

country changed its character. From the time we entered the desert, the mountains had been bald and rocky; here they began to be wooded with cedar and pine, and clusters of trees gave shelter to birds—a new and welcome sight—which could not have lived in the desert we had passed.

Descending a long hollow, toward the narrow valley of a stream, we saw before us a snowy mountain, far beyond which appeared another, more lofty still. Good bunch grass began to appear on the hill-sides, and here we found a singular variety of interesting shrubs. The changed appearance of the country infused among our people a more lively spirit, which was heightened by finding at evening a halting-place of very good grass on the clear waters of the *Santa Clara* Fork of the *Rio Virgen*.

CHAPTER XI.

Walker's Courage and Shrewdness—Badeau Killed—Back on Utah Lake—A Brief Summary—We face Eastward again—Uintah Fort—Fuentes lassos a Grizzly—A Narrow Escape—Joined by a Party of Trappers—Fight between Utahs and Arapahoes—Nearing Home—Home again.

May 11th.—The morning was cloudy and quite cool, with a shower of rain—the first we have had since entering the desert, a period of twenty-seven days; and we seem to have entered a different climate, with the usual weather of the Rocky Mountains. Our march to-day was very laborious, over very broken ground, along the *Santa Clara* River; but then the country is no longer so distressingly desolate.

The stream is prettily wooded with sweet cotton-wood trees—some of them of large size; and on the hills, where the nut-pine is often seen, a good and wholesome grass occurs frequently. This cotton-wood, which is now in fruit, is of a different species from any in Michaux's "*Sylva*." Heavy dark clouds covered the sky in the evening, and a cold wind sprang up, making fires and overcoats comfortable.

May 12th.—A little above our encampment the river forked; and we continued up the right-hand branch, gradually ascending toward the summit of the mountain. As we rose toward the head of the creek the snowy mountain on our right showed out handsomely—high, and rugged with precipices, and covered with snow for about two thousand feet from their summits down.

Our animals were somewhat repaid for their hard marches by an excellent camping-ground on the summit of the ridge, which forms here the dividing chain between the waters of the *Rio Virgen*, which goes south to the Colorado, and those of Sevier River, flowing northwardly, and belonging to the Great Basin. We considered ourselves as crossing the rim of the basin; and, entering it at this point, we found here an extensive mountain meadow, rich in bunch grass, and fresh with numerous springs of clear water, all refreshing and delightful to look upon. It was, in fact, those *Las Vegas de Santa Clara*, which had been so long presented to us as the terminating point of the desert, and where the annual caravan from California to New Mexico halted and recruited for some weeks. It

was a very suitable place to recover from the fatigue and exhaustion of a month's suffering in the hot and sterile desert. The meadow was about a mile wide and some ten miles long, bordered by grassy hills and mountains—some of the latter rising two thousand feet, and white with snow down to the level of the *vegas*. Its elevation above the sea was five thousand two hundred and eighty feet; latitude, by observation, $37^{\circ} 28' 28''$; and its distance from where we first struck the Spanish trail about four hundred miles.

Counting from the time we reached the desert, and began to skirt, at our descent from Walker's Pass in the Sierra Nevada, we had travelled five hundred and fifty miles, occupying twenty-seven days, in that inhospitable region. In passing before the great caravan we had the advantage of finding more grass, but the disadvantage of finding also the marauding savages who had gathered down upon the trail, waiting the approach of that prey. This greatly increased our labors, besides costing us the life of an excellent man. We had to move all day in a state of watch and prepared for combat—scouts and flankers out, a front and rear division of our men, and baggage animals in the centre. At night, camp-duty was severe. Those who had toiled all day had to guard, by turns, the camp and the horses all night. Frequently one-third of the whole party were on guard at once; and nothing but this vigilance saved us from attack. We were constantly dogged by bands, and even whole tribes of the marauders; and although Tabeau was killed, and our camp infested and insulted by some, while swarms of them remained on the hills and mountain sides, there was manifestly a consultation and calculation going on to decide the question of attacking us.

Having reached the resting-place of the *Vegas de Santa Clara*, we had complete relief from the heat and privations of the desert, and some relaxation from the severity of camp-duty. Some relaxation, and relaxation only—for camp-guards, horse-guards, and scouts are indispensable from the time of leaving the frontiers of Missouri until we return to them.

After we left the *Vegas* we had the gratification to be joined by the famous hunter and trapper, Mr. Joseph Walker, whom I have before mentioned, and who now became our guide. He had left California with the great caravan; and perceiving, from the signs along the trail, that there was a party of whites ahead, which he judged to be mine, he detached himself from the caravan with eight men (Americans), and ran the gauntlet of the desert robbers, killing two, and getting some of the horses wounded, and succeeded in overtaking us. Nothing but his great knowledge of the country, great courage and presence of mind, and good rifles, could have brought him safe from such a perilous enterprise.

May 13th.—We remained one day at this noted place of rest and re-

freshment; and, resuming our progress in a northeastwardly direction, we descended into a broad valley, the water of which is tributary to Sevier Lake. The next day we came in sight of the Wah-satch range of mountains on the right, white with snow, and here forming the southeast part of the Great Basin. Sevier Lake, upon the waters of which we now were, belonged to the system of lakes in the eastern part of the basin—of which the Great Salt Lake and its southern limb, the Utah Lake, were the principal—toward the region of which we were now approaching. We travelled for several days in this direction, within the rim of the Great Basin, crossing little streams which bore to the left for Sevier Lake; and plainly seeing, by the changed aspect of the country, that we were entirely clear of the desert and approaching the regions which appertained to the system of the Rocky Mountains. We met, in this traverse, a few mounted Utah Indians, in advance of their main body, watching the approach of the great caravan.

May 16th.—We reached a small salt lake, about seven miles long and one broad, at the northern extremity of which we encamped for the night. This little lake, which well merits its characteristic name, lies immediately at the base of the Wah-satch range, and nearly opposite a gap in that chain of mountains through which the Spanish trail passes; and which, again falling upon the waters of the Colorado, and crossing the river, proceeds over a mountainous country to Santa Fé.

May 17th.—After four hundred and forty miles of travelling on a trail which served for a road, we again found ourselves under the necessity of exploring a track through the wilderness. The Spanish trail had borne off to the southeast, crossing the Wah-satch range. Our course led to the northeast, along the foot of that range, and leaving it on the right. The mountain presented itself to us under the form of several ridges, rising one above the other, rocky, and wooded with pine and cedar; the last ridge covered with snow. Sevier River, flowing northwardly to the lake of the same name, collects its principal waters from this section of the Wah-satch chain.

We had now entered a region of great pastoral promise, abounding with fine streams; the rich bunch grass—soil that would produce wheat, and indigenous flax—growing as if it had been sown. Consistent with the general character of its bordering mountains, this fertility of soil and vegetation does not extend far into the Great Basin. Mr. Joseph Walker, our guide, and who has more knowledge of these parts than any man I know, informed me that all the country to the left was unknown to him, and that even the *Digger* tribes, which frequented Lake Sevier, could tell him nothing about it.

May 20th.—We met a band of Utah Indians, headed by a chief who

had obtained the American or English name of Walker, by which he is quoted and well known. They were all mounted, armed with rifles, and use their rifles well. The chief had a fusee, which he had carried slung, in addition to his rifle. They were journeying slowly toward the Spanish trail, to levy their usual tribute upon the great Californian caravan. They were robbers of a higher order than those of the desert. They conducted their depredations with form, and under the color of trade, and toll for passing through their country. Instead of attacking and killing, they affect to purchase—taking the horses they like, and giving something nominal in return. The chief was quite civil to me. He was personally acquainted with his namesake, our guide, who made my name known to him. He knew of my expedition of 1842; and, as tokens of friendship and proof that we had met, proposed an interchange of presents. We had no great store to choose out of; so he gave me a Mexican blanket, and I gave him a very fine one which I had obtained at Vancouver.

May 23d.—We reached Sevier River—the main tributary of the lake of the same name—which, deflecting from its northern course, here breaks from the mountains to enter the lake. It was really a fine river, from eight to twelve feet deep; and, after searching in vain for a fordable place, we made little boats (or rather rafts) out of bulrushes, and ferried across. These rafts are readily made, and give a good conveyance across a river. The rushes are bound in bundles, and tied hard; the bundles are tied down upon poles, as close as they can be pressed, and fashioned like a boat, in being broader in the middle and pointed at the ends. The rushes, being tubular and jointed, are light and strong. The raft swims well, and is shoved along by poles, or paddled, or pushed and pulled by swimmers, or drawn by ropes. On this occasion we used ropes—one at each end—and rapidly drew our little float backward and forward, from shore to shore. The horses swam.

At our place of crossing, which was the most northern point of its bend, the latitude was $39^{\circ} 22' 19''$. The banks sustained the character of fertility and vegetation which we had seen for some days. The name of this river and lake was an indication of our approach to regions of which our people had been the explorers. It was probably named after some American trapper or hunter, and was the first American name we had met with since leaving the Columbia River. From the *Dalles* to the point where we turned across the Sierra Nevada, near one thousand miles, we heard Indian names, and the greater part of the distance none; from Nueva Helvetia (Sacramento) to *Las Vegas de Santa Clara*, about one thousand more, all were Spanish; from the Mississippi to the Pacific, French and American or English were intermixed; and this prevalence of names indicates the national character of the first explorers.



THE DIGGER INDIAN.

We had here the misfortune to lose one of our people, François Badeau, who had been with me in both expeditions; during which he had always been one of my most faithful and efficient men. He was killed in drawing toward him a gun by the muzzle; the hammer, being caught, discharged the gun, driving the ball through his head. We buried him on the banks of the river.

Crossing the next day a slight ridge along the river, we entered a handsome mountain valley covered with fine grass, and directed our course toward a high snowy peak, at the foot of which lay the Utah Lake. On our right was a ridge of high mountains, their summits covered with snow, constituting the dividing ridge between the basin waters and those of the Colorado. At noon we fell in with a party of Utah Indians coming out of the mountain, and in the afternoon encamped on a tributary to the lake, which is separated from the waters of the Sevier by very slight dividing grounds.

Early the next day we came in sight of the lake; and, as we descended to the broad bottoms of the Spanish Fork, three horsemen were seen galloping toward us, who proved to be Utah Indians—scouts from a village which was encamped near the mouth of the river. They were armed with rifles and their horses were in good condition. We encamped near them, on the Spanish Fork, which is one of the principal tributaries to the lake. Finding the Indians troublesome, and desirous to remain here a day, we removed the next morning farther down the lake, and encamped on a fertile bottom near the foot of the same mountainous ridge which borders the Great Salt Lake, and along which we had journeyed the previous September.

Here the principal plants in bloom were two, which were remarkable as affording to the Snake Indians—the one an abundant supply of food, and the other the most useful among the applications which they use for wounds. These were the kooyah plant, growing in fields of extraordinary luxuriance, and *Convallaria stellata*, which, from the experience of Mr. Walker, is the best remedial plant known among those Indians. A few miles below us was another village of Indians, from which we obtained some fish—among them a few salmon-trout, which were very much inferior in size to those among the California mountains. The season for taking them had not yet arrived; but the Indians were daily expecting them to come up out of the lake.

We had now accomplished an object we had in view when leaving the Dalles of the Columbia in November last: we had reached the Utah Lake; but by a route very different from what we had intended, and without sufficient time remaining to make the examinations which were desired. It is a lake of note in this country, under the dominion of the Utahs, who resort to it for fish. Its greatest breadth is about fifteen miles, stretching