon of the fourteenth of May, 1804, "all in health and readiness to set out," the expedition left camp at River Dubois, "in the presence of many of the neighboring inhabitants, and proceeded on under a jentle brease up the Missourie."[1] Clark was in charge of the embarkation, for Lewis was attending to the last business details in St. Louis. The flotilla consisted of three craft—a keel boat fifty-five feet long, drawing three feet of water, carrying a sail, propelled by twenty-two oars, with both forecastle and cabin, and the center guarded by a breastwork, for attacks from Indians were feared, especially on the lower reaches of the Missouri; a pirogue or open boat with seven oars, and another with six, both of them car-

[1] In all citations from the official journals kept by the leaders, we follow the original manuscripts, now in the possession of the American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia, and soon to be published verbatim under the editorship of the present writer.

proceeding Wisdom River one day
Capt Lewis and 3 men set out after breakfst.
to examine the river above, find a portage
if possible, also the Snake Indians I should
have taken this trip had I have been
able to march, from the raging fury
of a tumor on my ankle mond, in the
evening clouded up and a few drops of rain
Encamped on the Lard side near a low bluff, the
river to day as yesterday, the three hunters
Could kill only two antelopes to day, game
of every kind Scarce

August 10th. Satturday 1805

Some rain this morning at sun rise and
Cloudy we proceeded on passed a remark-
able Cleft. point on the Stard. side about 150
feet high, this Cleft the Indians Call the
Beavers head, opposite at 300 yards is a low
Cleft of 50 feet which is a Spur from the Mo-
-ntain on the Lard. about 4 miles, the river
verry crooked, at 4 o Clark a hard rain from the
sw accompanied with hail Continued half
an hour, all wet, the men sheltered themselves
from the hail with bushes. we Encamped on
the Stard side near a Bluff, only one Deer killed
to day, the one killed 2 Fields 3 days past
& hung up we made use of river narrow, & stoles
but not rapid.

A PAGE OF CLARK'S JOURNAL.

Original now in possession of the American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia.

rying sails. The party comprised, in addition to Clark, three sergeants (Ordway, Pryor, and Floyd), twenty-three privates, two interpreters (Drouillard and Charbonneau), Charbonneau's Indian squaw Sacajawea, and the negro York.[1]

Lewis had not expected Clark to leave until the fifteenth, but the latter's plans were

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[1] The personnel of the expedition was:

Meriwether Lewis, captain in First United States Infantry, commanding.

William Clark, second lieutenant in United States Artillery.

Sergeants—John Ordway, Nathaniel Pryor, Charles Floyd—and Patrick Gass, succeeding Floyd on the latter's death (August 20, 1804).

Privates—William Bratton, John Colter, John Collins, Peter Cruzatte, Reuben Fields, Joseph Fields, Robert Frazier, George Gibson, Silas Goodrich, Hugh Hall, Thomas P. Howard, Francis Labiche, —— La Liberté, Hugh McNeal, John Potts, George Shannon, John Shields, John B. Thompson, William Werner, Joseph Whitehouse, Alexander Willard, Richard Windsor, Peter Wiser.

Interpreters—George Drouillard and Toussaint Charbonneau.

Indian woman—Sacajawea ("bird woman"), Charbonneau's wife.

Clark's negro slave, York.

Two soldiers, John Newman and M. B. Reed, set out with the expedition, but were punished for misconduct, and in April, 1805, sent back to St. Louis. In Newman's place, Baptist Lepage enlisted at Fort Mandan, November 2, 1804, and remained with the party until the discharge of all the men at St. Louis, November 10, 1806.

perfected a day ahead of time, and he was anxious to be off. Arriving the following noon at St. Charles, then a French hamlet of some four hundred and fifty inhabitants—"pore, polite & harmonious," his journal aptly describes them—he lay there until the twentieth when his friend joined him, the latter having been accompanied twenty-four miles overland from St. Louis by several citizens of that place and a small knot of United States military officers, who had but recently taken part in the territorial transfer from France. At their head was Captain Stoddard, serving as military governor of Upper Louisiana pending its reorganization by Congress.

The people of St. Charles hospitably entertained the visitors, and on the following day the expedition set out "under three Cheers from the gentlemen on the bank." During the succeeding two or three days many settlers flocked to the shores to watch the little fleet toiling up the great muddy stream, and good-naturedly to wish the company joy in their great undertaking.

Difficulties commenced immediately. Violent currents swept around the great sand-

bars, in which the boats were often dangerously near swamping. Snags were numerous, and against these sprawling obstructions they were frequently hurled violently by the swirling waters; several times masts were broken by being caught in the branches. Now and then war-trails were seen, and a close watch was deemed essential to avoid possible surprise by bands of prowling savages, jealous of this formidable invasion of their hunting-grounds. Farther up the river—by the third week of September—high shelving banks, now and then undermined by the current and falling into the river in masses often many acres in extent, gave them great alarm; and not infrequently their craft, swept by the current to the foot of such an overhanging bluff of sand and clay, were in serious danger.[1]

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[1] In a letter to his mother, dated Fort Mandan, March 31, 1805, Lewis states: "So far we have experienced more difficulties from the navigation of the Missouri than danger from the savages. The difficulties which oppose themselves to the navigation of this immense river arise from the rapidity of its current, its falling banks, sand-bars and timber which remains wholly or partially concealed in its bed, usually called by the navigators of the Missouri and the Mississippi 'sawyer' or 'planter'

"one of these difficulties the navigator never ceases to

The expedition was obliged, as it progressed, to live upon the country. While the majority of the company were employed in the arduous duty of navigating the craft which conveyed the arms, ammunition, instruments, articles for traffic with the Indians, and general stores, hunting was a task of the first importance. At least two hunters were out almost constantly, and these led two horses along the bank, to bring the abundant meat to the camping places. Frequently they were joined by others of the party, detailed for shore duty; and almost always one of the captains, generally Lewis, joined the pedestrians, himself engaged in collecting botanical

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contend with from the Entrance of the Missouri to this place; and in innumerable instances most of these obstructions are at the same instant combined to oppose his progress or threaten his destruction. To these we may also add a fifth, and not much less considerable difficulty—the turbed quality of the water—which renders it impracticable to discover any obstruction, even to the depth of a single inch. Such is the velocity of the current at all seasons of the year, from the entrance of the Missouri to the mouth of the great river Platte, that it is impossible to resist its force by means of oars or poles in the main channel of the river; the eddies which therefore generally exist on one side or the other of the river, are sought by the navigators, but these are almost universally encumbered with concealed timber, or within reach of the falling banks."

and other scientific specimens and making notes upon the country.

On the twenty-fifth of May the explorers passed La Charette, the last white settlement on the river—the home of Daniel Boone, still a vigorous hunter at a ripe old age. Upon the sixth of June buffalo signs were seen; on the eleventh they first shot bears. Five days later two small rafts were met, manned by French and half-breed traders from the Mandan country, and bearing buffalo tallow and furs to St. Louis. One of these men, named Dourion, who had lived with the Sioux for twenty years and gained their confidence, was persuaded to turn back with the expedition in order to induce that tribe to send a friendly delegation to visit the new Great Father at Washington.

Rapids were now frequently met with, necessitating the use in the swift water of towing-lines and kedge-anchors, a work much impeded by heavy growths, along the banks, of bushes and gigantic weeds. "Ticks and musquiters," and great swarms of "knats," begin to be "verry troublesome," necessitating smudge fires and mosquito-bars. The

men frequently suffer from snake-bites, sunstroke, and stomach complaints. Both Lewis and Clark now play the part of physicians, and administer simple though sometimes drastic remedies for these disorders; the journals make frequent mention of strange doses and vigorous bleeding. Sometimes storms drench them in their rude camp; or, suddenly bursting upon their craft in open river, necessitate great ado with anchors and cables until the flurry is over — as once, "when the Storm Sudenly Seased and the river became Instancetainously as Smoth as Glass."

Reaching Platte River on the twenty-second of July, they lay by for several days and sent for some Oto and Missouri chiefs, who were informed of the change of government and made happy with presents of flags, medals, and trinkets, and promises of future trade; the proceeding being graced with an Indian feast and much savage ceremony.

On the eighteenth of August, as they approached the Omaha Indians, a disagreeable event occurred. Two of the men, M. B. Reed and La Liberté, sent upon errands into the country, deserted. The captains were not dis-

posed to countenance such conduct, for deserters could work great injury by making false representations about them and the motives of the expedition. Search parties were therefore sent out. Both were caught, but La Liberté contrived again to escape. Reed, confessing his fault, was not condemned to death, but obliged to "run the gauntlet" four times, each of his former comrades being armed with nine switches, and then was ignominiously dismissed the service, although held until the following spring.

Two days later occurred the first and only death. Sergeant Charles Floyd, a man of firmness and resolution, being "taken verry bad all at once with a Biliouse Chorlick . . . Died with a great deal of composure." This event took place a short distance below the present Sioux City, about eight hundred and fifty miles above the mouth of the Missouri. Patrick Gass was elected his successor.

Upon the thirtieth and thirty-first of the month, at a point within Knox County, Nebraska, a somewhat elaborate camp was established, at which a large party of Sioux chiefs and their followers, brought in by Dourion,

were entertained with the customary ceremonials of speaking, dancing, and feasting. Clark's record of the affair gives much detailed information about the dress, customs, numbers, and trade of these people. He quaintly relates that their savage visitors were "much deckerated with Paint Porcupine quils feathers, large leagins and mockersons, all with buffalow roabs of Different Colours."

The explorers were now in a paradise of game. Great herds of buffaloes, sometimes five thousand strong, were grazing in the plains, the fattest of them falling easy victims to the excellent aim of the hunters. Elk, deer, antelopes, turkeys, and squirrels were abundant, and gave variety to their meals, for which the navigators generally tied up at the bank and joined the land party around huge camp-fires. Prairie-dogs, whose little burrows punctured the plains in every direction, interested the explorers. One day there was a general attempt to drown out one of these nimble miners; but although all joined for some time in freely pouring water down the hole, the task was finally abandoned as impracticable. Prairie-wolves nightly howled

about their camps in surprising numbers and in several varieties.[1]

Worn by the fatigue of a day's hard work at the oars or the towing-line or pushing-pole, or perhaps by long hours of tramping or hunting upon the rolling plains, which were frequently furrowed by deep ravines, each member of the party earned his night's rest. But as they lay under the stars, around the generous fires of driftwood, great clouds of mosquitoes not infrequently robbed them

[1] From Lewis's letter to his mother, previously cited: "Game is very abundant, and seems to increase as we progress—our prospect of starving is therefore consequently small. On the lower portion of the Missouri, from its junction with the Mississippi to the entrance of the Osage river we met with some deer, bear and turkeys. From thence to the Kancez river the deer were more abundant. A great number of black bear, some turkeys, geese, swan and ducks. From thence to the mouth of the great river Platte an immense quantity of deer, some bear, elk, turkeys, geese, swan and ducks. From thence to the river S [ioux] some bear, a great number of elks, the bear disappeared almost entirely, some turkeys, geese, swan and ducks. From thence to the mouth of the White river vast herds of buffalo, elk and some deer, and a greater quantity of turkeys than we had before seen, a circumstance which I did not much expect in a country so destitute of timber. Hence to Fort Mandan the buffalo, elk and deer increase in quantity, with the addition of the Cabie [cabra], as they are generally called by the French engages, which is a creature about the size of a small deer. Its flesh is deliciously flavored."

of sleep. The two leaders were possessed of mosquito-bars, which generally enabled them to rest with comparative comfort, although sometimes even these were ineffectual; but apparently none of the others enjoyed these luxuries, and buried their heads within their blankets, almost to the point of suffocation. Once they had camped upon a sand-bar, in mid-river. By the light of the moon the guard saw the banks caving in above and below. Alarming the sleepers, they had barely time to launch and board their boats before the very spot where they had lain slipped into the turbid current. In the upper reaches of the river, the following year, grizzly bears and stampeded buffalo herds were added to the list of night terrors.

It was not always possible for the land and water parties to make connections for the night camps. The hunters and walkers were often obliged to take long detours into the interior, either in search of game or because of deep ravines or of steep bluffs bordering upon the river; and sometimes a cut-short was taken, to avoid the frequent bends of the winding stream. The heavy growth of

timber and bushes along the banks often rendered it impossible for the land party to trace or even to see the water. The result was, that not infrequently the pedestrians and horsemen would lose sight of the boatsmen, and then it was impossible to say whether the former were above or below the latter. In the last week of August, one of the men, George Shannon, having the horses in charge—there were now several of them in the little herd—lost touch with his fellows and thought them ahead of him. For sixteen days he hurried on, without bullets to shoot game, and not only lost all his horses but one, but when finally caught up with by his comrades was in a starving condition. We shall, in future chapters, see that even the leaders were sometimes lost in this manner and obliged to camp out alone in the wilderness, uncertain whether to hurry or to tarry.

Lewis and Clark owed much of their success to tactfulness in treating with the Indians whom they met in their long journey. During the first season out they had but one disagreeable incident on this account. At

the mouth of Teton River (September 25th) was an encampment of Sioux, who stole the horse of a hunter. The two captains sent word to the village chiefs that they would not speak to the tribesmen until the horse had been returned.

The ceremonious red men thereupon arranged with the strangers for a council, which took place under an awning reared upon a sand-bar at the mouth of the Teton. The animal was restored, and the head men were shown the boats, each being given a drink of whisky, "which they appeared to be verry fond of." When the whites expressed a wish to leave, some of the young bucks seized the painter of a pirogue and wished forcibly to detain their visitors, from whom they sought more presents. Growing insolent, one or two of them even drew their bows and arrows; whereupon, writes Clark, "I felt My Self warm & spoke in verry possitive terms." The men were ordered under arms, and thrusting the Indians aside, the expedition pushed on for a mile up-stream. Here the boats were anchored off an island and heavily guarded for the night. "I call this Island," records

Clark, "bad humered Island as we were in a bad humer."

The tribesmen, recognizing that the explorers were not to be cowed, became friendly, and Lewis and Clark deemed it prudent to accept the proffered friendship of this powerful band, through whose country they must pass upon the return. During the two following days councils were held in the village council-house, with feasting, dancing, and much smoking and oratory. There was still, however, a disposition among some of the pugnacious young warriors to stop the expedition; and when leave was taken on the third day, the white captains informed them that if the Sioux wanted war with the new Great Father they could have it, but if peace, then they were to keep their young bucks at home and do as they were told. One of the friendly chiefs concluded to travel for a way upon one of the large boats, which had awakened his admiration; but after two days of navigation the motion of the craft in high waves caused him to beg to be put ashore, and he was sent off with presents and good advice.

On the eighth of October they reached the

Arikara country and went into camp near their chief village—"a pleasent evening—all things arranged both for Peace or War." Two French traders and several of their men were found here, and from them they obtained much information about the country and its savage inhabitants. These soon came crowding about the camp, filled with wonder at the newcomers and their outfit. The explorers strove hard to amuse the visitors. Lewis's air-gun was a source of great astonishment. But the dusky audience were particularly surprised at York, who did not lose this opportunity to display his phenomenal strength. The bulky negro told the Indians that he had once been a wild animal, but had been caught and tamed by his master. His acrobatic performances and facial contortions, combined with his feats of strength, succeeded in frightening the simple audience; indeed, Clark tells us he "made himself more turribal than we wished him to doe." The result was, however, that at the several villages which the expedition, amid much ceremonial, visited during the next few days, it was treated with marked civility.

An unpleasant event occurred on the thirteenth, when one of the men, J. Newman, was "confined for mutinous expression." That night they tried him "by 9 of his Peers—they did Centence him 75 Lashes & Disbanded [from] the party." He was, however, retained in custody until the arrival of spring.

Almost daily, now, they met hunting bands of Arikaras, by whom they were pleasantly entertained in exchange for the trinkets which were bestowed upon the delighted savages. One of the chiefs volunteered to accompany the explorers as far as their friends the Mandans, among whom Lewis and Clark desired to winter. The Sioux had expressed fondness for spirituous liquors; but the Arikaras were otherwise inclined, and when the white strangers offered it to them, as a makeweight for friendship, grew indignant. Clark writes that they "say we are no friends or we would not give them what makes them fools."

In the closing week of the month the Mandans were at last found in several riverside villages, and the Arikara chief, after hobnobbing with his friends, warmly bade farewell

to the agents of the Great Father, and paddled back to his own people. The principal Mandan village was on a bluff overlooking the Missouri, above the present Bismarck, N. Dak. Three miles below, "on the north side of the river in an extensive and well timbered bottom," the expedition settled itself for the winter within huts of cotton-wood logs surrounded by a stout palisade of the same timber, the establishment being named, "in honor of our friendly neighbors," Fort Mandan.[1]

In reaching this point, 1,600 miles above the mouth of the Missouri, they had occupied, including delays of every sort, one hundred and seventy-three days, thus making an average progress of a trifle over nine miles a day.

[1] On the north bank of the Missouri, probably seven or eight miles below Knife River, in what is now McLean County.

CHAPTER VIII

AT FORT MANDAN

During the five months spent at Fort Mandan the leaders were never free from care, for their position was one involving danger and the necessity for exercising both tact and firmness. At first the Mandans, while nominally friendly, quite naturally suspected the motives of these newcomers. With the French trappers and traders who either dwelt or frequently sojourned among them in behalf of the British fur companies, they were on intimate terms; and the Scotch, Irish, and English agents of these organizations were received upon their periodical visits with much consideration. The aims of these white men from the north were similar to their own—the preservation of the wilderness as a great hunting-ground, the only exploitation permissible being that which contributed to the market for pelts.

There were found among the Mandans several French and British representatives of the North West Company, just then in bitter rivalry with the Hudson's Bay Company, as well as some independent traders. Some of the Frenchmen had lived for years among these people, with native wives and half-breed children. During the winter numerous agents of the North West Company came on horseback overland from their log forts in the Assiniboin country to obtain news concerning the transfer of Louisiana, and to satisfy their curiosity concerning the expedition; if possible, to thwart it, for the American invasion was looked upon with aversion. During their long stay, in the course of which they frequently enjoyed the hospitality of the fort, these emissaries sought, while pretending friendship, to poison the minds of the Indians by spreading their own ill opinions of Lewis and Clark.[1] They circulated rumors that the

[1] In the journal of Charles MacKenzie, one of these traders, it is stated that Lewis and Clark always seemed glad to see their visitors from Canada, and treated them with kindly civility. But Lewis, though he "could speak fluently and learnedly on all subjects," had an "inveterate disposition against the British"; while Clark, "equally well informed," conversed pleasantly and "seemed to dislike giving offence unnecessarily."

coming of the American explorers was soon to be followed by an army of settlement and the consequent death of the fur trade—a prophecy more expeditiously realized than they themselves could possibly have foreseen.

It required the utmost exertions of the leaders of the expedition to overcome this subtle opposition. In the end, however, they succeeded. The chiefs were plainly told that the United States now owned the country, that loyalty to the Great Father at Washington was henceforth obligatory, and that they must no longer receive medals and flags from the British. At the same time, they were informed that the exploration had no other object than to acquaint the Great Father with his new children, and that upon its return arrangements would be made for sending traders into the country, with better goods and fairer treatment than had hitherto been obtained from the Canadian companies. Long before the close of the winter Lewis and Clark had gained a fair degree of popularity among these simple people, and the British agents were correspondingly discomfited.

The daily duties of the fortified camp were

largely under the conduct of Clark, who was the more practical woodsman of the two. Lewis took upon himself, chiefly, the diplomatic task of visiting and ceremoniously smoking pipes with the Indians in their several villages, in which journeys he was accompanied by one or two French interpreters and a body-guard of half a dozen of his own men—the latter, a precaution sometimes quite necessary to personal safety. In the neighborhood were several winter camps of Grosventres and other tribes, on friendly terms with the Mandans. Sometimes native bands were met, for whom no direct interpreters could be obtained. On such occasions the method of communication was roundabout: the Indians would address Sacajawea, the wife of Charbonneau; speaking no European tongue, she passed on the remark to her husband, a Frenchman; he in turn told the story to a mulatto, "who spoke bad French and worse English"; and the mulatto finally told the captains.

Such linguistic difficulties would have appalled most men; but in the course of the winter Lewis and Clark obtained in this man-

Observed time and distance of ☽ from Spica m. ✱, East, with Chronom.r & Sextant.

Time.	Distance ☽.
P. M. 8. 41. 42.	— 31. 35. ~.
" . 46 . 26 .	— " . 30 . 45.
" . 50 . 18 .	— " . 30 . 45.
" . 54 . 44 .	— " . 27 . 30.
" . 58 . 48 .	— " . 26 . ~.
9. 2 . ~ .	— " . 24 . ~.
" . 7 . 15 .	— " . 21 . ~.
" . 10 . 17 .	— " . 20 . 30.
" . 12 . 15 .	— " . 19 . ~.
" . 14 . 3 .	— " . 17 . 30.
" . 16 . 15 .	— " . 16 . 30.
" . 18 . 22 .	— " . 15 . 45.
" . 22 . 50 .	— " . 13 . ~.
" 30 . 33 .	— " . 6 . 15.

Thursday July 12th.

Observed Equal Altitudes of the ☉ with Sextant.

A. M. 7. 58. 59.	— P. M. 4. 12. 29.
8. ~ . 19.	— — " . 13. 48.
" . 1. 45.	— — " . 15. 14.

Altitude by Sextant at the time of the obt. 70° 42′ 45″.

Observed meridian Altd. of ☉ L. L. with Octant by the back observt. } 40° 53′ ~″

Latitude deduced from this observat. 39° 55′ 56″.

observed

A PAGE OF LEWIS'S JOURNAL.

Original now in possession of the American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia.

ner a mass of information concerning the characteristics, life, manners, and languages of the Indians which was quite remarkable.[1] The explorers have, however, left us in their daily records but little in the way of folk-lore. Clark's journal frequently contains such entries as: "Several little Indian aneckd^{ts} told me to day;" but he does not appear to have written them out—a neglect greatly to be deplored.

At one time there was an alarm that some prowling Sioux were about to attack the great Mandan village. Appealed to for aid, Clark at once crossed the river with twenty-three men, including interpreters, and skilfully and quickly flanked the town. No Sioux appeared, but the villagers were much impressed by this active military display, and henceforth more generally respected the Americans. At other times the natives were effectually aided in their buffalo-hunts, which

[1] President Jefferson had provided the explorers with printed vocabulary blanks, which they were to fill out. The recording of their words, a practise which they could not understand, greatly alarmed the natives, who feared that this meant some wicked design upon their country. Unfortunately, these vocabularies, although reaching Jefferson safely, were eventually lost.

were conducted either on horseback across the frozen plains or upon great ice-floes in the river—the latter an exceptionally dangerous proceeding.

The hospitality of the white men was sometimes severely taxed by the Indian visitors who thronged the neighborhood of the fort. The unsophisticated savages never tired of watching the white men at their daily tasks of wood-chopping, cooking, washing, repairing, and military drill. At the blacksmith shop, the bellows and the working of malleable iron were sources of much wonder. Lewis's air-gun, which could discharge forty shots from one load, awoke the chiefest astonishment, the bewildered spectators much dreading the magician who could bring such things to pass. A Grosventre chief told one of the North West agents, however, that his warriors could soon do for these palefaces, out on the upper plains—for "there are only two sensible men among them, the worker of iron and the mender of guns."

The strictest discipline was maintained at Fort Mandan. The natives frequently sought to test these regulations. Sometimes

Indian women who were in the fort overnight would unbar the gates to admit their friends, and twice some of the bucks scaled the palisade; but such practises were sternly prohibited and eventually stopped. The pertinacity of the natives was sometimes irksome to the last degree. "They usually," wrote Lewis in his journal, "pester us with their good company the ballance of the day after once being introduced to our apartment."

Having necessarily provided themselves with a large store of homely remedies and surgical appliances, and acquired the rudiments of medical and surgical practise, the two captains were called upon not only to treat their own people but to play the part of healers to the Indians, who, beset by various hurts and ailments, swarmed upon them not only at Fort Mandan, but throughout their entire route. The practise of this art proved to be of the utmost importance in the work of ingratiating themselves with the men of the wilderness.

Amid their constant labors and watchfulness, holidays were carefully observed by the often homesick explorers. Upon Christmas,

Clark records, they were "awakened before Day by a discharge of 3 platoons from the Party and the French, the men merrily Disposed, I give them all a little Taffia [brandy] and permitted 3 Cannon fired, at raising Our Flag, Some Men Went out to hunt & the others to Danceing and Continued untill 9 oClock P.M. when the frolick ended &c." For the time, they were free from their savage guests, who had been told that this being a "great medicine day" with the whites, their company was not wanted. New Year's was another gala-day. Two cannons were discharged, and some of the men went with the versatile York to the chief village and danced and otherwise performed, greatly to the delight of their brown neighbors.

The last six weeks of their stay were crowded with details. Towards the end of February, with the thermometer still in the neighborhood of 20° below zero, timber was cut for the making of pirogues, and preparations were commenced for the resumption of the long journey. The approach of spring brought the usual news of intertribal jealousies and consequent raids, especially on

the part of the restless Grosventres. A band of Sioux waylaid the hunters for the expedition and carried off two of their horses and considerable meat. Clark went upon a hunting trip as far as the Cannon Ball River. Sacajawea was delivered of a son (February 11th).

A few days after arriving at Fort Mandan, early in November, several of the French engagés, hired only for the trip thither, had returned down the river. Upon the seventh of April the barge and a canoe were despatched to St. Louis, with several soldiers (accompanying whom were the disgraced Reed and Newman), and Frenchmen charged with despatches and specimens to the President, as well as private letters. Among the articles thus forwarded were nine cages of living animals and birds, and several boxes containing rocks, soils, dried plants, stuffed zoological specimens, and articles of Indian dress, utensils, weapons, and ornaments. Many of these were long exhibited by Jefferson at his Monticello home, and others went to Peale's Museum in Philadelphia; some are still in existence.

At the same moment (four in the after-

noon) that the barge and canoe left for the lower country, Clark embarked with his party for the forward journey—Lewis, who craved the exercise, marching on shore to the first night's camp, four miles up-stream. The flotilla consisted of two large pirogues and six small canoes. Writes Clark: "This little fleet altho' not quite so respectable as those of Columbus or Capt. Cook, was still viewed by us with as much pleasure as those deservedly famed adventurers ever beheld theirs; and I dare say with quite as much anxiety for their safety and preservation. . . . I could not but esteem this moment of my departure as among the most happy of my life."

CHAPTER IX

FROM THE MANDANS TO THE SEA

A WEEK out from Fort Mandan (April 14th), the expedition reached the mouth of what the leaders named Charbonneau Creek. This was the highest point on the Missouri to which whites had thus far ascended, except that two Frenchmen, having lost their way, had proceeded a few miles farther up. All beyond was unknown to civilized men.

On the twenty-sixth the mouth of the Yellowstone was reached. Here, Lewis in his journal recommends that a trading post be established—eight hundred yards above the junction, on a high, well-timbered plain, overlooking a lake-like widening of the Missouri.

In these upper regions, where signs of coal were frequently seen and in places alkali whitened the ground like snow, "game is very abundant and gentle"; two hunters could,

Lewis thinks, "conveniently supply a regiment with provisions." Big-horns, monster elk, black and grizzly bears, antelopes, and great herds of buffaloes are daily met; they feast off beavers, Lewis thinking "the tale a most delicious morsel," and wondering greatly at the industry of these animals, which in some spots fell for their numerous dams many acres of timber as thick as a man's body; wolves increase, and the nimble coyotes begin to interest them.

The huge and savage grizzly was, in some respects, the most formidable obstacle encountered by the intrepid explorers; compared with these bulky, ferocious beasts, Indians occasioned small alarm. By the time the party were a month out from the Mandans, Lewis could write: "I find that the curiossity of our party is pretty well satisfyed with rispect to this anamal . . . [he] has staggered the resolution [of] several of them." A few days later came a disagreeable experience with a grizzly, in which he and seven of his men, as yet unable to locate the vulnerable parts, found it impossible to kill the creature save after a persistent fusillade from

their short-range rifles. "These bear," he says, "being so hard to die reather intimeadates us all; I must confess that I do not like the gentlemen and had reather fight two Indians than one bear."

Both Lewis and Clark were fond of hunting, and one or the other of them, more often Lewis, generally accompanied the hunters on shore; although, as in the lower reaches, the captain often wandered far from his party, collecting specimens or ascending elevations to examine the country. Lewis, when walking, was always armed both with his rifle and a halberd (or spontoon), which latter he found convenient as a weapon and as a staff. One day he fell upon the edge of a bluff whose surface had been rendered slippery through rain; but a dexterous use of the halberd saved him from a fall of ninety feet, that no doubt would have been fatal.

At another time he had just shot a fat buffalo and, his rifle as yet unloaded, was watching the animal die, when he was startled to find that a large grizzly had stealthily crept within twenty paces of him. There were no bushes within several miles, the nearest tree

was three hundred yards away, and the river-bank, eighty yards distant, sloped down to a height of not over three feet. At first he slowly retreated toward the tree, but the bear rushed at him with open mouth, at full speed. By turning on his track, the captain was able to reach the water, into which he ran until waist deep. Flourishing the halberd at the animal, the latter paused upon the shore, twenty paces distant, and suddenly showing alarm at this threatened attack, wheeled and ran away as fast as he could to the nearest woods.

But the enemy was not always thus easily frightened. On one occasion, an immense fellow so closely pursued two hunters who had poured eight bullets into his body that in their hasty retreat they cast aside their guns and pouches, and threw themselves into the river, over a perpendicular bank twenty feet high. The infuriated bear plunged in after them, only a few feet behind the second man, when fortunately another hunter on the shore shot the fellow through the head and killed him. Such sport lent zest to the journey, but soon gave rise to an order that the

men must, when in open country, act only on the defensive with this ferocious creature.

Once, at the dead of night, a large buffalo bull invaded their camp. Apparently attracted by the light, he swam the river, and climbing over their best pirogue—but fortunately not seriously injuring it—he charged the fires at full speed, passing within a few inches of the heads of the sleeping men, and made for Lewis and Clark's tent. Lewis's dog, his constant companion throughout the expedition, caused the burly beast to change his course, and he was off in a flash; all this, before the sentinel could arouse the camp, which was now in an uproar, the men rushing out with guns in hand, inquiring for the cause of the disturbance.

Owing to the mismanagement of the steersman, a squall of wind caused the pirogue to upset. Papers, instruments, books, medicines, ammunition, and articles of merchandise were wet and nearly lost—a narrow escape from a disaster which might well have meant the end of the expedition. A campfire once crept into a tree overhanging the captains' lodge. The guard awakened them,

and they removed the tent just in time to escape being crushed by the falling trunk. It would be easy to fill pages with experiences of this sort—with bears, buffaloes, wolves, tiger cats, and rattlesnakes, and with the forces of inanimate nature—which daily and nightly beset these hardy adventurers who, first of all white men, were breaking a transcontinental path westward to the Pacific.

"The succession of curious adventures," wrote Lewis, "wore the impression on my mind of inchantment, at sometimes for a moment I thought it might be a dream." But there were other trials which convinced him of the reality of his existence: "Our trio of pests still invade and obstruct us on all occasions, these are the Musquetoes eye knats and prickly pears, equal to any three curses that ever poor Egypt laiboured under, except the Mahometant yoke." The labor of navigation was of itself no holiday task. Oars could seldom be used against the heavy current, beset as it was with snags and sand-bars. Towing-ropes and setting-poles were now more frequently in use, the men finding the work excessively fatiguing. Clark, as master of

navigation, toiled lustily each day; and Lewis, when aboard the craft, encouraged his people by assisting; he assures us in his journal that he has "learned to push a tolerable good pole."

The third of June they came to where the river "split in two," and were greatly puzzled to know which way to go. To take the wrong branch, that did not lead toward the Columbia, would lose them the whole of the season, and probably so dishearten the party that the expedition might have to be abandoned. The utmost circumspection was necessary in order to arrive at the right decision. Both streams were carefully investigated by advance parties, being measured as to width, depth, and character and velocity of current. The men thought the north or right-hand fork the larger of the two, and therefore the main Missouri; but Lewis and Clark were satisfied that the other was the true channel, and by common consent this was chosen. On this, as on many other occasions, the joint judgment of the captains proved to be superior to that of their assistants. The right fork Lewis named Maria's River, after his young cousin,

Maria Wood. "It is true," he writes, "that the hue of the waters of this turbulent and troubled stream but illy comport with the pure celestial virtues of that lovely fair one; but on the other hand it is a noble river."

It now being necessary to relieve themselves of a part of their burden, a considerable quantity of provisions, salt, tools, and ammunition were secretly buried or "cached" at the forks; and their large pirogue was hidden upon an island, under a heap of brush. After several days in camp, during which they dried, or "jerked," a quantity of bear and elk meat, the expedition again set forth, and soon all were convinced that the proper path had been selected. On the thirteenth, Lewis, tramping on ahead, with a pack upon his back, reached the Great Falls of the Missouri. Here he selected a portage trail for Clark, who arrived three days later with the boats. Above the falls are many cascades, involving a toilsome land journey of eighteen miles; but this was successfully accomplished, although it was the fifteenth of July before the explorers could again start upon their river journey, this time in new "dugout" canoes.

The Three Forks

Upon the twenty-fifth, Clark, now in advance with the flotilla, arrived at the point where the Missouri is again divided, this time into three forks of nearly equal size. Puzzled to know which was the better path, he finally selected the southwest stream, as apparently having more water and bearing more closely to the west. Leaving a note for Lewis attached to a conspicuously placed pole at the junction, Clark ascended the southwest river for twenty-five miles on foot; but returned because Charbonneau gave out and all of the party were suffering from excessive heat and lack of good drinking water, for the roily fluid of the Missouri is unfitted for this purpose.

Upon Lewis's arrival, the two leaders carefully examined the several forks, and after a delay of five days—during which Clark was ill with a high fever "& akeing in all my bones"—fortunately decided to continue the ascent of the southwest stream; this they called Jefferson River, "in honor of that illustrious personage Thomas Jefferson, the author of our Enterprise." The middle fork was styled Madison, after the secretary

of state, and the southeast Gallatin, after the secretary of the treasury; rivers had already been named by the expedition for the secretaries of war and the navy.

It was now of the utmost importance that either Snake or Shoshoni Indians should be found, as this tribe was then inhabiting the country about the sources of the Missouri. Their aid was essential in both pointing out the overmountain path to the navigable reaches of the Columbia and in furnishing horses for the transport of the men and their goods. It was at this point that Sacajawea was expected to prove most useful. Five years previous she had been taken prisoner from a Shoshoni encampment not far above the Three Forks of the Missouri, and carried by her captors, the Minitarees, to the lower Missouri, where, gaining her freedom, she became united to the interpreter Charbonneau, who frequently maltreated her. This man had been employed chiefly because of his squaw, who was to serve as interpreter to the Snakes and Shoshoni and in some measure as guide to their country. We have already seen that she had proved of value to the party

as an interpreter, long before reaching the upper waters, and on several occasions she had been of considerable service in the exigencies of camp life. The only member of the expedition who had previously been upon the upper reaches of the Missouri, her memory was frequently appealed to with relation to geographical questions—sometimes successfully, although often her intellect appeared too dull to have comprehended what she saw during her descent of the river. In alluding to their arrival at the scene of her captivity, Lewis writes: "I cannot discover that she shews any immotation of sorrow in recollecting this event, or of joy in being again restored to her native country; if she has enough to eat and a few trinkets to wear I believe she would be perfectly content anywhere."

Lofty mountains scantily clad with pitch-pine soon began to approach closely to the river, and shallows and rapids increased the difficulties of navigation, rendering line and pole now the only means of stemming the fierce, boiling current; riffles succeeded each other every three or four hundred yards, and the men were much of the time wading along

the bush-strewn shore, over slippery rocks, wet to the skin, and weak from the extreme labor of pushing and hauling under such untoward circumstances. It became evident that it would not be long before the waterway must be abandoned and the mountain portage to the Columbia be undertaken. While Clark remained in charge of the flotilla, Lewis pushed ahead on foot with the hunters, hoping to find a band of Indians; yet in his eager quest ever filling the pages of his journal with careful notes upon the natural history of the region.

The land party, each man carrying his pack on his back, also had their trials. On the uplands, thorns of prickly pear filled their moccasins and rendered walking a painful exercise, while on the river-bottoms they were harassed by the dense brush of the pulpy-leaved thorn. The hunters still continued to kill elk, bear, antelopes, beaver, and now and then a panther, and occasionally to catch fish, but as a whole the meat supply was now running low.

One afternoon, Lewis, unaccompanied, and frequently climbing the hills for views, worked

ahead of his party, and though he fired his gun and whooped, his companions, two miles below, could not hear him; he was therefore obliged to spend the night alone. Killing a duck and cooking it by his large fire, he made a bed of willow-boughs and "amused myself in combatting the musquetoes for the ballance of the evening . . . should have had a comfortable nights lodge but for the musquetoes which infested me all night." The running of a grizzly near his fire once awakened him, causing him sharply to realize the danger of the wilderness. In the morning, his companions, concerned for his safety, joined him at breakfast.

On the fourth of August, Lewis came to where the Jefferson forks into three streams. At first puzzled to know which to take, he decided to follow the middle one, and left the usual note to Clark on a pole at the junction. But when Clark arrived with his boats there was no pole, for being green the beavers had carried it off; whereupon he ascended the northwest fork, not being able to judge so well as Lewis, who had the advantage of hill-top views. But the difficulties of passage up this

rapid stream were so great, that after a day's rough travel Clark returned to the forks, there finding Lewis awaiting him. Naming the northwest fork Wisdom, and the southeast Philanthropy—virtues which they ascribed to President Jefferson—they regarded the middle stream as the Jefferson, and continued its ascent. Lewis kept on his way afoot, while Clark —suffering from "the rageing fury of a tumer on my anckle musle"—followed with the craft.

The river now passed for much of the way under perpendicular cliffs of rocks, infested by rattlesnakes. The mountains were not high, yet covered with snow, showing that the altitude was great, although the ascent had been scarcely perceptible. "I do not believe," writes Lewis, "that the world can furnish an[other] example of a river runing to the extent which the Missouri and Jefferson rivers do through such mountainous country and at the same time so navigable as they are."

On the eleventh, a day above the now celebrated Beaver's Head cliff—with the river only twelve yards wide, and often barred by beaver dams—the Indian trail, which he had

been following for many days, had thinned out and soon vanished. Lewis, walking ahead in search of the road, finally saw a Shoshoni warrior on horseback. The savage stood still, allowing the captain to approach within a hundred paces, and show his white skin—the faces and hands of the explorers were now as dark as those of Indians—and make signs of peace; but the approach of Drouillard and Shields frightened the horseman, and he galloped off.

The following day Lewis reached the source of the Missouri—a spring of ice-cold water "issuing from the base of a low mountain or hill." Two miles below this, "McNeal had exultingly stood with a foot on each side of this little rivulet and thanked his god that he had lived to bestride the mighty & heretofore deemed endless Missouri." A little later in the day, the captain crossed the divide and reached "a handsome bold runing Creek of cold Clear water here I first tasted the water of the great Columbia river"; this was the Lemhi, an upper tributary of the Columbia.

Next day (August 13th) Lewis discovered

a party of squaws whom he made friendly with presents of beads, moccasin awls, pewter looking-glasses, and paint. They conducted him to their camp, two miles farther down the Lemhi, where the captain was introduced to sixty warriors, who, on hearing the tale of the exultant women, affectionately embraced Lewis and his party—"we wer all carressed and besmeared with their grease and paint till I was heartily tired of the national hug."

After a day and night of feasting and dancing, the Indians agreed to furnish horses for the transport, from their large herds grazing near by; and in the morning a considerable party of young men started out with their new friends to meet Clark at the head of navigation. Upon arriving at the place, on the fourteenth, Clark was not to be seen, whereupon the savages at once suspected treachery. It required courage and audacious diplomacy on Lewis's part to prevent them from either running away or killing the whites. Three days later, Clark—delayed by the great toil of the ascent and the grumbling of his men—appeared and relieved the situation, which was becoming serious. With him were Charbon-

neau and the squaw, a welcome event, for hitherto all communication between Lewis and his hosts had been by means of the universal sign language of the Western tribes. Sacajawea could not only serve as interpreter and communicate fully the objects which brought the adventurous white men, but to the great joy of all concerned she proved to be the long-lost sister of Cameawhait, the young head chief accompanying the horsemen. Lewis says: "The meeting of those people was really affecting, particularly between Sah-cah-gar-we-ah and an Indian woman, who had been taken prisoner at the same time with her and who had afterwards escaped from the Minnetares and rejoined her nation."

Council followed council, in the deliberate manner of the Indians, so that it was several days before negotiations for horses could be concluded; but in the end the Shoshoni gave abundant promise of assistance. While Clark pushed forward with eleven men to negotiate for animals at the principal village, to examine the Lemhi, and ascertain its navigable possibilities, also to select timber for dugout canoes, Lewis arranged to cache the boats and

the supplies needed for the return trip, and to bring on the party and their necessary baggage to the first Shoshoni camp.

Bargaining with the Indians was attended by many uncertainties. It was soon evident that the subordinate chiefs were jealous of the attentions naturally paid to Cameawhait, and must be handled cautiously. The prices demanded for the horses were exorbitant; in acquiring the twenty-nine animals finally secured, the party were almost bereft of their available stock of trading materials—knives, pistols, ammunition, clothing, etc. The savages were fickle in their friendship; sometimes, like a herd of sheep, being overcome by causeless panic in their dealings with the mysterious strangers, and ready to desert them in the mountain passes. Great firmness and patience, and reliance in the good faith of Cameawhait, to whose practical sense the captains never appealed in vain, in the end won, and the reluctant Indians were kept to their promise to see the explorers over the divide.

The Lemhi was soon abandoned by Clark as unsuitable for their purpose. They thereupon struck off to the northward, seeking

"the great river which lay in the plains beyond the mountains." The route taken was over the heavily timbered Bitterroot Mountains, which are slashed by deep gorges, down which rush torrential streams. This formidable region, "a perfect maze of bewildering ridges," was then and still is traversed by the Lolo or Northern Nez Percé trail, followed from time immemorial by Indians traveling between the upper waters of the Missouri and those of the Columbia. With many convolutions, rendered necessary by the uneven ground, this primitive highway follows the watershed between the north fork and the middle or Lachsa fork of the Clearwater River, and eventually reaches the bottoms of the Weippe Weeipe.

Having left the region of game, the party were soon pressed for provisions, and were obliged to kill several of their horses for food. Blinding snowstorms in mid-September greatly impeded progress; the sides of the mountains were steep and rocky, with insecure foothold, especially during the frequent showers of sleet; the nights were cold, raw, and often wet; great areas strewn with fallen

timber sometimes appeared almost impassable barriers; and not infrequently the rude path was dangerously near the edges of steep precipices, from which men or horses were in constant fear of being dashed to pieces. Thus they toiled on, through the dense and gloomy forests of pine, sometimes scaling steep ridges, at others descending rocky slopes at the peril of their lives, or threading the thick timber of marshy bottoms. Some of their horses fell through exhaustion, to be at once used as food; and the men themselves were so disheartened that Clark found it necessary to forge ahead with a party of hunters to find level country and game, by way of "reviving ther sperits."

As they descended the mountains, the heat increased, but on the twenty-second they welcomed the Weippe plain, where a band of Chopunnish Indians—chief traders upon the Clearwater branch of the Columbia system—received them with cautious ceremony. Lewis writes: "The pleasure I now felt in having tryumphed over the rockey Mountains and decending once more to a level and fertile country where there was every rational hope

of finding a comfortable subsistence for myself and party can be more readily conceived than expressed."

At the confluence of the Clearwater with its north fork the expedition went into camp, Lewis and most of the men being "weakened and much reduced in flesh as well as Strength." Clark, in addition to superintending the manufacture of five canoes—largely by the Indian method of burning them out of solid trunks of trees—busily ministered to his companions, giving them "rushes Pills" and other strong remedies of the day. The weather was hot, in this closing week of September, and there was little nourishing food to be had—chiefly fish and roots, which latter were not to be indulged in freely; nevertheless, the sick recovered within a few days.

Caching their saddles and much of their ammunition, they branded the horses—now thirty-eight in number—which they left in charge of a friendly chief, and upon the seventh of October launched their canoes for the descent to the Pacific. Rapids and islands were now numerous, and Indian summer fishing villages frequently appeared. The na-

tives of the Columbia Valley proved to be of an inferior type, living chiefly on fish and roots—a mild and friendly people, some of whom, in the lower reaches, had met white traders upon the seacoast; while in other camps the appearance of the explorers caused great consternation, the impression being that such strange visitors must have descended from the clouds.

Fish not always agreeing with the adventurers, dogs were almost daily purchased for food, Clark alone failing to relish this animal. Now and then they were able to purchase berries, but further than roots, fish, dog meat, and berries, it was impossible to vary their diet during the entire descent. The squalid and flea-ridden natives, all busily engaged in catching and drying fish for winter consumption, crowded to see the newcomers, eager to trade their fish, and even wood for cooking with, for bits of ribbon and other knick-knacks, and losing no opportunity adroitly to pilfer from the camp.

On several occasions, despite the impossibility of communicating save by signs, a conspiracy to kill them was detected, and only

GRANT'S CASTLE, ON COLUMBIA RIVER.

Passed by Lewis and Clark in October, 1805.

checkmated by a show of force. This, however, required skilful diplomacy, for the explorers were under the necessity of returning by the same route, and it was important to keep on good terms with these slippery fellows. The Frenchmen therefore frequently played their violins and danced for the amusement of the wondering tribesmen, while the Kentuckians and Virginians sang, York performed his feats of strength and agility, and Lewis's air-gun gave them an example of the sort of magic in which the white men dealt.

After safely braving the formidable Short Narrows of the Columbia—"swelling, boiling & whorling in every direction"—they passed camps of savages who were more familiar with white men, many of them being clad in civilized clothing obtained from the coast traders; if possible, these were even more tricky than their fellows above, and like them, dwelt in mortal fear of the Snakes and Shoshoni whom Lewis and Clark had met upon the sources of the river.

On the first of November they reached Pacific tide-water, and soon were amid rich

bottom-lands and abundant elk, deer, and other game, among which were sea-otters; and dense fogs frequently veiled the pleasing landscape. On the fourth, the natives at one village came in state to see them, tricked out in scarlet and blue blankets, sailor-jackets, overalls, shirts, and hats, in addition to their usual costume—assuming, disagreeable, thievish fellows, freely laying their hands on small things about the camp, but treated by the diplomatic explorers "with every attention & friendship." Three days later (the 7th) breakers could be heard during a storm, and Clark exultantly writes: "Great joy in camp we are in view of the Ocian." The river was here from five to seven miles wide, with bold, rocky shores, and "The Seas roled and tossed the Canoes in such a manner this evening that Several of our party were Sea sick."

In the midst of a pelting rainstorm of ten days' duration, and such violent waves that all hands were hard worked in preventing their slender craft from being crushed upon the rocky and drift-strewn beach, they were able to make but slow progress toward the seashore. "It would be distressing to See

our Situation," Clark's journal records, "all wet and colde our bedding also wet, (and the robes of the party which compose half the bedding is rotten and we are not in a Situation to supply their places) . . . Fortunately for us our men are healthy."

Finally, after being weather-bound for six days in "a dismal niche scercely largely to contain us, our baggage half a mile from us," and canoes weighted down with stones to prevent their dashing against the rocks, the wind lulled, they proceeded (November 15th) around a blustery point, and there found a "butifull Sand beech thro which runs a Small river from the hills."

The continent had at last been spanned by American explorers.

CHAPTER X

AT FORT CLATSOP, AND THE RETURN

The expedition had now reached what is at present called Baker's Bay, discovered by Vancouver in 1792. Personally he did not find the Columbia, which Gray had made known to him in that year; later in the season, however, one of Vancouver's officers, Broughton, ascended the stream to the Cascades, and took possession of the country for Great Britain. There was a strong, sentimental desire on the part of Lewis and Clark's men to winter on the actual shore of "this emence Ocian," and both of the leaders headed side expeditions to find a favorable camp. After much searching, a site was selected upon Young's Bay, and thither the party removed during the first week of December. A group of log houses protected by a palisade were erected, the establishment be-

ing called Fort Clatsop—from the local tribe of Chinook Indians who inhabited the shore. The remains of the cantonment were discernible sixty years after its construction.

Throughout the long and tiresome winter each man in this hardy little band had his regular round of duties. In addition to negotiations for food and the general control of the camp, both Lewis and Clark were much occupied with writing in their voluminous separate journals of the language, manners, customs, religion, games, handiwork, and other characteristics of the savages, who daily thronged their little fortress, and to whose villages they frequently paid complimentary visits. The men were not only engaged in their daily tasks of hunting, cooking, preparing firewood, washing, mending, and preserving some semblance of order among the rapacious and often offensive native visitors, but they dressed skins for clothing, and in every possible way made preparations for the return trip. Henceforth the explorers were dressed almost wholly in leather. During two months a detail was engaged in laboriously boiling salt from sea-water, upon a

point thirty-five miles distant, the product being twenty gallons. Fleas were so numerous at both camps as to deprive the men of half their sleep; the first duty of each day was to rid blankets and clothing of these uncomfortable neighbors, with which all the Indians of the Columbia River were swarming.

Game was scarce, and the natives had but small stores of fish that could be drawn upon. Dogs were not infrequently bought for food, Lewis thinking their flesh equal to beaver, but Clark abhorring it. Lewis, a born philosopher, in writing in his journal of this fact, says: "I have learned to think that if the chord be sufficiently strong, which binds the soul and boddy together, it does not so much matter about the materials which compose it." Not seldom the explorers were at short commons for provender, although most of the party had become expert riflemen, and Drouillard in particular was accounted one of the best hunters of his day. Lewis writes (January 29th): "A keen appetite supplys in a great degree the want of more luxurious sauses or dishes, and still renders my ordinary

meals not uninteresting to me, for I find myself sometimes enquiring of the cook whether dinner or breakfast is ready." On one occasion, he humorously records "an excellent supper it consisted of a marrowbone a piece and a brisket of boiled Elk that had the appearance of a little fat on it—this for Fort Clatsop is living in high stile." Among their grievances soon came to be the scarcity of tobacco; indeed, by the first of March it had been wholly consumed—yet of the thirty-seven composing the party, thirty smoked, and were thereafter obliged to use the bark of the crab-tree as a substitute.

The bay was from April to October an important center of the fur-trade, the many tribes of the Salish, Chinook, and Yakon families resorting here not only for meeting the English and American coast traders, who came in vessels, but for fishing and hunting. Lewis estimated that thirty thousand pounds of pounded salmon were annually brought by the natives to this place, either for disposal to the whites or to representatives of other tribes. Although our explorers met none of these traders, the influence of the

latter was evident on every hand—in the dress, ornaments, and weapons of the Chinooks, and in the "maney blackguard phrases" which they had acquired from the irreverent sea-dogs; but, curiously enough, no liquor was in use among them.

The avaricious Chinooks were exceedingly fond of barter, and although friendly, charged liberally for services rendered or food supplied. Their principal circulating medium was blue and white beads, for which "they will dispose [of] any article they possess." Lewis says: "There is a trade continually carryed on by the natives of the river each trading some article or other with their neighbors above and below them; and thus articles which are vended by the whites at the entrance of the river, find their way to the most distant nations enhabiting its waters."

Christmas was ushered in with "the discharge of the fire arm[s] of all our party. . . . Shouts and a song which the whole party joined in under our windows"; although the customary yule-feast was impracticable, for there was nothing "either to raise our Sperits

or even gratify our appetites." But on the evening of December 30th the fortification was at last complete, and New Year's day (1806) was fittingly noticed, notwithstanding the condition of the larder was but slightly bettered. The differences in temperament and education between Lewis, who had a poetic and sentimental turn of mind and elaborated his thoughts upon paper, and Clark, who expressed himself abruptly and with slight show of sentiment, are well illustrated by their respective journal entries upon this interesting occasion :

> *Lewis :* This morning I was awoke at an early hour by the discharge of a volley of small arms, which were fired by our party in front of our quarters to usher in the new year; this was the only mark of rispect which we had it in our power to pay this celebrated day. our repast of this day tho' better than that of Christmass, consisted principally in the anticipation of the 1st day of January, 1807, when in the bosom of our friends we hope to participate in the mirth and hilarity of the day, and when with the zest given by the recollection of the present, we shall completely, both mentally and corporally, enjoy the repast

> which the hand of civilization has prepared for us. at present we were content with eating our boiled Elk and wappetoe [roots], and solacing our thirst with our only beverage *pure water*.
>
> *Clark:* This morning at Day we wer Saluted from the party without, wishing us a "hapy new Year" a Shout and discharge of their arms.

By the first of March the explorers began to be anxious to return. Upon the lofty mountain barrier lying between them and the Missouri snow lingers into early summer, and they were quite aware that the passage could not be made until June. But the difficulty of obtaining proper food was a serious one upon the coast. The Chinooks—"a rascally, thieving set"—themselves none too well fed, charged extravagantly for their small supplies of dogs, roots, and dried fish; and the common store of small merchandise available for trading was now reduced to two handkerchiefs full, almost the sole dependence of the explorers for the purchase of horses and subsistence on the long overmountain trip—there being, in addition, some blankets, a few old clothes, and a uniform artillery coat and hat. The

hope of meeting coast traders from whom they might, through their general letter of credit from President Jefferson,[1] obtain merchandise for Indian trade was by this time shattered; and many of the men were now unwell from lack of suitable nourishment. An early departure from the coast was therefore decided upon, with the intention of tarrying on the upper waters of the river, where their horses had been left in charge of the Indians.

After giving to the natives lists of the names of the party, to which were appended statements of their feat in crossing the continent and verbal instructions to deliver these papers to the first traders arriving at the river, the expedition left upon the twenty-third of March. Heavy winds, excessive rains, and high tides combined to render difficult the early stages of their canoe journey. Higher

[1] The original of this letter, together with many other MSS. connected with the expedition, is now the property of Mrs. Julia Clark Voorhis, of New York city, who obtained them by gift and inheritance through her father, George Rogers Hancock Clark, a son of the explorer. The autograph copy of the letter of credit, retained by Jefferson, is among the Jefferson Papers in the State Department at Washington.

up, the now swollen rapids necessitated frequent portaging, whereas in the descent these had freely been shot. Horses were required for this work, the purchase of which from the Indians—present in large numbers fishing for salmon, and sometimes having considerable herds—soon exhausted the remaining stock of trading material.

Food had also to be bought, with the rare exceptions when native chiefs freely entertained their visitors; but soon it became impossible to offer any equivalent for horses, dogs, and sometimes fuel—for long stretches of the river-banks were treeless—save the practise of medicine. The services of the two captains as physicians and surgeons were at once in much demand. Hordes of weak-eyed, rheumatic, and bronchitic patients from a wide belt of country almost daily sought the great white medicine men; and both were often busied from morning till night in earnestly seeking to alleviate, with the simple remedies at command, the miseries of their squalid patients.

In this they were sufficiently successful for the spread of their reputation, for the Indians

were victims chiefly of the ills and accidents incident to an outdoor life; and for just such practise the two leaders had fitted themselves by study and long experience. Lewis tells us that their eye-water was in especial demand, a small vial being the price for "a very eligant grey mare." He writes: "In our present situation I think it pardonable to continue this deseption for they will not give us any provision without compensation in merchandize and our stock is now reduced to a mere handfull. we take care to give them no article which can possibly injure them. . . . I sincerely wish it was in our power to give relief of these poor aff[l]icted wretches."

At the mouth of Walla Walla River the explorers disposed of their now useless canoes to the Indians for beads and horses—the former to trade with—and traveled overland through East Washington by a well-worn trail, until reaching the Clearwater, whose bank they thenceforth ascended. Here they were greeted by their friends of the preceding autumn, the Nez Percés, and on the eighth of May reached the village of chief Twisted

Hair, who had essayed to winter their horses and care for their saddles. Many of the animals had strayed afar, while others bore evidence of hard treatment by the rough-riding Indian hunters who had freely used them in the chase; but eventually all were rounded up and brought into fair condition by the generous pasturage of the neighborhood.

The snow-clad peaks of the Rockies were now in view from the high plains, but crossing would be impossible for several weeks to come. On the fourteenth a permanent camp was formed on the Clearwater, not far from the eastern boundary of the present Nez Percé Indian Reservation, in Idaho. The local chief, Broken Arm, gave them firewood, several fat young horses for food, and lodges for the use of the captains. "It is," says Lewis, "the only act which deserves the appellation of hospitallity which we have witnessed in this quarter."

On their part, the captains, making a brave show of welcome, despite sentiments of disgust at the unclean savages, would frequently entertain their visitors with exhibitions of magnetism; and their spy-glass, compass,

watch, and air-gun were novel and incomprehensible wonders. The Indians were particularly impressed by the white men's ability to kill grizzlies, just then the chief meat of the latter; the natives themselves could conquer these beasts only upon the open plains, by running them down on horseback and shooting arrows into them.

On the tenth of June a second move was made toward the mountains, ten miles farther up, on the edge of Weippe prairie. The Indians still warned them not to attempt the crossing; but game was scarce, the trading material had again been reduced to a handful, despite the ingenuity of the men in fashioning trinkets out of bits of wire and ribbon, and the captains were concerned lest they might not reach home by winter. "We have not any time to delay," writes Lewis, "if the calculation is to reach the United States this season; this I am determined to accomplish if within the compass of human power."

At last, on the fifteenth, the final start was made. It was a slow, laborious march. The timber was dense, and much of it fallen; the

bared roads upon the steep hillsides were so slippery from recent rains that the horses frequently fell; and in ravines the snow lay eight and ten feet deep. "Winter with all its rigors," records Lewis; "the air was cold, my hands and feet were benumbed." After several days of rare hardship they were obliged to return discomfited to the Weippe flats—their first and only defeat.

Starting out afresh with better guides, solemnly pledged to take them to the Falls of the Missouri, they found that meanwhile the snow had suddenly subsided four feet, and the path was now discovered more easily. By the first of July, after several narrow escapes from disaster, the expedition was at the mouth of Travelers' Rest Creek, the converging of the mountain trails. Here they arranged to divide their party, in an endeavor to ascertain whether a better road to the Missouri might not be found than that chosen in the ascent of the previous year; for the principal object of the expedition was to discover the most practicable transcontinental route.

Lewis, with a special detail, was—to use his own words—"to go with a small party

by the most direct rout to the falls of the Missouri, there to leave Thompson McNeal and Goodrich to prepare carriages and geer for the purpose of transporting our canoes and baggage over the portage, and myself and six volunteers to ascend Maria's river with a view to explore the country and ascertain whether any branch of that river lie as far north as Lat^{d}. 50. and again return and join the party who are to decend the Missouri, at the entrance of Maria's river."

Clark agreed to take the others to the head of Jefferson's River, where, in the ascent, they had cached sundry articles and left their canoes; Sergeant Ordway and nine men were to take the canoes down to the Falls of the Missouri, there to meet McNeal and Goodrich, who would be ready to assist them over the long portage and in opening the caches at its foot. Clark and the remaining ten, among whom were Charbonneau and York, proposed to proceed thence to the Yellowstone River, build canoes, and descend it to the Missouri, where they were to await Lewis's arrival. It was planned to send Sergeant Pryor and two

others of Clark's party overland from the Yellowstone to the Mandans; thence to the British posts on the Assiniboin, with a letter to the trader Haney, whom they wished to induce several Sioux chiefs to join Lewis and Clark upon the Missouri, and accompany them to visit the new Great Father in Washington. On the third, the two friends took an affecting leave of each other. "I could not avoid feeling much concern on this occasion," Lewis writes in his diary, "although I hoped this seperation was only momentary."

After a cold, wet trip, in which, however, there was a bountiful supply of game—one of the buffalo herds numbering ten thousand, which in this mating season kept up "one continual roar" of bellowing—Lewis arrived at the falls on the thirteenth, six days after crossing the continental divide. There he found that much of the material in the caches had been destroyed by moisture. Leaving the portage party, the captain descended to the mouth of Maria's River, which he reached in two days. Ascending this stream, he had several thrilling experiences with grizzlies, was much tortured with mosquitoes, saw im-

mense flocks and herds of game, and frequently lost horses at the hands of prowling Minitarees—"a vicious lawless and reather an abandoned set of wretches."

On the twenty-sixth, while Lewis and his companions were exploring a branch of Maria's River—the main party were awaiting them at the forks—they fell in with a band of mounted Minitarees in charge of a herd of some thirty horses. The whites passed the night in the Indian camp, but toward morning were attacked by their hosts, who captured their guns and tried to run off their horses. In the scuffle, Reuben Fields stabbed one of the savages to the heart—the only Indian killed by the expedition—and there was an ineffectual exchange of shots. While some of Lewis's horses were stolen, the tribesmen chanced to leave better ones, with which the party made a hasty retreat to their waiting comrades, sixty-three miles away. Lewis ordered on this forced march that "the bridles of the horses should be tied together and we would stand and defend them, or sell our lives as dear as we could." Fortunately, however, the Indians were quite as

alarmed as they, and gave no chase. This affair long rankled in the hearts of the revengeful Minitarees and their Blackfeet relatives, and was the cause of many later attacks by them upon white men.

Now reunited, Lewis's party continued the descent of the Missouri in a pirogue and five small canoes, hurrying as fast as might be, from fear of attack by the incensed natives. The river was high, and thick with mud freshly washed down from the ravines by heavy rains, which prevailed for several days. The swift current often hurled their craft upon the numerous snags which choked the stream, and on several such occasions some of the party had narrow escapes from drowning. But "game is so abundant and gentle that we kill it when we please."

August seventh they reached the mouth of the Yellowstone. Here was found a note informing them that Clark, tormented by mosquitoes and finding no buffaloes at this point, had departed thence a week before. On the eleventh, while Lewis was hunting elk, he was accidentally wounded in the left thigh by a bullet from Cruzatte's gun, and

suffered intense pain. Fortunately, the following day they overtook Clark, who dressed the wound and made his friend as comfortable as possible, although for nearly a month to come Lewis was to be incapacitated for active duty, even for the writing of his journal.

On his part, Clark had had a successful although hazardous expedition. On the eighth of July he arrived at the head of Jefferson River, where the cache was opened, new canoes were made and launched, and the party descended to the mouth of Gallatin's River. Here, Clark and his Yellowstone detachment parted from the others, who were instructed to join Lewis at the Forks of the Missouri. With the captain went Charbonneau and Sacajawea with their child, Sergeant Pryor, York, and seven others, and a herd of forty-nine horses and a colt. "The indian woman who has been of great service to me as a pilot through this country," continued to be an important member of the party.

Beaver dams so impeded their travel on the overflowed river-bottoms that it was necessary to resort to the highlands. The hunt-

ers were sometimes chased, even on horseback, by ferocious grizzlies. On the night of the twentieth, twenty-four of their horses, while grazing, were stolen by Indians, whose fires they could see upon the hilltops, signals of the white men's approach. Gibson was severely injured by being thrown from his mount, and for a long time had to be carried on a horse-litter. Such are specimens of the adventures which fill Clark's copious note-book—all told in the most matter-of-fact manner, but suggestive of a perilous undertaking whose conduct daily required courage, diplomacy, and executive ability in a high degree.

July twenty-fourth, when some two or three days above the Big Horn River, two canoes were made and launched, being lashed together side by side. Upon this craft most of the party embarked, two or three proceeding by land in care of the horses. With these they had much trouble on account of frequent buffalo herds, which the Indian ponies persisted in circling, as was the custom of the savage hunters who had trained them. Buffaloes were so numerous that sometimes the

navigators were obliged to land in order to allow great herds to cross the stream—the burly beasts frequently drowning or miring amid the wild, rushing scramble of their fellows. Clark writes: "For me to mention or give an estimate of the differant Species of wild animals on this river particularly Buffalow, Elk Antelopes & Wolves would be increditable. I shall therefore be silent on the subject further." Bighorn sheep, deer, and antelopes were frequently killed by the party for their skins, from which the men made clothing.

As already stated, it had been the intention of Clark to send three of his men, with a dozen horses, to meet Haney on the Assiniboin; but for several reasons this proved impracticable and the project was abandoned. The third of August he reached the Missouri, but mosquitoes and a local deficiency of game caused him to drop below and await Lewis on more favorable ground. We have seen that nine days after, "Capt Lewis hove in Sight with the party which went by way of the Missouri as well as that which accompanied him from Travellers rest on Clarks river."

Two days later (the 14th) the reunited expedition reached the principal villages of the Mandans, where they were cordially welcomed as old friends. John Colter, one of their best hunters, was now released from duty, as with two friends whom he met there he wished to return upon a prolonged trapping expedition to the upper waters of the Missouri. Colter, a man with a remarkable history as an explorer, remained in the mountains until the spring of 1810, and had many exciting experiences with the Indians. Among other points to his credit, he is recognized as the first white discoverer of what is now Yellowstone National Park. Charbonneau and Sacajawea were also discharged, and said good-by to their old-time comrades. They settled among the Mandans, to them being given the blacksmith tools of the expedition, with instructions to use these in the service of the natives.

In the place of their discharged servants, Lewis and Clark took with them Big White Chief, one of the prominent Mandan leaders, together with his squaw and son, and René Jussaume, an interpreter, with his squaw and

two children. This party eventually visited Washington and other Eastern cities, carrying back to their wilderness lodges strange tales of the wonders of civilization. The Minitarees, Arikaras, and Sioux, suspicious of the whites, could not be prevailed on to send delegates to the Great Father.

The thirtieth of August was memorable for an attempt on the part of the Teton Indians to prevent the descent. After a show of force, during which Lewis hobbled out on his crutches, the savages calmed down, and the affair ended in "a big smoke," with the customary ceremonials.

At the mouth of the Vermilion (September 3d) they met a trader named Aird, who gave them not only needed supplies of tobacco and flour, but news of the fatal Burr-Hamilton duel, and tarried long at their camp-fire to discuss other political and social gossip of the past two and a half years. Three days later, a little above the "Petite River de Secoux," was encountered one of the boats belonging to their old friend August Chouteau, a prominent St. Louis fur-trader, bound for River Jacque to trade with the Yanktons. From its master

they purchased "a gallon of whiskey . . . and gave to each man of the party a dram which is the first spiritious licquor which has been tasted by any of them since the 4 of July 1805. several of the party exchanged leather for linen Shirts and beaver for corse hats." On parting company, Chouteau's man gaily saluted them with two shots from the swivel on his prow, the captains repaying the compliment in kind.

By the ninth, at the River Platte, which was being entered by several French trading boats, "My worthy friend Cap. Lewis has entirely recovered his wounds are heeled up and he can walk and even run." The next day they heard of Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike's expedition to the Red and Arkansas Rivers. Not long after, Lewis's old army friend Captain McClellan was met on a trading expedition to Santa Fé. Thus daily were they now greeted by traders or explorers going up the great waterway; for in their long absence a flood of immigration had set in towards the rapidly unfolding West, and was pouring far into the new lands of the Louisiana Purchase. The bronzed and tattered adventurers, fresh

from their great exploit, were welcomed as men long thought by their fellow citizens to have been lost; supplies poured in upon them, and from each fraternal meeting on the river or in camp upon the shore they were sent on their way with songs and applauding cheers.

Making a daily progress on the rapid current of from forty to seventy-five miles, they quickly approached their long-sought destination. At Charette (September 20th) Clark reports that "every person, both French and americans seem to express great pleasure at our return, and acknowledged themselves much astonished in seeing us return. they informed us that we were supposed to have been lost long since, and were entirely given out by every person &c." Yet, amidst this public thanksgiving, they were charged eight dollars in cash for two quarts of whisky, which the indignant diarist rightly dubs "an imposition on the part of the citizen."

The following day they came in sight of St. Charles, whose people had so generously entertained them upon their departure. "This day being Sunday," notes Clark, "we observed a number of Gentlemen and ladies

walking on the banks, we saluted the Village by three rounds from our blunderbuts and the Small arms of the party, and landed near the lower part of the town. we were met by great numbers of the inhabitants," and freely entertained in their homes.

At twelve o'clock noon of the twenty-third they hove to at the St. Louis beach, and greeted the waiting crowd with a salute. "We were met by all the village and received a harty welcom from its inhabitants &c," was Clark's terse record of what must have been a hilarious popular demonstration. Letters briefly describing the expedition were at once posted to President Jefferson at Washington, and to General William Henry Harrison, Governor of the Northwest Territory, at Vincennes. On the twenty-fifth there was given to them "in the evening a dinner & Ball"; and on the twenty-fifth we have the last word in the journals—"a fine morning we commenced wrighting &c." Thus, they had no sooner returned and greeted their friends than the two great explorers began with commendable promptness to revise their field notes for publication.

Unfortunately, both men soon receiving public appointments, they were obliged to leave their literary task unfinished. Biddle's well-known narrative, which is but a paraphrase of their journals, did not appear until 1814; and not until the winter of 1903–04, a century after the event, were the complete records of what was in many ways the most important and interesting of Rocky Mountain explorations laid before the reading public.[1]

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[1] Lewis had intended to be the editor of the journals; but on his way to Philadelphia, in 1810, to undertake this work, he died in a log tavern in Tennessee—whether by murder or suicide is still a moot question. Nicholas Biddle, of Philadelphia, a lawyer friend of Jefferson, undertook the task, and published his Narrative in two volumes, in 1814. It was for its day an excellent piece of editorial work, but omits much of interest and scientific value. In 1818 Jefferson rescued the original note-books—save five that Biddle had returned to Clark—and deposited them with the American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia. The five Clark books are now the property of Mrs. Julia Clark Voorhis, of New York city, a granddaughter of the explorer.

CHAPTER XI

THOMPSON, FRASER, THE ASTORIANS, AND PIKE

In the treaty of peace with Great Britain (1782–83) the northern boundary of the United States was defined as running from the northwest point of the Lake of the Woods "on a due-west course to the river Mississippi"; thence down the main channel of that river until it was crossed by the line of Louisiana (31° North latitude). There was, however, some reason to suspect that the source of the Mississippi might be within British possessions, which led to the clause specifying that, however this might be, citizens of both nations should enjoy the free navigation of the river. The Jay treaty (1794) provided for an "amicable negotiation" to settle whatever questions might arise should the Mississippi be found to extend northward of the due-west line from the Lake of the Woods.

It is not necessary, in the present connection, to follow the protracted discussion of this and other questions which arose in connection with the northwest boundary, further than to state that not until 1818 was the source of the Mississippi found to lie considerably south of the Lake of the Woods; and not until the Webster-Ashburton treaty (1846) and the confirmatory decision of the German Emperor in 1872, that the United States was at last given the forty-ninth parallel of latitude as its northern limit, west of the lake. The purchase of Louisiana (1803) had placed our northern boundary in an entirely new light, by giving us vast but undefined rights westward to the crest of the Rocky Mountains, and northward to include the territory visited by the French fur-traders.

Lack of knowledge regarding the source of the Mississippi led to the introduction upon our stage of David Thompson, one of the most picturesque of Rocky Mountain explorers. An astronomer and surveyor of much merit, Thompson had been in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company; but as that conservative corporation discouraged his

marked tendency to explore, he went to Grand Portage, the Lake Superior headquarters of its great rival, the North West Company, and there offered his services. Being promptly employed, he was sent out in August, 1796, to explore the source of the Mississippi—for the boundary question was a matter of much importance to the Canadian traders, who during the unsettled condition of affairs were freely trading with and influencing the Indians throughout the vast region west and southwest of Lake Superior. He was also to visit the Mandan villages on the Missouri, to make inquiries relative to fossils and prehistoric remains, and to establish the latitude and longitude of each of the company's posts which he should visit.

His long winter journey to the Mandans, by way of Rainy Lake, Lakes Manitoba and Winnipeg, and the Saskatchewan and Assiniboin Rivers, was similar in character to that undertaken by Vérendrye in 1738. In his company was René Jussaume, the interpreter who ten years later accompanied Lewis and Clark down the Missouri. Leaving the Mandans, Thompson crossed in the spring (1797)

to the Red River of the North with three French Canadians and an Indian guide. Later in the season he reached Lake Superior by descending St. Louis River, and in due course arrived by canoe at Grand Portage, after one of the most venturesome journeys on record, which brought him wide-spread fame.

In 1805, after the fusion of the North West and X Y corporations into the United Company, Thompson was sent up the Saskatchewan, with orders to cross the Rockies over to the Columbia and examine the mountains on the Pacific coast. At the same time, Simon Fraser, of whom we shall presently hear, was despatched up Peace River, and directed to explore the western region from the northern approach. Thompson crossed the divide in 1806, discovered the upper waters of the Columbia, and the following year established there the trading-post of Kootenay House, where he wintered (1807–08).

Returning to the Saskatchewan the next summer, he recrossed the mountains with horses, and was back at Kootenay House in November. Continuing his explorations

upon the Columbia, and once more passing a winter there, the persistent traveler was at Lake Athabasca in the autumn of 1810. Again descending the Columbia the year following, this time as far as Lewis River, he attached a note to a pole, claiming the country for Great Britain; for news had reached the "Nor'-Westers" that the Americans were about to open a trading-post at the mouth of the river. Upon reaching the sea, he was keenly disappointed to find that the Americans had preceded him, by building Astoria. Thompson, however, at once erected a rival fort at Spokane. He soon after drifted to eastern Canada, where he was later employed on important surveys, dying (1857) at the age of eighty-seven, a very poor man, but one deserving much at the hands of his countrymen.

Fraser, one of the most daring of the fur-traders of his day, was the son of American loyalists, and in youth became a clerk in the North West Company. In 1797 we find him the company's agent at Grand Portage, and later he was at Athabasca. Accompanied by John Stuart, a North West clerk, whose friends

claimed that he was the leading spirit in the expedition, Fraser crossed the mountains in the spring of 1806. Stopping to barter with the Indians—for the explorers of that time were traders as well—it was not until May 22, 1807, that he made his final start for the Pacific. With Stuart, a trader named Quesnel, nineteen voyageurs, and two Indians, all in four canoes, he descended the Tacouche Tesse (afterward known as Fraser River). It was an enterprise abounding in peril, for the stream is studded with whirling rapids, down which the intrepid explorers plunged with an apparent recklessness which almost hourly threatened the demolition of their canoes, if not loss of life. But the river often surges between frowning cliffs; portages are long and difficult, and frequently quite impracticable without immense outlay of labor; so that a wild dash through a dizzy gorge seemed sometimes the only solution of the problem. Indian turbulence prevented Fraser from actually reaching the sea, but his trip stands on record as one of the most notable of Rocky Mountain exploits. Returning to the Red River of the North (1808), he served his com-

pany for several years in the Lake Superior region, and subsequently died on the Ottawa.

Among the men first to grasp the advantage of the transcontinental route up the Missouri and down the Columbia was John Jacob Astor, of New York. Astor had at first been an independent fur-trader at Montreal, shipping to London. When Jay's treaty removed the restriction on exporting furs from British possessions, Astor consigned his peltries to New York and opened a trade with China, where prices for furs were high. Soon himself removing to New York, he sought under the encouragement of the Federal Government to obtain a monopoly of the fur-trade in the United States. Founding the American Fur Company in 1809, two years later he bought out several large Mackinac traders and organized the South West Company.

A part of his great scheme was to establish a line of posts along Lewis and Clark's entire route, and control the trade of the Columbia basin. The North West Company was now operating to the north of this point, and we have seen that for several years trading

vessels had regularly called at the native coast villages. Astor shrewdly obtained a good footing with the Russian Fur Company, to the far north, and then proposed to plant a station at the mouth of the Columbia. For this purpose he organized the Pacific Fur Company, in which Canadians freely took stock and employment, and made arrangements for two expeditions to the Northwest Coast. One proceeded by sea from New York around Cape Horn, starting in September, 1810; the other followed, in the main, Lewis and Clark's trail—from Montreal (June 10,1811) up the Great Lakes to Mackinac, thence by the Fox-Wisconsin route to the Mississippi, then up the Missouri and overland to the Columbia. The sea party, after constant troubles between the company's employees and the captain, arrived at the Columbia in March, and built the stout post of Astoria; the land party, who had suffered innumerable hardships, reached their destination the following February (1812).

The Nor'-Westers, jealous of this movement, promptly despatched Thompson to forestall the Astorians upon the lower Columbia;

but we have seen that he arrived too late, although the post which he planted farther upstream greatly annoyed Astor's agents. News of the outbreak of the War of 1812–15 reached Astoria in June, 1813. In October following there appeared on the scene a vessel bearing North West Company's goods and traders. The latter contracted for the purchase of the Pacific Company's "establishments, furs, and stock in hand" for about fifty-eight thousand dollars—a very considerable sacrifice; but Astor's local representatives were largely Canadians, who had a strong personal leaning towards the Nor'-Westers. While the transfer was being made, a British sloop of war put in an appearance, bearing orders "to take and destroy everything American on the north-west coast," and prepared to capture Astoria. But the trade having been made, its terms were respected. The American flag was replaced by the British, and Astoria rechristened Fort George.

The name of Zebulon Montgomery Pike will always be associated with those of Lewis and Clark in the history of early exploration beyond the Mississippi. Pike was some twenty-five

ZEBULON M. PIKE.

years of age and a first lieutenant in the same infantry regiment (the First) in which Lewis held a captaincy. In July, 1805, he was detailed by General James Wilkinson to explore the Mississippi from St. Louis to its source; report on sites for military posts; make treaties with the native tribes; bring about a peace between the Chippewas and Sioux; and ascertain all he could concerning the trading operations within American territory of the North West Company, and its influence upon the Indians. There was then no settlement above Prairie du Chien, the country to the north being still practically in control of the British traders and their savage allies.

Building a stockade at Little Falls, the limit of navigation for his boats, Pike pushed on with a few men to Cass Lake, and examined Turtle and Leech Rivers and Leech Lake. Returning overland in the early spring to his stockade and its winter garrison, he embarked for the south with his entire party and reached St. Louis in April. He executed an admirable map of the region traversed. Throughout this difficult expedition, Pike, who despite his "gentle and retiring disposi-

tion" proved to be a man of great daring and executive ability, "performed the duties of astronomer, commanding officer, clerk, spy, guide, and hunter." He was at once promoted to a captaincy.

The following summer Wilkinson despatched Pike upon another and far more important and difficult exploration. Its primary object was to return to their friends fifty-one Osage Indians, some of whom had been upon a deputation to Washington, and the others but lately redeemed from captivity among the Potawatomis. This task completed, he was to accomplish a peace between the Kansas and Osages, to "establish a good understanding" with the Yanktons and Comanches, to "ascertain the direction, extent, and navigation of the Arkansaw and Red rivers," to report upon various scientific phenomena, and to collect natural history specimens.

The exploration of Red River was just then "an object of much interest with the executive," as it was part of the proposed boundary between Spanish and American possessions and was erroneously supposed to have its

source but a short distance east of Santa Fé, the capital of New Mexico. In the preceding February President Jefferson had—together with letters and other data from the Lewis and Clark expedition[1]—published interesting reports from Dr. John Sibley, a Revolutionary surgeon and now an Indian agent, who had (March, 1803), under Government auspices, ascended the Red from its mouth to the Louisiana town of Natchitoches—then "a small, irregular, and meanly built village" of "forty families, nearly all French"—and obtained much valuable information regarding the upper reaches, as well as concerning the Indians "residing in and adjacent to the territory of Orleans;" also from William Dunbar, of Natchez, "a citizen of distinguished science," who in connection with Dr. Hunter made an official tour of exploration (October 16, 1804–January 31, 1805) from Natchez down to Red River, and thence up that stream and its tributaries the Black and

[1] Message from the President of the United States, communicating Discoveries made in exploring the Missouri, Red River and Washita, by Captains Lewis and Clark, Doctor Sibley, and Mr. Dunbar (Washington, 1806).

the Washita, to "the hot springs in the proximity of the last mentioned river."

But a short time before Pike's own departure, a party "consisting of Captain Sparks, Mr. Freeman, Lieutenant Humphrey, and Dr. Custis," with twenty men, followed the Dunbar-Hunter route to Natchitoches; they were there reenforced by thirteen soldiers and their officers. Two hundred and thirty miles up the Red the party were halted (July 29th) by a Spanish guard, and "reluctantly consented to relinquish their undertaking."

Leaving the mouth of the Missouri on the fifteenth of July (1806), Pike—accompanied by Lieutenant James B. Wilkinson, Dr. John H. Robinson (a volunteer surgeon), one sergeant, two corporals, sixteen privates, and one interpreter—ascended that river in rowboats to the Osage. Horses were procured at the principal Osage village, for thenceforth the journey was to be by land.

Proceeding over the Kansas prairies, then gay with the flowers of early autumn, Pike (late in September) reached the Republican River, on the lower edge of what is now Nebraska—the country of the dreaded Pawnees.

These lusty savages, whose animosities toward Americans had recently been inflamed by Spanish emissaries—sent thither because of jealousy of Pike's expedition—took no pains to conceal their anger at his intrusion on their domain, rightly judging his party to be merely the pioneers of an army of occupation. They sneered, however, at his travel-worn squad of followers, and made invidious comparisons between them and the glittering cavalry squadron sent out as the ambassadors of the Spaniards. Notwithstanding this reception, the astute captain succeeded in imbuing his unwilling hosts with a certain sense of the importance of the Government that had sent him. The head chief sought to stop his farther progress by a show of force; but was told that "the young warriors of his great American father were not women, to be turned back by words," that they "would sell our lives at a dear rate to his nation," and if vanquished would be succeeded by others who would "gather our bones and revenge our deaths on his people."

With these brave words as a parting salute, Pike advanced southwest to the Arkansas,

which he reached near Pawnee Fork. Sending Lieutenant Wilkinson down that river to explore it to its junction with the Mississippi, the commander ascended the stream to where it debouched from the mountains.

Pike appears to have been the first to describe the fine grazing plains of Nebraska and western Kansas as a "desert"—"a barrier," he says, "placed by Providence to keep the American people from a thin diffusion and ruin." It took over half a century to destroy this myth of the Great American Desert, for which Pike was responsible. When more gigantic systems of irrigation than now exist shall slake the thirst of these parched plains lying upon the eastern slope of the Rockies; when what is at present being done for comparatively narrow districts at the base of the hills shall be extended as far east as the rainy belt, this desert will everywhere blossom as the rose. The cattle ranches are fast being subdivided into homesteads, and the cultivable area is rapidly growing before our eyes. We hear now and then the cry of the alarmist, that the limit of settlement in the great West is clearly in sight; but there is

still room for tens of millions of vigorous colonists in the upper valleys of the Missouri, the Platte, and the Arkansas, and the great plains stretching north and south between them. The Great American Desert of our childhood may yet become the garden of the land.

It was the middle of November by the time Pike had ascended the inclined plane which leads gently upward for nearly a thousand miles, from the Mississippi to the Colorado foothills. The Arkansas River, which the expedition was ascending, had now become a narrow torrent gushing forth from lofty mountains white with the snows of early winter. To the south the Spanish Peaks stood out in bold relief against the leaden sky; while to the north there was reared a mighty pile far overtopping the mountain wall which suddenly blocked the path of progress from the east. Taking a side tour from his camp at Pueblo, Pike set out to scale this forbidding height, and thus to obtain a view of the country beyond. In this enterprise he failed, declaring that "no human being could have ascended to its pin-

nacle." Nevertheless, this storied hill, long after a landmark for emigrants going overland across the plains, has ever since borne the name of "Pike's Peak." In our time, a railway conveys each summer thousands of tourists to the top of the great mountain which Pike himself could not climb.

On every hand the ravines were now choked with snow, and the roaring rivers were bridged with frozen spray or gushed from beneath monster drifts. The Arkansas was ascended to the vicinity of the present Leadville; but to follow up the stream to its ultimate source in the mountains appeared impracticable. Pike expressed the opinion in his journal[1] that "scarcely any person but a madman would ever purposely attempt to trace further than the entrance of those mountains which had hitherto secured their sources from the scrutinizing eye of civilized man."

The party had, among other orders, been directed to find the sources of the Red River of the South, and to follow that stream down to a more genial climate. But all attempts to

[1] Edited by Elliott Coues (New York, 1895).

discover it proved in vain. Foiled in every venture, frequently lost among the hills, and experiencing many a narrow escape from death at the hands of savage nature, the little band—"marching through the snow about two and a half feet deep, silent and with downcast countenances"—finally turned back, "for the first time in the voyage, discouraged." They long sought for the trail which had been taken by the Spaniards in their journey from Santa Fé to the Pawnee villages on the Platte. But the snows had covered the plains, the trail was obliterated, and so they wandered back and forth, east and west, north and south, battling for life—a strange, weird story, indeed, for us to hear; for the cañons and mesas where Pike's sorry crew were beating to and fro in their desperate struggle for existence are to-day among the best known and most easily accessible of Rocky Mountain summer resorts.

Finally, by crossing the Sangre de Cristo Range by way of Sand Hill Pass into San Luis Valley, they reached (January 30th, 1807) the upper waters of the Rio Grande del Norte, which Pike then thought to be the long-

sought Red. In a "luxuriant vale" at the mouth of the Rio Conejos he built a cottonwood stockade, and for a brief time reveled in "a terrestrial paradise shut out from the view of man."

Dr. Robinson "having some pecuniary demands in the province of New Mexico," this was used as a pretext for sending that able lieutenant forward to the Spanish capital of Santa Fé. While ostensibly seeking to collect a debt for a friend—which he had a right to do under the Spanish-American treaty—the doctor was really to "gain a knowledge of the country, the prospect of trade, force, etc." In other words, he was a military spy.

A few days later, Spanish spies arrived, reporting that Robinson had been kindly received by Allencaster, the Spanish Governor of New Mexico. On the twenty-seventh of February a troop of a hundred horsemen galloped into the camp, its commander telling Pike that he was upon New Mexican territory and suspected of a project to seize the province—the assumption being that this expedition, following closely, as it did, on the heels of Captain Sparks's venture, was in

some way connected with Aaron Burr's filibustering scheme in the Southwest, against which the Mexican authorities had already been warned.

Prisoners, although treated with great consideration, Pike and his party proceeded with the Spaniards to Santa Fé, intending to explain their trespass on the ground of being lost in the mountains. Their appearance certainly spoke for the truth of their assertions, for Pike writes in his report: "When we presented ourselves in Santa Fé, I was dressed in a pair of blue trousers, mockinsons, blanket coat, and a cap made of scarlet cloth lined with fox-skin; my poor fellows were in leggins, breech cloths and leather coats, and there was not a hat in the whole party. This appearance was extremely mortifying to us all, especially as soldiers; although some of the officers used frequently to observe to me, that 'worth makes the man,' etc., with a variety of adages to the same amount. Yet the first impression made on the ignorant is hard to eradicate; and a greater proof cannot be given of the ignorance of the common people, than their asking if we lived in houses, or

camps like the Indians, or if we wore hats in our country."

The Falstaffian crew were not detained long in Santa Fé, being sent on to Governor Salcedo, at Chihuahua. This official, on polite pretense of wishing to study the papers and sketches of the expedition, retained the greater part of them; thus compelling the captain to make up his report and map largely from memory, without those scientific details which he otherwise would have been able to present. This was indeed a cruel and unnecessary blow to the ambitious explorer, and a distinct loss to the world.

Thus poor Pike, sent home with Robinson in this beggarly fashion, under Spanish escort—northward through Coahuila and San Antonio—was in no happy frame of mind when on the first of July he reached Natchitoches, then the southwesternmost limit of American settlement. Eight of his party had been detained in Mexico, but eventually all were returned to the United States.

CHAPTER XII

THE SOUTH PASS

During and for several years succeeding the second war with Great Britain there was no scientific exploration in the Rockies on either side of the international boundary. The rival fur companies maintained a warm and often bloody competition on the disputed Oregon border; while their trappers and agents roamed freely from New Mexico to Alaska, although seldom penetrating the innermost fastnesses of the mountains. In 1821 the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies combined under the name of the former, the expensive rivalry ceased, and peace reigned among the roving bands. Thereafter this semi-military trading corporation opposed only the common enemy—their customers and neighbors, the often hostile aborigines, and the American settlers advancing into our far Northwest.

By 1819 the tide of American emigration had begun to flow toward the Missouri Valley and beyond—far less pronounced than a generation later, yet of enough importance to warrant official attention. The woods of Kentucky and Tennessee were filling up. Men of the Daniel Boone type, who panted for "more elbow room" when newcomers appeared in sight of their rude cabins, were pulling stakes and resuming their march toward the ever-shifting frontier—uncouth, unlettered backwoodsmen, but hardy sires of a vigorous and progressive race, unwittingly blazing the paths of progress for that civilization which they sought to avoid, but which with the certainty of Fate followed closely upon their heels.

From the reports of trappers, it had begun to be suspected by topographers that the Platte might possibly flow from some pass in the center of the Rockies, which would be easier of access and more practicable than the circuitous and difficult path by which Lewis and Clark and the Astorians had approached the Pacific. In 1819, Major Stephen H. Long, a topographical engineer who had made trips

to the Red and Washita Rivers in 1817–18, was deputed by President Monroe to discover, if possible, this desirable South Pass, and on his return to make an attempt to determine the sources of Red River.[1]

Steamboats were now coming into use, and the well-appointed expedition, including several military officers and scientific attachés, had a small craft of this character at its command—the Western Engineer.[2] Setting out from Pittsburg early in April, the party descended the Ohio, and wintered at (old) Council Bluffs on the Missouri, near the junc-

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[1] Long's party was the scientific branch of an expedition designed, primarily, to establish a strong military post at the mouth of the Yellowstone. But the military arm, under Colonel Henry Atkinson, although elaborately equipped, was badly managed, and after a sorry experience in the winter camp this feature was abandoned. Long, returning from Washington after this fiasco, carried new instructions, to make a scientific expedition to the mountains only, as related in the text.

[2] A letter written at St. Louis, June 19, 1819, ten days after the arrival of the strange craft at that town, says: "The bow of this vessel exhibits the form of a huge serpent, black and scaly, rising out of the water from under the boat, his head as high as the deck, darted forward, his mouth open, vomiting smoke, and apparently carrying the boat on his back."—Chittenden's History of the American Fur Trade of the Far West (New York, 1902), p. 571. It is thought to have been the first stern-wheeler made.

tion of the Platte. Long's experiences on "the Great Muddy" differed strangely from those of Lewis and Clark, only sixteen years before. They had laboriously pushed and hauled open row- and sail-boats against the fierce flood and through the snags and sawyers, at the rate of about nine miles a day. Long, while proceeding some three miles an hour, could from under the awning of his upper deck obtain a bird's-eye view of the country, and with equanimity study the printed journals of his harassed predecessors.

Long and a companion descended the river in a canoe, and spent the winter in Washington. He returned to camp in May (1820), with several accessions to the party, having proceeded overland on horseback from St. Louis to Council Bluffs. Sending the steamboat home, the expedition, now composed of twenty persons, was thereafter mounted on horses, "and equipped for a journey in the wilderness," progress being resumed on the sixth of June.

Proceeding up the Platte, through the country of the Pawnees, they found these haughty savages, in view of the growing

power of the American Government, disposed to assume a more reasonable attitude than hitherto. By way of the South Fork they reached the base of the mountains on the sixth of July, after a journey of about a thousand miles from the Missouri. The path these explorers thus struck out was afterward followed from Omaha west to the mountains, by the overland stages, and finally by the Union Pacific Railway. The lofty mountain now known as Long's Peak was seen and named, although not scaled; but Dr. Edwin James, the botanist, geologist, and annalist of the expedition,[1] with two men, made the first ascent to the summit of Pike's Peak.[2] The Arkansas River to the south was reached a

[1] Account of the Expedition . . . under the Command of Major Stephen H. Long . . . Compiled by Edwin H. James (Philadelphia, 1823, 2 vols.).

[2] Long says in his notes: "From the information received from hunters and trappers, it was believed that no one, either civilized or savage, had ever ascended it before. . . . Dr. James having accomplished this difficult and arduous task, I have thought proper to call the peak after his name." But Frémont, in the report and map of his explorations (1843–44), named it Pike's Peak, because locally known as that; and such it has ever since been called.

Long's nearest approach to the peak named in his honor was St. Vrain's fort, forty miles distant.

few days later. A detachment ascended this noisy stream as far as the Royal Gorge, where the perpendicular walls of rock ascend for upward of half a mile into mid-air, and the human voice can with difficulty be heard amidst the din of whirling waters.

Small wonder that the explorers were dismayed. It was sixty years later before the railroad engineers, who now stop at few barriers, ventured to pierce the Royal Gorge of the Arkansas and connect Pueblo and Leadville by a road of steel. Tools, materials, provisions, mules, and men were lowered into the awful chasm by ropes dangling from the cliffs above. In one place, the gap between the mountain walls is so narrow that there was found no room for even the railway-bed; for some distance, therefore, the track passes over a suspended bridge anchored in the mountain on either side, the boiling torrent plunging madly beneath. The screech of the locomotive brought new echoes to mingle with the old; and now tens of thousands of tourists are each summer swept through this mighty gorge in luxurious observation-cars. As he turned back, baffled and dis-

mayed from the terrors of the Arkansas cañon, Major Long, in his wildest flights of fancy, could have foreseen no such extravagances as these.

"This morning," Dr. James writes under July nineteenth, "we turned our backs upon the mountains, and began to move down the Arkansa. It was not without a feeling of regret, that we found our long contemplated visit to these grand and interesting objects, was now at an end. More than one thousand miles of dreary and monotonous plain lay between us and the enjoyments and indulgences of civilized countries. This we were to traverse in the heat of summer, but the scarcity of game about the mountains rendered an immediate departure necessary."

Dividing their forces, one branch of the party, under Captain J. R. Bell, descended to the Mississippi by way of the Arkansas Valley; the other, under Long himself, sought a homeward route in what was at first supposed to be the valley of the Red, but which proved to be the Canadian, the chief tributary of the Arkansas—thus ending the third attempt of the Federal authorities to

discover the sources of Red River. A side trip was made by Long (in October) to the hot springs of the Washita, which had been visited by Hunter and Dunbar in 1804. In the two large volumes which resulted from this notable expedition through many thousands of miles of wilderness, Long and his annalist, James, lay particular stress on the desert character and barrenness of the plains around the upper waters of the Platte and the Arkansas, adopting Pike's view that they were unfit for human occupation.[1]

Now that Long had led the way up the

[1] Three years later (1823) Long headed a small expedition which proceeded from Pittsburg overland to Chicago, a village then consisting "of a few miserable huts, inhabited by a miserable race of men, . . . perhaps, one of the oldest settled places in the Indian country." Thence they went to Prairie du Chien and ascended the right bank of the Mississippi to Fort Snelling, which he had previously visited in 1817. Here, fitted out with a party of thirty-three men, he made the first accurate exploration of the sources of St. Peter's (or Minnesota) River. Continuing down the valley of the Red River of the North, he went to Winnipeg Lake and River; and by the Lake of the Woods, Rainy River, and Grand Portage route reached Lake Superior, along whose "dreary northern shore" he finally reached Sault Ste. Marie, the terminus of the expedition. The annalist of this tour was William H. Keating, mineralogist and botanist. See his Travels in the Interior of North America (London, 1828, 2 vols.).

valley of the Platte, emigration to the far West received a new impetus. It was many years before the Government again attempted any extended scientific exploration in the Rockies; but the public soon became familiar with the trans-Missouri country from the reports of trappers, traders, emigrants, rovers, and occasional Government officials, who surmounted countless obstacles reared by savage man and untamed nature in threading the valleys on the eastern slopes of the mountains and tracing the more accessible of the gorges. By way of illustration, let us glance at a few of these many exploits; the space at our command in this series will not permit of specific mention of all.

In 1825–27, Benjamin Reeves, George C. Sibley, and Thomas Mather surveyed and marked out a road "from the western frontier of Missouri, near Fort Osage, to San Fernando de Taos, near Santa Fé"—the Santa Fé trail, that had already long been used by merchant adventurers into the Southwest.

In 1832 Ross Cox published an account of "six years of adventures on the western side of the Rocky Mountains among various tribes

of Indians hitherto unknown"—a valuable work in connection with the history of the fur-trade, describing the author's ascent of the Columbia to one of its northern sources, and his crossing of the Rockies at the head of Athabasca River, near Mount Hooker. In the summer of the same year (1832) Lieutenant James Allen, of the United States army, accompanied by Henry R. Schoolcraft, Indian agent at Mackinac, made "the first topographical and hydrographical delineation of the source of the Mississippi." In the course of the tour they traveled two thousand miles—going out from Lake Superior by St. Louis River, and returning thereto by way of the St. Croix and the Bois Brulé.

In 1822 General William H. Ashley, of St. Louis, organized the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, whose parties erected posts and traded far and wide through the mountains and in the Columbia basin. Two years later Ashley personally attempted—so far as we know, first of all white men—to navigate Green River near South Pass, but failed. Three years later he entered the basin of Great Salt Lake, which he extensively ex-

plored, amid adventures by land and flood which it is a sore trial not to be able to relate in the present volume. Upon descending the Missouri with a cargo of furs, Ashley met near the mouth of the Yellowstone General Henry Atkinson and Major Benjamin O'Fallon, commissioners who, accompanied by a large military escort, had been negotiating treaties with the Missouri tribes and collecting information regarding the country. It had been the intention of the Government to plant several garrisoned posts in the trans-Mississippi country. But Atkinson having reported that he found no evidence of British intrigue among the Western Indians, the project was delayed—Fort Leavenworth, established in 1827 near the mouth of the Little Platte, remaining the extreme Western garrison until after 1843.

Among the most interesting trading expeditions of the first third of the nineteenth century was that headed by Joshua Pilcher, a member of the Missouri Fur Company, who in 1827–28 wintered on Green River with forty-five men and over a hundred horses. After a long journey with nine companions

through the Columbia region, "to ascertain its attractions and capabilities for trade," he returned to St. Louis (June, 1830) by way of the Athabasca, the Saskatchewan, the Red, the Mandan villages, and the Missouri.

Alexander Philipp Maximilian, Prince of Neuwied, a German naturalist of considerable reputation, visited North America between 1832 and 1834, and spent much of his time studying the natives of the upper Missouri. He was accompanied by Charles Bodmer, a competent artist, whose illustrations accompanying Maximilian's book of travels[1] are in some respects the best extant, representing the American Indian in a state of uncontaminated savagery. The student of Lewis and Clark finds in these pictures the best obtainable illustrations of the Missouri Valley and its aborigines as seen by the explorers themselves; for during the intervening quarter of a century the tribesmen had remained practically unchanged.

Eminent among the mountain explorers who diffused information concerning the Western wilds and stimulated popular inter-

[1] Travels in the Interior of North America (London, 1843).

est in them was James O. Pattie, another St. Louis fur-trader, who in 1832 published a modest narrative of adventure and discovery (1824–30) along the Colorado River and the then mysterious Gulf of California. Pattie is thought to have been the first white man to cross the continent to California, just as Lewis and Clark were first to cross over to Oregon.

William L. Sublette, who had been connected with Ashley's operations, was also, from 1826 to 1842, a prominent character among the mountain traders, explorers, and Indian fighters. By aid of posts on the Platte and the Missouri, he and his three brothers conducted an active opposition to the American Fur Company. Joseph Meek, a trapper in Sublette's employ, becoming lost from his party (1829), wandered into what is now Yellowstone Park, which Colter had discovered twenty-seven years before (p. 182); and in 1834 an American Fur Company clerk also visited this American Wonderland, in our time annually visited by nearly ten thousand tourists, from every land in Christendom.

Captain Benjamin Eulalie de Bonneville, of the regular army, inspired by a hope of

profit in the far Western fur-trade, in 1832 led over a hundred men with wagons and goods from the Missouri to South Pass and on to the Columbia. He spent two years in trapping, trading, and exploring, with financial results that hardly paid the wages of his men. But his notes of the novel journey, brimming with romantic adventure, were edited by Washington Irving, who skilfully wrought from them one of the most interesting and exhilarating books in American literature.[1]

Bonneville's chief assistant, I. R. Walker, conducted (1833) a subsidiary trapping expedition of thirty-six men to Great Salt Lake and to California, over the Sierras. They suffered severely from famine, exposure, and the Indians, but claimed to have been the first white visitors to the Valley of the Yosemite.[2] The return was made the following year, although several of the men decided to remain permanently in California.

Attractive, although often extravagant, narratives were published by several of Bonne-

[1] Not always strictly accurate, however, for Irving himself was unacquainted with the West.

[2] Chittenden's Fur Trade, p. 417.

ville's contemporaries. These books, closely succeeding one another, were widely read throughout this country and in England, and awakened among all classes of people an enthusiasm which greatly stimulated the spirit of ambitious adventure. In the same year that Bonneville went West a party of twenty-two Bostonians, imbued with a desire for roving, and wishing to partake of the occasionally great profits of the fur-trade, formed a company to proceed overland to the Pacific coast. Their leader was Nathaniel J. Wyeth, who had evolved a trading scheme quite similar to Astor's. Cooperating with his land party was a small vessel which sailed by way of Cape Horn to the mouth of the Columbia; this was to carry to market the products of Wyeth's enterprise.

The overland contingent, for ten days previous to starting, practised frontier hardships on one of the islands in Boston harbor, attracting no small degree of popular wonderment by their showy and attractive uniform suits, a feature of which was a broad belt from which dangled bayonet, knife, and ax. Among other novelties, the expedition was

provided with an amphibious machine, which when bottom up was a wagon, and the other side up a boat. This curious device occasioned high merriment at Harvard College, of which Wyeth was an alumnus, the students dubbing it a "Nat-Wyethium."

The cumbersome omnibus-boat crossed the Alleghanies successfully, and greatly astonished the simple settlers along the route; but at St. Louis it was abandoned, together with other fantastic notions. After many strange adventures and much genuine hardship and peril on the plains and in the mountains, the saddened and weary Bostonians finally established themselves in the basin of the Columbia, where they became practical and valuable settlers; but Wyeth's commercial dreams came to naught.

Connected with a second expedition under Wyeth, in 1834, were two scientists, Thomas Nuttall, botanist, and John Kirk Townsend, naturalist, and four Methodist missionaries under Reverend Jason Lee. They accompanied Wyeth as far as Snake River, but from there to the Willamette traveled with another party. Two years later (1836)

Whitman and Spalding

Marcus Whitman, physician and clergyman, appeared on the Willamette, together with his wife and Reverend and Mrs. H. H. Spalding. They had ascended the Platte and reached Western waters through the South Pass, chiefly in company with parties of the American Fur Company. The wives of these two missionaries were the first white women known to have crossed the Rockies, their children being, so far as we can ascertain, the first whites born in Oregon.

Several small governmental expeditions were undertaken at about this time, which deserve at least a passing mention. In 1833 Colonel James B. Many headed a column of rangers as far as the head of Little River. Colonel Henry Dodge, of the dragoons, led his men the following year to visit the Comanches and Pawnees, and made an excursion into the country between the Red and Canadian Rivers, some seventy miles west of the Wichita Range. The next season (1835) he proceeded up the Platte and South Fork to its source, went south to the Arkansas, and returned to Fort Leavenworth by way of the Santa Fé trail.

In 1841 General Hugh McLeod with six companies of troops escorted a trading caravan to Santa Fé; the party were captured by the Spaniards, and had some rough experiences, but, first of Americans, contrived to visit the source of Red River.

A naval expedition under Commander Charles Wilkes visited Oregon in the same year, and sent out land parties through the Columbia basin. One of these crossed the Cascade Range, and reached the mouth of the Spokane; another surveyed the Columbia as far up as Walla Walla, ascended the Willamette, and crossing to the sources of the Sacramento, descended it to the Bay of San Francisco.

Several explorations were made in the basin of the upper Mississippi (1836–40)[1] by J. N. Nicollet, a distinguished French astronomer and geographer, who was assisted (1838–40) by Lieutenant John C. Frémont, of the topographical engineers, concerning whom we shall presently hear. Nicollet was first to

[1] In 1836–37 Nicollet was privately occupied in this work; but in 1838 he was employed by the Federal Government to continue his task, Frémont being assigned as his assistant.

discover the true source of the Mississippi; and his astronomical observations and consequent map were among "the greatest contributions ever made to American geography."

CHAPTER XIII

THE CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA

In May, 1843, several hundred bold and restless pioneers, heavily armed, set out from Missouri with their women and children —over a thousand persons all told—and in wagons and on foot, accompanied by herds of neat cattle and horses, slowly traversed the broad plain which lies between the Missouri and the foot of the Rockies. Crossing the lofty mountain barrier amid many privations and perils, under Whitman's guidance they reached the verdant valley of the Willamette, and subsequently the Columbia, both of which were now rapidly filling with settlers who were dissatisfied with conditions in the Eastern States. The following year two thousand emigrants of a like character followed in their wake, to meet with the same experiences en route, and to share in the destitution

which in the first year or two usually befalls agricultural settlers in a new land. In 1845 three thousand took up the line of march over the Oregon trail, a number nearly doubled in 1847.

The Hudson's Bay Company, whose traders and trappers still ruled with despotic sway over the far Northwest, was the violent enemy of these newcomers, who were destroying the hunting-grounds. Not infrequently the agents of the great corporation incited the Indians to infamous outrages upon the settlers—an easy task, for the tribesmen entertained a natural hatred for the land-grabbing Americans, who were transforming the forests into farms, and in this rude process evincing no disposition to consider the rights of the aboriginal owners. Congress, with the question of political proprietorship in Oregon still in the diplomatic stage—and entertaining toward the new country an apathy long displayed in our day toward Alaska—was averse to taking measures of active protection in behalf of these distant frontiersmen. But at length, largely through the exertions of the irrepressible Senator Thomas H. Benton,

of Missouri, the matter of the Western Territories and other remote domains of the United States was brought before Congress in a manner in which the question must be disposed of. In 1848, after a protracted struggle, Oregon—its northern boundary established by the treaty with England two years previous—was created a Territory.

Benton was a far-seeing, patriotic statesman, and foremost in his day in aiding the development of the great West. Wishing to facilitate emigration thither, he was concerned to know whether the South Pass, now the favorite transcontinental highway, was really the best. Nicollet, the French astronomer and engineer, had just returned from his trip to the sources of the Mississippi, mentioned in the preceding chapter. We have seen that in Nicollet's party was a young topographical engineer, Lieutenant John C. Frémont. Upon their return to Washington, Benton met Frémont and became interested in him. Both were men of enterprise; both had lofty ideas of the possibilities of the West. Frémont had, while with Nicollet, cultivated a keen desire for exploration; on

his part, Benton had been seeking for an explorer. The young lieutenant and the veteran statesman became warm friends; Frémont wooed and won the Missouri Senator's fascinating and accomplished daughter, Jessie;[1] and so it came about that early in 1842 this gallant engineer was selected by President Harrison to explore the South Pass "in aid of and auxiliary to the Oregon emigration."

Frémont's companions were twenty-one French Creole voyageurs, familiar with the Indian country through service for the fur companies; Charles Preuss, a topographical assistant; Maxwell, a crack hunter; and, last but not least, the guide was Kit Carson, of Taos, who was to become world-famous from his connection with Frémont's explorations.

The expedition of 1842 was well supplied with scientific instruments and other paraphernalia. Leaving the mouth of the Kansas in June, it proceeded up that, the Big Blue, and the Platte valleys and on through the

[1] They were married October 19, 1841. Frémont received the first intimation of Harrison's intention at the White House, New Year's following.

South Pass. The lieutenant ascended Frémont's Peak, in the Wind River Range, and at the dizzy height of 13,570 feet "unfurled the national flag to wave in the breeze where never flag waved before." In the course of his journey he traveled two thousand miles, experienced much hardship, was frequently attacked by Indians, but succeeded in making very considerable additions to the existing stock of information concerning the Rockies. His report was a perfect narrative, clear, full, and lively, with an appendix abounding in minute scientific detail.

In May, 1843, this time accompanied by twenty-nine frontiersmen, his scientific assistant Preuss, two young gentlemen who wished to see the country, and the redoubtable Kit Carson, Frémont started from St. Louis upon his second expedition. His proposed path was through the South Pass, and on to the country about the lower reaches of the Columbia. He had intended to be absent about eight months, but it was fourteen before he again set foot in St. Louis, where, in her father's home, he had left his brilliant wife.

Kansas City, then a small village, was the

JOHN C. FRÉMONT.

KIT CARSON.

general rendezvous, and here the party were to wait several weeks for the prairie grass to get its full strength. A few days after their arrival, however, Frémont received a letter from his wife urging him to proceed at once to Bent's Fort, a Hudson's Bay fur-trading station, away out on the Santa Fé trail, in southern Colorado, near where La Junta is now situated, and in that day far beyond the frontiers of civilization. It was a long march, seven hundred miles to the westward, with preparations incomplete and the grazing meager. There were no explanations, and Frémont tells us in his Memoirs that he marveled at the reason for this sudden move; but having implicit confidence in his wife's judgment in all matters, promptly obeyed. Upon his return home the following year he first learned the reason for this strange request.

It was well known that Frémont had started out with a wider purpose, and accompanied by a larger and better-equipped force than he had had the year before. He was ambitious and enthusiastic, and entertained a scheme of exploration covering the entire Pacific slope of the United States, which then

was, south of Oregon, Mexican territory. The memory of Aaron Burr's attempted conspiracy to set up an empire in the Southwest had not yet faded. The air was filled with conflicting rumors of Frémont's purpose. It was the day when the proposed annexation of Mexico was being everywhere discussed—over the game of checkers in the corner grocery, in the village debating clubs, in chambers of commerce, in the corridors of the national Capitol. The young lieutenant was charged with being bent on carnage and conquest; it was pointed out that he had with him a small brass howitzer or mountain cannon—in short, he was pictured as a political adventurer, a filibuster whom it were folly to allow to depart. There came, therefore, an official order from the Secretary of War for Frémont to at once return to Washington and explain why he was armed with a howitzer in addition to ordinary arms, the secretary pointing out that it was a scientific expedition, not military, and must not be armed as if for war.

It has often happened in the world's history that Fate has been outwitted by a woman. This was a case in point. Mrs.

Frémont had been charged with discretionary care of her husband's correspondence. When the order came, and was opened by her, she at once realized that there had been reached a crisis in his career. She saw that the pretext for recalling Frémont to Washington was flimsy, and meant the abandonment of the expedition in obedience to senseless popular clamor. Grasping the situation, and without consulting another person, she suppressed the order, and sent a messenger in hot haste to warn her husband to winter at a point far beyond the reach of mail connections. She knew that as a military officer his sense of duty would not permit him to disobey the official order were he aware of its existence. She therefore sent him a woman's reason—he must fly because she willed it. Thus did the presence of mind of daring Jessie Benton Frémont save the far West from another decade of neglect; but for her, the expedition would surely have been given up, and her husband probably never have become a hero, a general, a senator, and a presidential candidate.

Frémont sped westward. By the Santa Fé trail he reached Fort Bent. Thence de-

flecting northward, he visited St. Vrain's Fort, another Hudson's Bay post on the South Fork of the Platte, near where Denver now is. North of Long's Peak, by following up the Cache-a-la-Poudre River, he forced a new pass through the outlying barrier of hills, and from here sought the Bear River, which was descended into the basin of Great Salt Lake, a portion of which he also explored. From here he crossed over to the Columbia, reaching Pacific tidewater in November, having scientifically examined and mapped the whole intervening country.

After visiting the Oregon settlers—who were gaining a foothold despite the fierce and often bloody opposition of the British fur-traders and the apathy of our own Government—the intrepid "Pathfinder," regardless of the oncoming of winter in the unexplored Sierras, turned southward to the Sacramento. He hoped to obtain supplies at Sutter's Fort, in that valley,[1] so as to enable his party to return homeward.

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[1] Established in 1838–39, upon a grant obtained by Captain Sutter from the Mexican Government. Extensive agricultural operations were here carried on, with Indians as farm laborers.

The topography of the vast region which Frémont now entered had hitherto been quite unknown. Previous conjectures as to it proved erroneous. Deep snows and rigorous weather were almost constantly encountered. Along the edges of appalling precipices; over rugged mountains; through awesome gorges with walls apparently reaching to the skies; scaling chasms; wearily climbing precipitous peaks whose summits extended beyond the clouds; often narrowly escaping great avalanches miles in extent, apprehensive that at any moment a yielding snowfield might prove but a treacherous bridge over some unseen abyss, the daring pioneers of science plodded on through the dreary wilderness, the extent and outcome of which were as little known to them as was the mysterious Western Ocean to the adventurous Columbus of old.

Indians refused to serve as guides in so inhospitable and dangerous a region. Horses and men succumbed to the horrors of the situation. "The slow and mournful procession of feeble, starving skeletons, crawled like a disabled serpent along their dangerous way,

surrounded by the deep snows of the Sierra Nevada and by all the awful incidents of March among the rudest solitudes of nature." But throughout these half thousand painful miles the leader was undaunted; his wonderful endurance, unconquerable determination, and masterly management have never been surpassed by any explorer.

At last Frémont and his companions arrived (March 8th) and recruited at Sutter's settlement. Resuming their journey south, the valley of the San Joaquin was explored; thence, recrossing the mountains through a gap, they skirted the Great Basin, journeying through a comparatively unknown world and making rich scientific collections. Great Salt Lake, Utah Lake, Little Salt Lake, and the great features of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada were all examined and explored. For months, away above the verdant valleys, never out of sight of snow and ice, the expedition continued with unfaltering energy. Crossing the continental divide at an elevation of eight thousand feet, near the head of Pullman's Fork of the Platte, North and South Forks were visited, and the moun-

tains again crossed to the Arkansas, by which the plains were eventually reached. On the last of July (1844) the explorers were once more encamped at Kansas City, on the Missouri. All accomplished, Frémont returned home, bearing rich fruits of his toil, danger, and heroism in an enlarged and satisfactory acquaintance with the resources of those vast and unappropriated mountain realms, and contributions to every department of science. His own narrative of the expedition[1] is charmingly written and singularly modest.

Captain Frémont's third expedition (1845–47), for the purpose of finding the shortest route for a railroad to San Francisco Bay, closed with incidents of a most romantic and unexpected character. The summer of 1845 was spent in exploring the watershed of the continental divide. In midwinter (January) Frémont, with a few followers, again crossed the Sierra Nevada Range and went to Monterey, the capital of California, where permission was obtained from the Mexican Governor, General José Castro, to explore the

[1] Published by order of the United States Senate in 1845; and again in Frémont's Memoirs (Chicago, 1887), vol. i.

Oregon and California hinterland. This permission was soon withdrawn, and Frémont ordered to leave the country. But the stubborn captain was not at first disposed to obey, and entrenched himself against a threatened attack from Castro. After a few days, however, he retreated into Oregon.

While upon the march (May 9, 1846) secret despatches arrived from Federal officials, notifying Frémont that the country was about to be transferred to Great Britain, and that the now large American settlements on the Sacramento were threatened by Castro. The explorer, with his little band of adherents, turned back and took a prominent part in the popular American revolt against Mexico; and on July fourth he was elected by his fellow countrymen as their governor—a choice soon confirmed by Commodore Robert F. Stockton, who had arrived at Monterey with a frigate designed to capture California from Mexico. A treaty signed by Frémont with the Mexicans (January 13, 1847), resulted in the withdrawal of the latter, leaving the Americans practically in possession of the country.

Incredible Hardships

General Stephen W. Kearny having arrived in California with a force of dragoons, fresh from his conquest of New Mexico, a dispute arose between him and Stockton as to who was to command in California. Frémont decided to obey the orders of the latter, although Kearny was his superior officer in the army. The captain-governor accompanied Kearny homeward in the spring of 1847, and on arrival at Fort Leavenworth was arrested for mutiny. The trial took place at Washington, resulting in Frémont's conviction on technical grounds. The penalty was remitted by President Polk, but the young officer forthwith resigned from the army.

In October, 1848, Frémont organized a fourth expedition, of thirty-three men, at his own charge, this time seeking a practicable route to the Pacific through the Valley of the Rio Grande. While crossing the mountains the party were lost and suffered incredible hardships from hunger and cold, and some of them even practised cannibalism. Retreating to Santa Fé, with the loss of all his animals and a third of his men, Frémont recruited a fresh party and successfully

reached Sacramento the following spring. He now settled permanently in California, and for a long term of years the "Pathfinder" was one of the most active and distinguished residents of the Pacific coast.

Frémont's several explorations, supplemented by those of Major William H. Emory (1846–47), Captain W. H. Warner (1847–49), Colonel William W. Loring (1849), Captain H. Stanbury (1849–50), and other army officers, who crossed the backbone of the continent by different routes, intensified public interest in the land beyond the Missouri. Although the vast interior spaces of the plains and mountains were as yet unknown save to roving bands of explorers, trappers, and Indian traders, already considerable definite information had become disseminated among the people concerning the principal passes of the mountains; while the narrow belts of the overland trails had become quite familiar to the residents of the "States." Each year parties of considerable size made the transcontinental trip. In many cases, however, they suffered hardship and privation of the most painful character. Of their struggles

with the elements, their contests with Indians, their hunger, thirst, and toil, but little has been formally recorded, although traditions exist of horrors fortunately having few equals in the history of the world.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CONTINENT SPANNED BY SETTLEMENT

Two months after the signing of the treaty with Mexico, which definitively gave to us California, the world was startled (April, 1848) by news that gold had been found in deposits of fabulous value at Sutter's Fort, Frémont's rendezvous in the Sacramento Valley. The American El Dorado, so long sought in vain by Spanish wanderers, had at last been discovered. The year previous, Brigham Young had led the Mormon vanguard to Salt Lake, seeking in its desert basin an isolated asylum from the hostile Gentiles. But the opening of the gold diggings led to a mighty westward rush along the overland trail that passed the very door of the Saints. During the spring and summer of 1849, 1,500 wagons, 40,000 oxen and mules, and 27,000 men were ferried across

the Missouri, at the towns between Independence and Council Bluffs. During each of the three succeeding years 100,000 persons from both hemispheres crossed the great river, probably half of them at St. Joseph.

This enormous movement of population quickly resulted in the establishment west of the Missouri of ferries, trading-posts, and military stations, to accommodate and protect the passing throng. A monthly mail-route was soon opened between the Missouri and the Pacific by way of Salt Lake; increased to a weekly service in 1858 as far westward as Salt Lake. Another route was opened on the Santa Fé trail, from Independence to Albuquerque. It was 1858 when St. Louis and San Francisco became connected by the Southern Overland Mail Company's expresses, which made the distance in a month.

California had for ten years been basking in a flood of golden glory, when (July, 1858) the precious metal was also found in the bed of Cherry Creek, at the base of the Colorado hills, where the progressive city of Denver now lies.

By the following spring tens of thousands

of men, of every age, color, and race, were pouring into the valley of Cherry Creek, or "the Pike's Peak country," as it was then called. The Peak itself is fifty miles to the south; but being the most prominent landmark in the region, gave name to it all. Some came across the plains on foot, their worldly possessions on their backs; others were harnessed to hand-carts laden with their belongings; one man trundled a wheelbarrow all the way out from Kansas City, a distance of nearly eight hundred miles. Daily stages were put on between Leavenworth and Denver—the "Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express"—a journey which occupied from ten to fifteen days, the fare being $100 for the 687 miles. But the majority of the immigrants, unable to meet this expense, came by "prairie-schooners," sighting the glistening mountain height for over a hundred miles to the east, and by it guiding their white-winged barks across the dreary plain. Up the valleys of the Platte, the Smoky Hill, and the Arkansas, they came singly or in caravans, often insufficiently provided with the articles necessary for so hazardous a journey; hun-

dreds either perished miserably by the way or arrived at their goal half dead from fatigue, starvation, and the wounds of Indian arrows. Upon the sides of their canvas-covered wagons was often crudely traced in charcoal the jaunty motto of the day, "Pike's Peak or Bust!" Many there were that "busted." The reports of the miseries and sufferings of the overland trail did not in the least, however, check the human tide which had set in the direction of the everlasting hills.

The need for a transcontinental railroad was early recognized. We have seen that one of Frémont's objects in 1845 had been the survey of a railroad route to San Francisco Bay; but the expedition ended in a manner little anticipated. From 1852 to 1854 the Federal Government sent out five surveying parties "to ascertain the most practicable and economical route for a railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean":

1. In 1853-54, Isaac Ingalls Stevens, a topographical engineer and then Governor of Washington Territory, headed a large party which surveyed a route from St. Paul to Puget Sound, along the forty-seventh parallel

—a line now followed in the main by the Northern Pacific, the construction of which was not, however, completed until 1883.

2. Lieutenant E. G. Beckwith, in 1854, explored a route between the forty-first and forty-third parallels, which formed a basis for the work of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific, continuous systems which were physically joined during May, 1869.

3. Captain A. W. Whipple surveyed, in 1853, the line opened by the Atlantic and Pacific road—the Pacific outlet of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé, which connected with the Southern Pacific, completed in 1882.

4. The Southern Pacific's line was delineated by Captain John Pope in 1854.

5. A route for the Denver and Rio Grande, now running between Pueblo, Salt Lake City, Denver, and other points in the mountains, was surveyed by Captain J. W. Gunnison and Lieutenant Beckwith in 1853–54—the former losing his life at the hands of Indians, or possibly of both Mormons and tribesmen.

Among other notable expeditions—to mention but a few of the many contemporaneous surveys during this period of activity

—were: The opening of a road from Puget Sound to Walla Walla, by Lieutenant R. Arnold (1854); the search by F. W. Lander (1854), at the request of citizens of Oregon and Washington Territories, for a railroad route through the Columbia Valley, and by way of South Pass and the Platte River to the Missouri; Lieutenant R. W. Williamson's railroad survey through the passes of the Sierra Nevada and Coast Range and over the Colorado desert (1854); a railroad survey by Lieutenant J. G. Parke (1854–55) from San José to Fort Fillmore, New Mexico; explorations of the Brazos and Big Wichita Rivers, by Captain R. B. Marcy (1854); the march from Fort Leavenworth to California by way of Salt Lake and the Oregon trail, by Colonel Edward J. Steptoe (1854–55); a mounted punitive expedition against the Indians, by Major G. P. Haller (1855), from the Columbia and through South Pass to Fort Boisé; a reconnaissance on the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers by Lieutenant G. K. Warren (1856); and the first Government expedition to Yellowstone National Park, in charge of Captain W. F. Raynolds (1859–60).

The governmental surveys of the boundary between Mexico and the United States, undertaken at intervals between 1849 and 1856, by Captain Whipple, Colonel J. D. Graham, Major Emory, and others, are also deserving of mention in this connection; the country being carefully examined by these parties from the mouth of the Rio Grande to the Pacific, and much interesting scientific information obtained. During 1857 several Government expeditions were in the field—one of them, under Lieutenant Parke, was employed on the Canadian-American boundary-line; others improved mountain surveys previously made; while new wagon roads were opened up, the navigation of important streams investigated, and territorial boundaries definitively established. A contemporary report significantly declares, also, that "the Land Office surveys along the whole frontier are advancing steadily."

By the opening of the war between the States the North American continent had at last been spanned by Anglo-Saxon settlement. The story of Rocky Mountain exploration had

practically reached its end. The overland stages were quickly withdrawn upon the advance of the Pacific railways. The buffalo and the grizzly soon disappeared. The Indian, stoutly standing for his birthright, was cowed at last. There are no longer any Kit Carsons; the French-Canadian voyageur and the Rocky Mountain trapper can only be seen in literature; the explorers of to-day are the engineer armed with his level, the geologist with his hammer, and the botanist with his tin box. Thrifty farms now abut each other to the uttermost limit of the rainy belt and are creeping along the irrigable bases of the mountains. Rapidly growing towns and cities besprinkle the map of the trans-Missouri. Subsidiary railways spider-web the land, while reaching out to gather sustenance for the main transcontinental thoroughfares. The broad, rolling plains where Coronado marched of old, where Pike, and Long, and Frémont made heroic records by combating nature, are the seat of gigantic cattle industry—or perhaps we should say were, for we live fast in America and a decade may with us be the span of an epoch; cowboys

and range cattle are fast being crowded out by homesteaders from every Eastern State and European land. In the picturesque mountain passes, cañons, and parks, where the pioneers of civilization suffered martyrdom in the cause of human progress, are now palace-like hotels for the tourists of the world. Upon the hillsides and in the gulches, where individual adventurers once won fortunes with the pick and the pan, giant corporations armed with costly and intricate machinery dig and delve for deeply hidden riches, the innumerable human ants in their employ being handled with the discipline, the regularity, and the system of an army corps. There are now peace and plenty. The Dark Continent of our grandfathers is the Light Continent of our day. The Far West has become the Great West.

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