

south 20° east. Here the river enters between lofty precipices of red rock, and the country below is said to assume a very rugged character; the river and its affluents passing through cañons which forbid all access to the water. This sheltered little valley was formerly a favorite wintering ground for the trappers, as it afforded them sufficient pasturage for their animals, and the surrounding mountains are well stocked with game.

We surprised a flock of mountain sheep as we descended to the river, and our hunters killed several. The bottoms of a small stream called the Vermilion Creek, which enters the left bank of the river, a short distance below our encampment, were covered abundantly with *F. vermicularis*, and other chenopodiaceous shrubs. From the lower end of Brown's Hole we issued by a remarkably dry cañon, fifty or sixty yards wide, and rising, as we advanced, to the height of six or eight hundred feet. Issuing from this, and crossing a small green valley, we entered another rent of the same nature, still narrower than the other, the rocks on either side rising in nearly vertical precipices perhaps one thousand five hundred feet in height.

These places are mentioned, to give some idea of the country lower down on the Colorado, to which the trappers usually apply the name of a cañon-country. The cañon opened upon a pond of water, where we halted at noon. Several flocks of mountain sheep were here among the rocks, which rung with volleys of small arms. In the afternoon we entered upon an ugly, barren, and broken country, corresponding well with that we had traversed a few degrees north, on the same side of the Colorado. The Vermilion Creek afforded us brackish water and indifferent grass for the night.

A few scattered cedar-trees were the only improvement of the country on the following day; and at a little spring of bad water, where we halted at noon, we had not even the shelter of these from the hot rays of the sun. At night we encamped in a fine grove of cotton-wood trees on the banks of the Elk Head River, the principal fork of the Yampah River, commonly called by the trappers Bear River. We made here a very strong *corral* and fort, and formed the camp into vigilant guards. The country we were now entering is constantly infested by war parties of the Sioux and other Indians, and is considered among the most dangerous war-grounds in the Rocky Mountains; parties of whites having been repeatedly defeated on this river.

On the 11th we continued up the river, which is a considerable stream fifty to a hundred yards in width, handsomely and continuously wooded with groves of the narrow-leaved cotton-wood (*Populus angustifolia*); with these were thickets of willow and *Grains de bœuf*. The characteristic plant along the river is *F. vermicularis*, which generally covers the bottoms; mingled with this, are saline shrubs and artemisia. The new variety

of grass which we had seen on leaving the Uintah Fort, had now disappeared.

The country on either side was sandy and poor, scantily wooded with cedars, but the river bottoms afforded good pasture. Three antelopes were killed in the afternoon, and we encamped a little below a branch of the river, called St. Vrain's Fork. A few miles above was the fort at which Frapp's party had been defeated two-years since; and we passed during the day a place where Carson had been fired upon so close that one of the men had five bullets through his body. Leaving this river the next morning, we took our way across the hills, where every hollow had a spring of running water, with good grass.

Yesterday and to-day we have had before our eyes the high mountains which divide the Pacific from the Mississippi waters; and entering here among the lower spurs, or foot-hills of the range, the face of the country began to improve with a magical rapidity. Not only the river bottoms, but the hills, were covered with grass; and among the usual varied flora of the mountain region these were occasionally blue with the showy bloom of a *lupinus*.

In the course of the morning we had the first glad view of buffalo, and welcomed the appearance of two old bulls with as much joy as if they had been messengers from home; and, when we descended at noon on St. Vrain's Fork, an affluent of Green River, the hunters brought in mountain sheep and the meat of two fat bulls. Fresh entrails in the river showed us that there were Indians above; and, at evening, judging it unsafe to encamp in the bottoms, which were wooded only with willow-thickets, we ascended to the spurs above, and fortified strongly in a small aspen-grove, near to which was a spring of cold water. The hunters killed two fine cows near the camp.

A band of elk broke out of a neighboring grove; antelopes were running over the hills; and on the opposite river plains herds of buffalo were raising clouds of dust. The country here appeared more variously stocked with game than any part of the Rocky Mountains we had visited; and its abundance is owing to the excellent pasturage and its dangerous character as a war-ground.

June 13th.—There was snow here near our mountain camp, and the morning was beautiful and cool. Leaving St. Vrain's Fork, we took our way directly toward the summit of the dividing ridge. The bottoms of the streams and level places were wooded with aspens; and as we neared the summit we entered again the piny region.

We had a delightful morning's ride, the ground affording us an excellent bridle-path, and reached the summit toward mid-day, at an elevation of eight thousand feet. With joy and exultation we saw ourselves once more

on the top of the Rocky Mountains, and beheld a little stream taking its course toward the rising sun. It was an affluent of the Platte, called *Pul-lam's* Fork, and we descended at noon upon it. It is a pretty stream, twenty yards broad, and bears the name of a trapper who, some years since, was killed here by the *Gros Ventre* Indians.

Issuing from the pines, in the afternoon we saw spread out before us the Valley of the Platte, with the pass of the Medicine Butte beyond, and some of the Sweet Water Mountains; but a smoky haziness in the air entirely obscured the Wind River chain.

We were now about two degrees south of the South Pass, and our course home would have been eastwardly; but that would have taken us over ground already examined, and therefore without the interest which would excite curiosity.

Southwardly there were objects worthy to be explored, to wit: The approximation of the head-waters of three different rivers—the Platte, the Arkansas, and the Grand River Fork of the Rio Colorado of the Gulf of California; the passes at the heads of these rivers; and the three remarkable mountain coves, called parks, in which they took their rise. One of these parks was, of course, on the western side of the dividing ridge; and a visit to it would require us once more to cross the summit of the Rocky Mountains to the west, and then to recross to the east; making in all, with the transit we had just accomplished, three crossings of that mountain in this section of its course. But, no matter. The coves, the heads of the rivers, the approximation of their waters, the practicability of the mountain passes, and the locality of the THREE PARKS, were all objects of interest; and, although well known to hunters and trappers, were unknown to science and to history. We therefore changed our course, and turned up the Valley of the Platte, instead of going down it.

We crossed several small affluents, and again made a fortified camp in a grove. The country had now become very beautiful—rich in water, grass, and game; and to these were added the charm of scenery and pleasant weather.

June 14th.—Our route this morning lay along the foot of the mountain, over the long, low spurs which sloped gradually down to the river, forming the broad Valley of the Platte. The country is beautifully watered—in almost every hollow ran a clear, cool, mountain stream; and in the course of the morning we crossed seventeen, several of them being large creeks forty to fifty feet wide, with a swift current and tolerably deep. These were variously wooded with groves of aspen and cotton-wood, with willow, cherry, and other shrubby trees. Buffalo, antelope, and elk were frequent during the day; and, in their abundance, the latter sometimes reminded us slightly of the Sacramento Valley.

We halted at noon on Potter's Fork—a clear and swift stream forty yards wide, and in many places deep enough to swim our animals; and in the evening encamped on a pretty stream, where there were several beaver-dams, and many trees recently cut down by the beaver. We gave to this the name of Beaver-dam Creek, as now they are becoming sufficiently rare to distinguish by their name the streams on which they are found. In this mountain they occurred more abundantly than elsewhere in all our journey, in which their vestiges had been scarcely seen.

The next day we continued our journey up the valley, the country presenting much the same appearance except that the grass was more scanty on the ridges, over which was spread a scrubby growth of sage; but still the bottoms of the creeks were broad, and afforded good pasture-grounds. We had an animated chase after a grizzly bear this morning, which we tried to lasso. Fuentes threw the lasso upon his neck; but it slipped off, and he escaped into the dense thickets of the creek, into which we did not like to venture. Our course in the afternoon brought us to the main Platte River, here a handsome stream with a uniform breadth of seventy yards, except where widened by frequent islands. It was apparently deep, with a moderate current, and wooded with groves of large willow.

The valley narrowed as we ascended, and presently degenerated into a gorge, through which the river passed as through a gate. We entered it, and found ourselves in the New Park—a beautiful circular valley of thirty miles diameter, walled in all round with snowy mountains, rich with water and with grass, fringed with pine on the mountain sides below the snow-line, and a paradise to all grazing animals. The Indian name for it signifies "*Cow Lodge*," of which our own may be considered a translation; the enclosure, the grass, the water, and the herds of buffalo roaming over it, naturally presenting the idea of a park. We halted for the night just within the gate, and expected, as usual, to see herds of buffalo; but an Arapahoe village had been before us, and not one was to be seen. Latitude of the encampment, $40^{\circ} 52' 44''$. Elevation, by the boiling-point, seven thousand seven hundred and twenty feet.

It is from this elevated *cove*, and from the gorges of the surrounding mountains, and some lakes within their bosoms, that the Great Platte River collects its first waters and assumes its first form; and certainly no river could ask a more beautiful origin.

June 16th.—In the morning we pursued our way through the park, following a principal branch of the Platte, and crossing, among many smaller ones, a bold stream, scarcely fordable, called Lodge Pole Fork, and which issues from a lake in the mountains on the right, ten miles long. In the evening we encamped on a small stream near the upper end of the park. Latitude of the camp, $40^{\circ} 33' 22''$.

June 17th.—We continued our way among the waters of the park, over the foot-hills of the bordering mountains, where we found good pasturage, and surprised and killed some buffalo. We fell into a broad and excellent trail, made by buffalo, where a wagon would pass with ease; and in the course of the morning we crossed the summit of the Rocky Mountains, through a pass which was one of the most beautiful we had ever seen. The trail led among aspens, through open grounds richly covered with grass, and carried us over an elevation of about nine thousand feet above the level of the sea.

The country appeared to great advantage in the delightful summer weather of the mountains, which we still continued to enjoy. Descending from the pass we found ourselves again on the western waters, and halted at noon on the edge of another mountain valley, called the Old Park, in which is formed Grand River, one of the principal branches of the Colorado of California.

We were now moving with some caution, as, from the trail, we found the Arapahoe village had also passed this way. As we were coming out of their enemy's country, and this was a war-ground, we were desirous to avoid them. After a long afternoon's march we halted at night on a small creek, tributary to a main fork of Grand River, which ran through this portion of the valley. The appearance of the country in the Old Park is interesting, though of a different character from the New; instead of being a comparative plain, it is more or less broken into hills and surrounded by the high mountains, timbered on the lower parts with quaking asp and pines.

June 18th.—Our scouts, who were as usual ahead, made from a butte this morning the signal of Indians, and we rode up in time to meet a party of about thirty Arapahoes. They were men and women going into the hills—the men for game, the women for roots—and informed us that the village was encamped a few miles above, on the main fork of Grand River, which passes through the midst of the valley. I made them the usual presents; but they appeared disposed to be unfriendly, and galloped back at speed to the village. Knowing that we had trouble to expect, I descended immediately into the bottoms of Grand River, which were overflowed in places, the river being up, and made the best encampment the ground afforded. We had no time to build a fort, but found an open place among the willows which was defended by the river on one side and the overflowed bottoms on the other. We had scarcely made our few preparations when about two hundred of them appeared on the verge of the bottom, mounted, painted, and armed for war. We planted the American flag between us; and a short parley ended in a truce, with something more than the usual amount of presents. About twenty Sioux were with them

—one of them an old chief who had always been friendly to the whites. He informed me that, before coming down, a council had been held at the village, in which the greater part had declared for attacking us—we had come from their enemies, to whom we had doubtless been carrying assistance in arms and ammunition; but his own party, with some few of the Arapahoes who had seen us the previous year in the plains, opposed it.

It will be remembered that it is customary for this people to attack the trading parties which they meet in this region, considering all whom they meet on the western side of the mountains to be their enemies. They deceived me into the belief that I should find a ford at their village, and I could not avoid accompanying them; but put several sloughs between us and their village, and fortified strongly on the banks of the river, which was everywhere rapid and deep, and over a hundred yards in breadth. The camp was generally crowded with Indians; and though the baggage was carefully watched and covered a number of things were stolen.

The next morning we descended the river for about eight miles, and halted a short distance above a cañon through which Grand River issued from the park. Here it was smooth and deep, one hundred and fifty yards in breadth, and its elevation at this point six thousand seven hundred feet. A frame for the boat being very soon made our baggage was ferried across; the horses, in the meantime, swimming over. A southern fork of Grand River here makes its junction, nearly opposite to the branch by which we had entered the valley, and up this we continued for about eight miles in the afternoon, and encamped in a bottom on the left bank, which afforded good grass. At our encampment it was seventy to ninety yards in breadth, sometimes widened by islands, and separated into several channels, with a very swift current and bed of rolled rocks.

On the 20th we travelled up the left bank, with the prospect of a bad road, the trail here taking the opposite side; but the stream was up, and nowhere fordable. A piny ridge of mountains, with bare, rocky peaks, was on our right all the day, and a snowy mountain appeared ahead. We crossed many foaming torrents with rocky beds, rushing down to the river; and in the evening made a strong fort in an aspen-grove. The valley had already become very narrow, shut up more closely in densely timbered mountains, the pines sweeping down to the verge of the bottoms. The *coq de prairie* (*Tetrao europhasianus*) was occasionally seen among the sage.

We saw to-day the returning trail of an Arapahoe party which had been sent from the village to look for Utahs in the Bayou Salade (South Park); and it being probable that they would visit our camp with the desire to return on horseback, we were more than usually on the alert.

Here the river diminished to thirty-five yards, and, notwithstanding the number of affluents we had crossed, was still a large stream, dashing swiftly

by, with a great continuous fall, and not yet fordable. We had a delightful ride along a good trail among the fragrant pines; and the appearance of buffalo in great numbers indicated that there were Indians in the Bayou Salade (South Park), by whom they were driven out. We halted to noon under the shade of the pines, and the weather was most delightful. The country was literally alive with buffalo; and the continued echoes of the hunters' rifles on the other side of the river for a moment made me uneasy, thinking perhaps they were engaged with Indians; but in a short time they came into camp with the meat of seven fat cows.

During the earlier part of the day's ride the river had been merely a narrow ravine between high piny mountains, backed on both sides, but particularly on the west, by a line of snowy ridges; but, after several hours' ride, the stream opened out into a valley with pleasant bottoms. In the afternoon the river forked into three apparently equal streams; broad buffalo trails leading up the left-hand, and the middle branch indicating good passes over the mountains; but up on the right-hand branch, (which, in the object of descending from the mountain by the main head of the Arkansas, I was most desirous to follow) there was no sign of a buffalo trace. Apprehending from this reason, and the character of the mountains, which are known to be extremely rugged, that the right-hand branch led to no pass, I proceeded up the middle branch, which formed a flat valley bottom between timbered ridges on the left, and snowy mountains on the right, terminating in large buttes of naked rock. The trail was good, and the country interesting; and at nightfall we encamped in an open place among the pines, where we built a strong fort. The mountains exhibit their usual varied growth of flowers, and at this place I noticed, among others, *Thermopsis montana*, whose bright-yellow color makes it a showy plant. This has been a characteristic in many parts of the country since reaching the Uintah waters. With fields of iris were *Aquilegia cærulea*, violets, esparcette, and strawberries.

At dark we perceived a fire in the edge of the pines on the opposite side of the valley. We had evidently not been discovered, and, at the report of a gun and the blaze of fresh fuel which was heaped on our fires, those of the strangers were instantly extinguished. In the morning they were found to be a party of six trappers who had ventured out among the mountains after beaver. They informed us that two of the number with which they started had been already killed by the Indians—one of them but a few days since—by the Arapahoes we had lately seen, who had found him alone at a camp on this river, and carried off his traps and animals. As they were desirous to join us the hunters returned with them to their encampment, and we continued up the valley, in which the stream rapidly diminished, breaking into small tributaries—every hollow affording water.

At our noon halt the hunters joined us with the trappers. While preparing to start from their encampment they found themselves suddenly surrounded by a party of Arapahoes, who informed them that their scouts had discovered a large Utah village in the Bayou Salade (South Park), and that a large war-party, consisting of almost every man in the village except those who were too old to go to war, were going over to attack them. The main body had ascended the left fork of the river, which afforded a better pass than the branch we were on; and this party had followed our trail, in order that we might add our force to theirs. Carson informed them that we were too far ahead to turn back, but would join them in the bayou; and the Indians went off apparently satisfied. By the temperature of boiling water our elevation here was ten thousand four hundred and thirty feet; and still the pine-forest continued, and grass was good.

In the afternoon we continued our road—occasionally through open pines, with a very gradual ascent. We surprised a herd of buffalo, enjoying the shade at a small lake among the pines; and they made the dry branches crack, as they broke through the woods. In a ride of about three-quarters of an hour, and having ascended perhaps eight hundred feet, we reached the SUMMIT OF THE DIVIDING RIDGE, which would thus have an estimated height of eleven thousand two hundred feet. Here the river spreads itself into small branches and springs, heading nearly in the summit of the ridge, which is very narrow. Immediately below us was a green valley, through which ran a stream; and a short distance opposite rose snowy mountains, whose summits were formed into peaks of naked rock.

We soon afterward satisfied ourselves that immediately beyond these mountains was the main branch of the Arkansas River—most probably heading directly with the little stream below us, which gathered its waters in the snowy mountains near by. Descriptions of the rugged character of the mountains around the head of the Arkansas, which their appearance amply justified, deterred me from making any attempt to reach it, which would have involved a greater length of time than now remained at my disposal.

In about a quarter of an hour we descended from the summit of the pass into the creek below, our road having been very much controlled and interrupted by the pines and springs on the mountain-side. Turning up the stream, we encamped on a bottom of good grass near its head, which gathers its waters in the dividing crest of the Rocky Mountains, and, according to the best information we could obtain, separated only by the rocky wall of the ridge from the head of the main Arkansas River.

By the observations of the evening, the latitude of our encampment was $39^{\circ} 20' 24''$, and south of which, therefore, is the head of the Arkansas River. The stream on which we had encamped is the head of either the *Fontaine-qui-bouit*, a branch of the Arkansas, or the remotest head of the