have been irretrievably lost. Working through the herds it was decided, in order to get more out of their way, to make a temporary halt for a day or two on the *Tampa*, a small stream flowing into the Shayen. On the second day after, Dixon and Frenière came in with three Indians from a party which had been reconnoitring our camp. They belonged to a hunting village of some three hundred lodges, who were out making buffalo-meat and were just about arranging for a grand "*surround*." It would have been dangerous to risk breaking in upon this, as might easily happen in our ignorance of the locality and their plans. To avert mischief Frenière, on the third day, rode over to the village with a message requesting their chiefs to indicate the time and route for our march. In consequence we were invited to come on to their encampment. Pushing our way through the crowds of buffalo, we were met in the afternoon by two of the chiefs, who escorted us to the village and pointed out the place for our camp. We found the encampment made up of about three hundred lodges of various tribes—Yanktons, Yanktonons, and Sissitons—making about two thousand Indians.

The representations of our guides had insured us a most friendly reception. We were invited to eat in the lodges of different chiefs; the choicest, fattest pieces of buffalo provided for us, and in return they were invited to eat at our camp. The chiefs sat around in a large circle on buffalo robes or blankets, each provided with a deep soup plate and spoon of tin. The first dish was a generous *pot-au-feu*, principally of fat buffalo meat and rice. No one would begin until all the plates were filled. When all was ready the feast began. With the first mouthful each Indian silently laid down his spoon, and each looked at the other. After a pause of bewilderment the interpreter succeeded in having the situation understood. Mr. Nicollet had put among our provisions some Swiss cheese, and to give flavor to the soup a liberal portion of this had been put into the kettles. Until this strange flavor was accounted for the Indians thought they were being poisoned; but, the cheese being shown to them, and explanation made, confidence was restored; and by the aid of several kettles of water well sweetened with molasses, and such other tempting *delicatessen* as could be produced from our stores, the dinner party went on and terminated in great good humor and general satisfaction.

The next day they made their surround. This was their great summer hunt when a provision of meat was made for the year, the winter hunting being in smaller parties. The meat of many fat cows was brought in, and the low scaffolds on which it was laid to be sun-dried were scattered over all the encampment. No such occasion as this was to be found for the use of presents, and the liberal gifts distributed through the village heightened their enjoyment of the feasting and dancing, which was prolonged

through the night. Friendly relations established, we continued our journey.

Having laid down the course of the river by astronomical stations, during three days' travel; we crossed to the left bank and directed our road toward the Devil's Lake, which was the ultimate object of the expedition. The Indian name of the lake is *Mini-wakan*, the Enchanted Water; converted by the whites into Devil's Lake.

Our observations placed the river where we left it in latitude 47° 46′ 29″, longitude 98° 13′ 30″, and elevation above the sea 1,328 feet; the level of the bordering plateaus being about one hundred and sixty feet above the river.

In our journey along this river, mosquitoes had infested the camp in such swarms and such pertinacity that the animals would quit feeding and come up to the fires to shelter themselves in the smoke. So virulent were they that to eat in any quiet was impossible, and we found it necessary to use the long green veils, which to this end had been recommended to us by the fur traders. Tied around our straw hats the brims kept the veils from our faces, making a space within which the plates could be held; and behind these screens we contrived to eat without having the food uncomfortably flavored by mosquito sauce piquante.

After a short day's march of fourteen miles we made our first camp on this famous war and hunting ground, four miles from the *Mini-wakan*. Early in the day's march we had caught sight of the woods and hills bordering the lake, among them being conspicuous a heart-shaped hill near the southern shore. The next day after an hour's march we pitched our camp at the head of a deep bay not far from this hill. To this the Indians have given the name of the "*Heart of the Enchanted Water*," by the whites translated "Heart of the Devil's Lake."

At a wooded lake of fresh water near last night's camp on the plateau we had found traces of a large encampment which had been recently abandoned. The much-trodden ground and trails all round showed that a large party had been here for several weeks. From many cart-wheel tracks and other signs our guides recognized it as a hunting camp of the *Métis*, or *Bois-Brulés*, of the Red River of the North; and the deep ruts cut by the wheels showed that the carts had received their full load, and that the great hunt of the year was over. It was this continuous and widespread hunt that had put in motion the great herds through which we had passed.

Among other interesting features of the northwest we had heard much from our guides about these people and their buffalo hunts; and to have just missed them by a few days only was quite a disappointment.

The home of the Half-breeds is at Pembina in British North America. They are called indifferently *Métis* or Half-breeds, *Bois-Brulés*, and *Gens*

libres or Free People of the North. The Half-breeds themselves are in greater part the descendants of French Canadian traders and others who, in the service of the Fur Company, and principally of the Northwest Company of Montreal, had been stationed at their remote forts, or scattered over the northwest Indian country in gathering furs. These usually took local wives from among the Indian women of the different tribes, and their half Indian children grew up to a natural life of hunting and kindred pursuits, in which their instincts gave them unusual skill.

The Canadian *engagés* of the company who had remained in the country after their term of service had expired were called Free Canadians; and, from their association with the Half-breeds came also the name of *Gens libres*. They were prominently concerned in a singular event which occurred in British America about a quarter of a century before the time of which I am writing. In the rivalry between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Fur and Trading Company of Montreal, the Half-breeds were used by the Northwest Company in their successful attempts to destroy a Scotch colony which had been planted by the Earl of Selkirk on the Red River of the North at its confluence with the Assiniboine, about forty miles above Lake Winnipeg. The colony was founded upon a grant of land made to the Earl by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1811; and about a hundred immigrants were settled at the Forks in 1812, reaching to some two hundred in 1814. This was called the Kildonan settlement, from a parish in the County of Sutherland which had been the home of the immigrants. In August of 1815 it was entirely broken up by the Northwest Company, and the settlers driven away and dispersed. During the following winter and spring the colony was re-established, and in prosperous condition when it was attacked by a force of Half-breeds, under officers of the Northwest Company, and some twenty unresisting persons killed; including Mr. Semple, the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company and five of his officers. In the course of this contest there were acts of a savage brutality, not repugnant, perhaps, to the usages of the Indian country where they were perpetrated, but unknown among civilized men. The opposition made to the colony by the Northwest Company was for the declared reason that "Colonization was unfavorable to the Fur Trade:" their policy was to hold the great part of a continent as a game preserve for the benefit solely of their trade.

The colony was revived when the Northwest was merged in the Hudson's Bay Company, and reoccupied its old site at the Forks of Red River; the settlements extending gradually southward along the banks of the river. The grants of land which had been made to the colonists by the Earl of Selkirk held good under the general grant made to him by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1811, and have been so maintained.

Meantime the Half-breeds had been increasing in number; and, as the buffalo have receded before the settlements in British America, they make their hunting expeditions to the plains around the Devil's Lake. With them, the two important events of the year are the buffalo hunts which they come to these plains to make. They bring with them carts built to carry each the meat of ten buffalo, which they make into *pemmican*. This consists of the meat dried by fire or sun, coarsely pounded and mixed with melted fat, and packed into skin sacks. It is of two qualities; the ordinary pemmican of commerce, being the meat without selection, and the finer, in small sacks, consisting of the choicest parts kneaded up with the marrow. Buffalo tongues, pemmican, and robes, constitute chiefly their trade and support.

When making their hunts the party is usually divided; one-half to hunt, the other to guard the camp. Years ago they were much harassed by the Indians of the various tribes who frequented these buffalo grounds as much to fight as to hunt. But as a result of these conflicts with the Half-breeds the Indians were always obliged to go into mourning; and gradually they had learned to fight shy of these people and of late years had ceased to molest them. They are good shots and good riders, and have a prairie-wide reputation for skill in hunting and bravery in fighting.

We remained on the Devil's Lake over a week, during which three stations were made along the southern shore, giving for the most northern latitude 47° 59′ 29″, and for longitude 98° 28′. Our barometer gave for the top of the "Enchanted Hill" 1,766 feet above the sea, for the plateau 1,486 feet, and for the lake 1,476 feet. It is a beautiful sheet of water, the shores being broken into pleasing irregularity by promontories and many islands. As in some other lakes on the plateau, the water is brackish, but there are fish in it; and it is doubtless much freshened by the rains and melting snows of the spring. No outlet was found, but at the southern end there are low grounds by which at the season of high waters the lake may discharge into the Shayen River. This would put it among the sources of the Red River. The most extended view of its waters obtainable from any of the surrounding hills seemed to reach about forty miles in a northwesterly direction. Accompanied by Dixon or Frenière, I was sent off on several detached excursions to make out what I could of the shape and size of the lake. On one of these I went for a day's journey along the western shore, but was unable in the limited time to carry my work to the northern end. Toward nightfall we found near the shore good water and made there our camp in open ground. Nothing disturbed our rest for several hours, when we were roused by a confused heavy trampling and the usual grunting sounds which announced buffalo. We had barely time to get our animals close in and to throw on

dry wood and stir up the fire, before the herd was upon us. They were coming to the lake for water, and the near ones being crowded forward by those in the rear and disregarding us, they were nigh going directly over us. By shouting and firing our pieces, we succeeded in getting them to make a little space, in which they kept us as they crowded down into the lake. The brackish, salty water, is what these animals like, and to turn the course of such a herd from water at night would be impossible.

Unwieldy as he looks, the buffalo bull moves with a suddenness and alertness that make him at close quarters a dangerous antagonist. Frenière and I being together one day, we discovered a bull standing in the water of a little lake near the shore, and we rode up to see what he was doing there alone. "He may be sick," said Frenière. As we approached we noticed that he was watching us inquiringly, his head high up, with intention, as a bull in an arena. As we got abreast of him within a few yards, he made two or three quick steps toward us and paused. "*Oho! bonjour camarade,*" Frenière called out, and moved his horse a little away. My attention for an instant was diverted to my *riata,* which was trailing, when the bull made a dash at us. I made an effort to get out of his range, but my horse appeared to think that it was in the order of proceeding for me first to fire. A rough graze to his hind quarters which staggered him made him see that the bull had decided to take this particular affair into his own hands, or horns, and under the forcible impression he covered a rod or two of ground with surprising celerity; the bull meanwhile continuing his course across the prairie without even turning his head to look at us. Concluding that it was not desirable to follow up our brief acquaintance, we too continued our way. A good hunter does not kill merely for the sake of killing.

The outward line of the expedition being closed, our route was now turned eastward across the plateau toward the valley of the Red River of the North. The first night was passed at a small fresh-water lake near the Lake of the Serpents, which is salt; and on August 7th we encamped again on the Shayen-oju. Continuing east, we crossed next day the height of land at an elevation of 1,500 feet above sea level, and a few miles farther came in view of the wide-spread valley of the Red River, its green wooded line extending far away to the north on its way to British America. From this point, travelling southerly, a week was spent in sketching and determining positions among the head-waters of its tributaries; and on August 14th we descended again to the valley of the Shayen and recrossed that river at an elevation of 1,228 feet above the sea, its course not many miles below curving northeast to the Red River. Two days later we reached the Lake of the Four Hills, about a hundred feet above the river. This lake is near the foot of the ascent to the *Ré-*

ipahan, or Head of the Coteau des Prairies. We ascended the slope to the highest point at the head of the Coteau, where the elevation was 2,000 feet above the sea and the width of the Coteau about twenty miles. In its extension to the south it reaches, in about a hundred and fifty miles, a breadth of forty miles; sloping abruptly on the west to the great plains of the *Riviere à Jacques,* and on the east to the prairies of the Mini-sotah River. Here we spent several days in the basin of the beautiful lakes which make the head-waters of the Mini-sotah of the Mississippi River, and the Tchankasndata or Sioux River of the Missouri. The two groups of lakes are near together, occupying apparently the same basin, with a slight rise between; the Mini-sotah group being the northern. They lie in a depression or basin, from 150 to 300 feet below the rim of the Coteau, full of clear living water, often partially wooded; and, having sometimes a sandy beach or shore strewed with boulders, they are singularly charming natural features. These were pleasant camping-grounds—wood was abundant, the water was good, and there were fish in the lakes.

From the lake region we descended 800 or 900 feet to the lower prairies, and took up our march for the residence of our friends the Renvilles.

Some well employed time was devoted here to make examinations of the Big Stone and other lakes, and to making observations and collecting materials to render Mr. Nicollet's projected map of this region as nearly complete as practicable. In all these excursions we had the effective aid of the Renvilles, whose familiar knowledge of the country enabled us to economize both labor and time.

The autumn was far advanced when we took our leave of this post. That year the prairie flowers had been exceptional in luxuriance and beauty. The rich lowlands near the house were radiant with asters and golden-rod, and memory chanced to associate these flowers, as the last thing seen, with the place. Since then I have not been in that country or seen the Renvilles; but still I never see the golden-rod and purple asters in handsome bloom, without thinking of that hospitable refuge on the far northern prairies.

Some additional examinations on the water-shed of the Mini-sotah and along the Mississippi closed the labors of these expeditions; and at nightfall early in November I landed at *Prairie du Chien* in a bark canoe, with a detachment of our party. A steamboat at the landing was firing up and just about starting for St. Louis, but we thought it would be pleasant to rest a day or two and enjoy comfortable quarters while waiting for the next boat. But the next boat was in the spring, for next morning it was snowing hard, and the river was frozen from bank to bank. I had time enough

while there to learn two things: one, how to skate; the other, the value of a day.

After some weeks of wagon journey through Illinois, in a severe winter, we reached St. Louis; when, after the party had been cared for, I went on to Washington to assist Mr. Nicollet in working up the material collected in the expeditions.

CHAPTER III.

1840–41—At work in Washington—Companionship with Mr. Nicollet and Mr. Hassler—Interest of Western senators in our work—Mr. Poinsett—Survey of the Des Moines River—Connected by marriage with Senator Benton—Oregon question—Charles Preuss—Planning first expedition to the Rocky Mountains.

THE official report of our return to Washington was duly made. I accompanied Mr. Nicollet in his visit to the President and Mr. Poinsett, by whom he was received with marked cordiality and assured of their great satisfaction in the success of the expedition. It had brought back valuable knowledge concerning a region of great agricultural capacities, little known to the people at large, and which opened to them a new field to occupy. Mr. Poinsett told me of his gratification with the good report which Mr. Nicollet gave him concerning myself; and his kind reception and approval were to me the culminating pleasure of a campaign which had been full of novel interest.

Some pleasant days were spent in welcomes to Mr. Nicollet by his friends in Baltimore, in which I was usually included. Among the agreeable acquaintances made at this time the most interesting to me was Bishop Chanche, of St. Mary's College. Here, as in St. Louis, Mr. Nicollet's relations with the upper clergy were intimate and friendly; and with him I had in this way the advantage of seeing in intimacy men of secluded and dignified lives and large impersonal aims. They received him as the abbots of old welcomed a congenial traveller into their calm retreats when monasteries were seats of learning. The security and peace and orderly comfort made for them a grateful refreshment and relief.

At the college, Mr. Nicollet had his quarters, which were always kept ready for him. He used to take pleasure in showing me in his wardrobes the wealth of linen and other luxuries of his former civilized life; which were all in amusing contrast with that which we had lately been leading, where the chief luxury we could command was a clean skin. It is an uncommon pleasure in a man's life to have such an interior welcome and so real a home in many places as Mr. Nicollet had. The sight of these things usually recalled to him other scenes and events, and led him in confidential