Crossing a dividing ridge in the afternoon, we followed down another little Bear River tributary to the point where it emerged on an open green flat among the hills, timbered with groves and bordered with cane thickets, but without water. A pretty little rivulet, coming out of the hill-side and overhung by tall flowering plants of a species I had not hitherto seen, furnished us with a good camping-place. The evening was cloudy, the temperature at sunset 69°, and the elevation five thousand one hundred and forty feet.

Among the plants occurring along the line of road during the day, *épinettes des prairies* (*Grindelia squarrosa*) was in considerable abundance, and is among the very few plants remaining in bloom—the whole country having now an autumnal appearance, in the crisped and yellow plants and dried-up grasses. Many cranes were seen during the day, with a few antelope, very shy and wild.

August 28th.—During the night we had a thunder-storm, with moderate rain, which has made the air this morning very clear, the thermometer being at 55°. Leaving our encampment at the *Cane Spring* and quitting the trail on which we had been travelling, and which would probably have afforded us a good road to the lake, we crossed some very deep ravines, and in about an hour's travelling again reached the river. We were now in a valley five or six miles wide, between mountain ranges which, about thirty miles below, appeared to close up and terminate the valley, leaving for the river only a very narrow pass, or cañon, behind which we imagined that we should find the broad waters of the lake.

We made the usual halt at the mouth of a small clear stream, having a slightly mineral taste (perhaps of salt), four thousand seven hundred and sixty feet above the gulf. In the afternoon we climbed a very steep sandy hill; and after a slow and winding day's march of twenty-seven miles encamped at a slough on the river. There were great quantities of geese and ducks, of which only a few were shot, the Indians having probably made them very wild. The men employed themselves in fishing, but caught nothing. A skunk (*Mephitis Americana*) which was killed in the afternoon made a supper for one of the messes. The river is bordered occasionally with fields of cane, which we regarded as an indication of our approach to a lake country. We had frequent showers of rain during the night, with thunder.

August 29th.—The thermometer at sunrise was 54°, with air from the northwest, and dark rainy clouds moving on the horizon; rain-squalls and bright sunshine by intervals. I rode ahead with Basil to explore the country, and, continuing about three miles along the river, turned directly off on a trail running toward three marked gaps in the bordering range, where the mountains appeared cut through to their bases, toward which the river plain rose gradually.

Putting our horses into a gallop on some fresh tracks which showed very plainly in the wet path, we came suddenly upon a small party of Shoshonee Indians who had fallen into the trail from the north. We could only communicate by signs; but they made us understand that the road through the chain was a very excellent one, leading into a broad valley which ran to the southward. We halted to noon at what may be called the gate of the pass; on either side of which were huge mountains of rock, between which stole a little pure-water stream, with a margin just sufficiently large for our passage. From the river the plain had gradually risen to an altitude of five thousand five hundred feet, and by meridian observation the latitude of the entrance was 42°.

In the interval of our usual halt several of us wandered along up the stream to examine the pass more at leisure. Within the gate the rocks receded a little back, leaving a very narrow, but most beautiful valley, through which the little stream wound its way, hidden by different kinds of trees and shrubs—aspen, maple, willow, cherry, and elder; a fine verdure of smooth, short grass spread over the remaining space to the bare sides of the rocky walls. These were of a blue limestone, which constitutes the mountain here; and opening directly on the grassy bottom were several curious caves, which appeared to be inhabited by root-diggers. On one side was gathered a heap of leaves for a bed, and they were dry, open and pleasant. On the roofs of the caves I remarked bituminous exudations from the rock.

The trail was an excellent one for pack-horses; but as it sometimes crossed a shelving point, to avoid the shrubbery we were obliged in several places to open a road for the carriage through the wood. A squaw on horseback, accompanied by five or six dogs, entered the pass in the afternoon, but was too much terrified at finding herself in such unexpected company to make any pause for conversation, and hurried off at a good pace—being of course no further disturbed than by an accelerating shout. She was well and showily dressed, and was probably going to a village encamped somewhere near, and evidently did not belong to the tribe of *Root-diggers*.

We had now entered a country inhabited by these people; and as in the course of our voyage we shall frequently meet with them in various stages of existence, it will be well to remark that, scattered over the great region west of the Rocky Mountains and south of the Great Snake River, are numerous Indians whose subsistence is almost solely derived from roots and seeds, and such small animals as chance and great good fortune sometimes bring within their reach. They are miserably poor, armed only with bows and arrows, or clubs; and as the country they inhabit is almost destitute of game, they have no means of obtaining better

arms. In the northern part of the region just mentioned they live generally in solitary families; and farther to the south they are gathered together in villages.

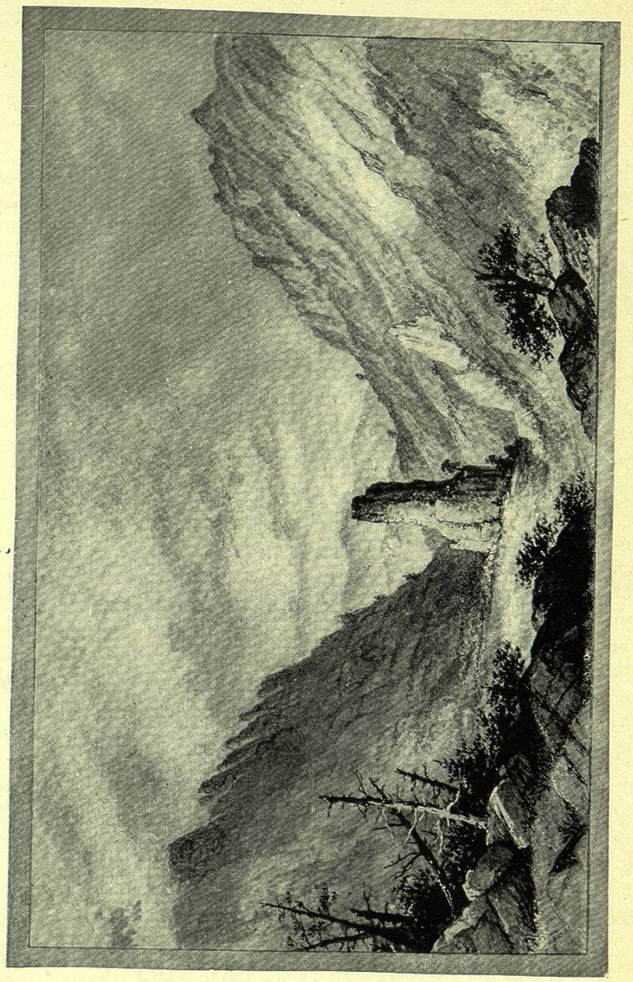
Those who live together in villages, strengthened by association, are in exclusive possession of the more genial and richer parts of the country, while the others are driven to the ruder mountains and to the more inhospitable parts of the country. But simply observing, in accompanying us along our road, will give to the reader a better knowledge of these people than I could give in any other than a very lengthened description.

Roots, seeds, and grass, every vegetable that affords any nourishment, and every living animal thing, insect or worm, they eat. Nearly approaching to the lower animal creation, their sole employment is to obtain food; and they are constantly occupied in a struggle to support existence.

In the annexed view will be found a sketch of the *Standing Rock*—the most remarkable feature of the pass, where a huge rock, fallen from the cliffs above, and standing perpendicularly near the middle of the valley, presents itself like a watch-tower in the pass. It will give a tolerably correct idea of the character of the scenery in this country, where generally the mountains rise abruptly up from comparatively unbroken plains and level valleys; but it will entirely fail in representing the picturesque beauty of this delightful place, where a green valley, full of foliage and a hundred yards wide, contrasts with naked crags that spire up into a blue line of pinnacles three thousand feet above, sometimes crested with cedar and pine, and sometimes ragged and bare.

The detention that we met with in opening the road, and perhaps a willingness to linger on the way, made the afternoon's travel short; and about two miles from the entrance we passed through another gate, and encamped on the stream at the junction of a little fork from the southward, around which the mountains stooped more gently down, forming a small open cove.

As it was still early in the afternoon, Basil and myself in one direction, and Mr. Preuss in another, set out to explore the country, and ascended different neighboring peaks in the hope of seeing some indications of the lake; but though our elevation afforded magnificent views, the eye ranging over a long extent of Bear River, with the broad and fertile *Cache Valley*, in the direction of our search was only to be seen a bed of apparently impracticable mountains. Among these the trail we had been following turned sharply to the northward, and it began to be doubtful if it would not lead us away from the object of our destination; but I nevertheless determined to keep it, in the belief that it would eventually bring us right. A squall of rain drove us out of the mountain, and it was late when we reached the camp. The evening closed in with frequent showers of rain with some lightning and thunder.



STANDING ROCK.

August 30th.—We had constant thunder-storms during the night, but in the morning the clouds were sinking to the horizon, and the air was clear and cold, with the thermometer at sunrise at 39°. Elevation by barometer five thousand five hundred and eighty feet. We were in motion early, continuing up the little stream without encountering any ascent where a horse would not easily gallop, and, crossing a slight dividing ground at the summit, descended upon a small stream, along which we continued on the same excellent road. In riding through the pass numerous cranes were seen; and prairie hens, or grouse (*Bonasia umbellus*), which lately had been rare, were very abundant.

This little affluent brought us to a larger stream, down which we travelled through a more open bottom, on a level road where heavily-laden wagons could pass without obstacle. The hills on the right grew lower, and, on entering a more open country, we discovered a Shoshonee village; and being desirous to obtain information and purchase from them some roots and berries, we halted on the river, which was lightly wooded with cherry, willow, maple, service-berry, and aspen.

A meridian observation of the sun which I obtained here gave 42° 14′ 22″ for our latitude, and the barometer indicated a height of five thousand one hundred and seventy feet. A number of Indians came immediatelely over to visit us, and several men were sent to the village with goods, tobacco, knives, cloth, vermilion, and the usual trinkets, to exchange for provisions. But they had no game of any kind; and it was difficult to obtain any roots from them, as they were miserably poor and had but little to spare from their winter stock of provisions. Several of the Indians drew aside their blankets, showing me their lean and bony figures; and I would not any longer tempt them with a display of our merchandise to part with their wretched subsistence, when they gave as a reason that it would expose them to temporary starvation.

A great portion of the region inhabited by this nation formerly abounded in game; the buffalo ranging about in herds, as we had found them on the eastern waters, and the plains dotted with scattered bands of antelope; but so rapidly have they disappeared within a few years, that now, as we journeyed along, an occasional buffalo-skull and a few wild antelope were all that remained of the abundance which had covered the country with animal life.

The extraordinary rapidity with which the buffalo is disappearing from our territories will not appear surprising when we remember the great scale on which their destruction is yearly carried on. With inconsiderable exceptions, the business of the American trading-posts is carried on in their skins; every year the Indian villages make new lodges, for which the skin of the buffalo furnishes the material; and in that portion of the country where they are still found, the Indians derive their entire support from

them, and slaughter them with a thoughtless and abominable extravagance. Like the Indians themselves, they have been a characteristic of the great West; and as, like them, they are visibly diminishing, it will be interesting to throw a glance backward through the last twenty years, and give some account of their former distribution through the country and the limit of their western range.

The information is derived principally from Mr. Fitzpatrick, supported by my own personal knowledge and acquaintance with the country. Our knowledge does not go farther back than the spring of 1824, at which time the buffalo were spread in immense numbers over the Green River and Bear River Valleys, and through all the country lying between the Colorado, or Green River of the Gulf of California, and Lewis' Fork of the Columbia River; the meridian of Fort Hall then forming the western limit of their range.

The buffalo then remained for many years in that country, and frequently moved down the valley of the Columbia, on both sides of the river, as far as the *Fishing Falls*. Below this point they never descended in any numbers. About the year 1834 or 1835 they began to diminish very rapidly, and continued to decrease until 1838 or 1840, when, with the country we have just described, they entirely abandoned all the waters of the Pacific north of Lewis' Fork of the Columbia. At that time the Flathead Indians were in the habit of finding their buffalo on the heads of Salmon River and other streams of the Columbia; but now they never meet with them farther west than the three forks of the Missouri, or the plains of the Yellowstone River.

In the course of our journey it will be remarked that the buffalo have not so entirely abandoned the waters of the Pacific, in the Rocky Mountain region south of the Sweet Water, as in the country north of the Great Pass. This partial distribution can only be accounted for in the great pastoral beauty of that country, which bears marks of having long been one of their favorite haunts, and by the fact that the white hunters have more frequented the northern than the southern region—it being north of the South Pass that the hunters, trappers, and traders have had their rendezvous for many years past; and from that section also the greater portion of the beaver and rich furs were taken, although always the most dangerous, as well as the most profitable, hunting-ground.

In that region lying between the Green or Colorado River and the head-waters of the Rio del Norte, over the *Yampah, Kooyah, White,* and *Grand* Rivers—all of which are the waters of the Colorado—the buffalo never extended so far to the westward as they did on the waters of the Columbia; and only in one or two instances have they been known to descend as far west as the mouth of White River.

In travelling through the country west of the Rocky Mountains, observations readily led me to the impression that the buffalo had, for the first time, crossed that range to the waters of the Pacific only a few years prior to the period we are considering; and in this opinion I am sustained by Mr. Fitzpatrick and the older trappers in that country.

In the region west of the Rocky Mountains we never meet with any of the ancient vestiges which, throughout all the country lying upon their eastern waters, are found in the *great highways*, continuous for hundreds of miles, always several inches, and sometimes several feet in depth, which the buffalo have made in crossing from one river to another, or in traversing the mountain ranges. The Snake Indians, more particularly those low down upon Lewis' Fork, have always been very grateful to the American trappers for the great kindness (as they frequently expressed it) which they did to them, in driving the buffalo so low down the Columbia River.

The extraordinary abundance of the buffalo on the east side of the Rocky Mountains, and their extraordinary diminution, will be made clearly evident from the following statement: At any time between the years 1824 and 1836 a traveller might start from any given point, south or north, in the Rocky Mountain range, journeying by the most direct route to the Missouri River; and during the whole distance his road would be always among large bands of buffalo, which would never be out of his view until he arrived almost within sight of the abodes of civilization.

At this time the buffalo occupy but a very limited space, principally along the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains, sometimes extending at their southern extremity to a considerable distance into the plains between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers, and along the eastern frontier of New Mexico as far south as Texas.

The following statement, which I owe to the kindness of Mr. Sanford, a partner in the American Fur Company, will further illustrate this subject, by extensive knowledge acquired during several years of travel through the region inhabited by the buffalo:

"The total amount of robes annually traded by ourselves and others will not be found to differ much from the following statement:

	Robes.
American Fur Company	70,000
Hudson's Bay Company	10,000
All other companies, probably	10,000
Making a total of	90,000

as an average annual return for the last eight or ten years.