

armed parties scouring the prairies in various directions in search of water, Indians, and our lost animals. About noon, after a toilsome journey through a hilly and broken country, the command crossed the bed of a stream which was evidently a large river during the rainy season. At this time but little water was found, and that so salt that it was impossible to drink it. Towards night we came to the banks of a clear and delicious fresh-water stream, called, as we afterward ascertained, the Quintufue, the waters of which were bubbling along over a bed of golden sand. Running nearly north and south, at the distance of some six miles to our left, was the chain of hills I have mentioned, and rising above the rest were three peaks, which really deserved the name of mountains. We crossed the stream with our wagons, and encamped close on the opposite side.

Scarcely had we unsaddled our horses and turned them loose before one of our hunting parties came in and reported that a large body of Indians were in our immediate vicinity, and that they had driven off an immense *cavallada* or drove of horses. Soon another party arrived, with information that they had met a small body of Indians, one of whom spoke Spanish. They said that they were Caygüas, and on being interrogated concerning the direction towards Santa Fé, gave equivocal answers. They pointed to the southwest, however, to what appeared a passage through the hills, and said that was the direction to Chihuahua. They pretended to know nothing about the Rio Colorado or Red River. These Indians were mounted on fine horses, dressed in buckskin, and armed with lances and bows and arrows.

The stream upon which we were now encamped ap-

peared to have its source in the long chain of hills upon our left, and ran in nearly a northeast direction. A short distance above us, occupying a beautiful situation on the same stream, the main camp of the Indians in our neighbourhood was discovered. It had apparently been just deserted, the inhabitants, in their great haste to drive off and secure their horses, not having time even to *cache** their other property. Tent-poles, skins, numerous rough utensils, besides a quantity of dried buffalo, mustang, and deer meat, were found precisely as they had left them. The latter we appropriated to our own use, and, in our half-starving condition, was found extremely palatable.

Captain Strain, with a party of twenty or twenty-five men, was ordered out immediately, with orders to find and bring in some of the Indians, if possible, and at all events to ascertain their feelings and intentions. In the mean time the horses and cattle were herded close within the lines, a strong guard set, and the cannon placed in an advantageous position to guard against a night attack. The night passed off, however, without any alarm.

The journey was resumed early in the morning, our course being now nearly north to avoid the chain of hills on our left. By many it was thought that Red River came through a pass in this chain, and it was even conjectured that we should find that stream at the base of the farthest mountain in the ridge, so well did the region about us answer the description given by Carlos, before he left us, of the country in the immediate vicinity of the Narrows.

* This is a term used by the Rocky Mountain trappers and Western traders, and is equivalent to the English word *bury*. Furs and other valuables, when secreted in the ground, are called *cached*. The word is an obvious derivative from the French *cache*, to hide.

A party of some twenty or thirty had gone forward in the morning for the purpose of finding the best road, while the main body followed slowly on. While stopping to noon, near a small hole of muddy water, the last-mentioned party returned, and reported that they had encountered deep and impassable ravines in a northern direction—impassable even for mules. A halt for the night, although there was no water by this time even for the men, was now called, and a party of ten picked men, well mounted, sent out under Lieutenant Hann to scour the country in a northeast direction, in order, if possible, to find a road around the head of the gullies and ravines. At the time, it was considered impossible to cross, with the wagons, the high and rugged hills and mountains west of us, and our only course appeared to be by a road to the northeast.

In the mean time night overtook us, and still no tidings were received from Captain Strain, who had now been out more than twenty-four hours. The bright dreams of the night before vanished when we saw that our onward course was impeded by impassable barriers, and in their stead were forebodings of the gloomiest nature. When the mind is harassed by uncertainty, it is singular how trifling a thing can raise the spirits to the highest pitch of excitement or depress them to a state bordering on despair.

We passed another night sadly enough, yet without an alarm or losing any of our horses; but the morning brought no news of Captain Strain. Our camp was in a small bend, protected in the rear by a skirting of cotton-wood and hackberry trees which fringed the dry bed of a creek. The berries of the latter tree were ripe, and the limbs were completely stripped by our men, to satisfy a gnawing desire for food of a vegetable nature, and to appease hunger.

A report was raised, early in the morning, that fresh water had been discovered two miles distant, in the direction of the mountains, and our suffering animals were driven there immediately; but at about eight o'clock they returned unsuccessful in their search. To endure the horrible sufferings we were experiencing seemed no longer possible, and, at a consultation held among the officers, it was resolved to fall back upon the stream we had left the previous morning, and there await the return of the scouting parties which had been sent out. The weather, I might here add, was insupportably hot, adding much to our suffering.

Our conjectures were anything but flattering on account of the continued absence of Captain Strain and his party, now out more than thirty-six hours. It was known, however, that both he and Lieutenant Hann, as well as the parties of three and five who were out hunting for water on their own account, could easily find their way back to camp by following the trail of the wagons, and immediate preparations were accordingly made to retrace our steps to the old camp, or some point higher up on the same stream.

The horses and mules were driven up and saddled, the oxen were yoked, and the other preparatory work was in progress for our departure, when suddenly a young man came dashing into camp from the northward, evidently much agitated, and announced that a large body of Indians were pursuing a party of our men directly towards us. Scarcely had he finished speaking before a firing was heard but a few hundred yards distant, a slight roll of the prairie concealing the combatants from our sight. Fast as they could mount horses, a party of some fifty of our men dashed off towards the scene of strife, while the wagons were drawn up in

square, the cattle and horses brought inside, and every preparation made to resist an attack, which was now considered certain. The first impression was, that the scouting-parties had been entirely cut off, and that these successes would induce the Indians to attack our main body.

Just as the party of our men who had gone out to the relief of their companions reached the spot, the Indians retreated; but their bloody work was done. Scattered about within the circumference of a few yards were the dead bodies of Lieutenant Hull and four of our men, stripped, scalped, and horribly mutilated, while the appearance of the ground gave strong evidence that manfully and with strong hearts they had resisted the attack of their adversaries. They had left camp but a short time previous, probably with the hope of finding water, and in returning had been thus cruelly murdered. But one look at their mangled bodies was sufficient to stir deep feelings of revenge in every heart, and madly did our men spur their horses in pursuit, with the vain hope of avenging the death of their companions. The Indians were at least four times their number, yet they retreated, and, being far better mounted, were able to keep out of the way. So near, however, were our men, that they could plainly see the dead bodies of several of the Indians, packed upon extra horses they had with them for that purpose. The prairie warriors always have horses trained especially to carry off their dead or wounded companions, which they take with them on going into action; and it is considered one of the greatest calamities that can befall them if they are compelled to leave one of their number in the hands of an enemy.

The pursuit of the bloodthirsty Cayguas, for such the Indians proved to be, was continued by our men until

it was evident that they could not be overtaken, and then reluctantly given up. Several times during the chase, the Indians reined up their well-trained horses on the higher rolls of the prairies, and formed in line as if intending to give battle; but before our men could get within gunshot they were off again, with lightning speed, across the plain. On returning to the spot where our men had fallen, a closer examination showed how hard and desperate had been the struggle. Lieutenant Hull had received no less than thirty lance and arrow wounds before he fell, and the broken stock of one of Colt's rifles was still retained in the grasp of a stout man, named Mayby, plainly telling us that he had fought to the last, and that after discharging the piece he had still continued the combat. The heart of one of the men was cut out, and had not the Indians been driven off the other bodies would have been mutilated in the same way. Two of the horses of our unfortunate comrades were lanced close by—the others were probably in better condition and more able to run, and had been taken off as spoils by the savages. It was evident enough that Lieutenant Hull and his men had retreated from the Indians until they had found it impossible to elude them, and that they had then thrown themselves from their horses in a body and sold their lives at a fearful rate. The resistance they made had probably terrified their adversaries, and induced them to fly when they saw our party coming up, although they outnumbered the Texans at least as three to one.

A party of fifty well-armed men, taking with them shovels, were sent out immediately on the melancholy errand of burying our murdered companions, while the main body retraced their steps towards the Quintufie, which is said to be a branch of the Palo Duro, or Hard

Wood River. Scarcely had we started, before all were rejoiced by the appearance of Captain Strain with part of his men. He told us that he had scoured the prairies in almost every direction, but without success, having been unable to hold a parley with any of the Indians, although he had seen several small parties. He also reported that he had been unable to find either a road or water: there was a route by which the ravines might be headed in a course a little north of east, but in no other direction. A part of his men had left him early in the morning, having gone back to the Quintufue for water.

About noon the main body of the command again reached the river, at a point somewhat higher up than the former camping-ground. Here, after drinking incredible quantities of the water, and allowing our suffering animals also to quench a thirst which their eyes and general appearance too plainly showed had nearly driven them mad, a strong position was chosen, and we encamped.

In the evening a general consultation of all the officers was held. At this meeting it was resolved to despatch a party of one hundred chosen men, on the best horses in camp, with instructions not to return until the settlements of New Mexico were found. Although no hopes were entertained that a passage over the mountains could be effected by the wagons, it was still thought that mounted men would be able to accomplish it.

The distance to the nearest settlements was not supposed to be more than one hundred miles at farthest, and it was accordingly determined that the party should take five days' provisions, allowing but scanty rations. The course to be taken was northwest, and this course was to be kept, as near as circumstances would admit,

until the party struck either the settlements near Santa Fé, the Rio Grande at a point below, or the trail of the St. Louis traders above. On reaching New Mexico, a party was immediately to be sent back to the command with guides and provisions.

However impolitic it may be considered to divide a command, in this instance such a course could not be avoided. We were completely lost, and without power of moving forward; our provisions, which had for weeks been scanty, were now almost entirely exhausted; the men were enfeebled by long marches, with only poor beef enough each day to support nature;* and in addition we were surrounded by a large and powerful tribe of well-mounted Indians, scouring our vicinity, and always on the look-out to pick off any small party that might be sent out to hunt, or for other purposes. All these reasons considered, it will at once be seen that but two courses offered—one, to destroy the wagons, and to retreat hastily towards Texas; the other, to divide the command, and send one party forward with orders not to return until the settlements were reached. I will not say that the wiser course was adopted; but in answer to any one who may blame the leaders of the expedition for dividing the command, I would remark that few men, under the circumstances, would have advised to the contrary.

So soon as a division of the command had been determined upon, several of the oxen were killed for the use of the party to be sent onward, and preparations were made to dry the meat on the ensuing morning. Night came, but with it came no news of Lieutenant Hann and his little party. On calling the roll it was

* It may not be amiss to state that every part of each ox killed was devoured: the blood, hide, entrails—nothing was lost.

also found that others besides those killed in the morning were missing, and with the full conviction that they had shared the fate of Lieutenant Hull and his men, we that night laid ourselves to rest. The next morning we were still without tidings of our absent comrades.

The party detailed by General McLeod to march in advance was placed under the command of Captain Sutton, an excellent officer. It consisted of eighty-seven officers and privates, with merchants, travellers, and servants enough to swell the number to ninety-nine. Among the officers were Captain Lewis, and Lieutenants Lubbock, Munson, Brown, and Seavy,* the latter acting as adjutant: the civilians were Colonel Cooke, Dr. Brenham, Major Howard, Messrs. Van Ness, Fitzgerald, Frank Combs, and myself. We were all well armed and mounted on the best horses in camp, and deemed ourselves able to cut our way through any party of Indians that might dare to attack us. That we should be molested was considered more than probable, as it was impossible to leave the command without being perceived by the scouting parties of Caygüas continually hovering about our camp, who could observe our every movement. In a fortified position we felt confident they would not attack the command; but now that we were divided they might be emboldened to attack the smaller party.

The Caygüas appear to be a powerful tribe, about whom, from their geographical position, little has been known. Their range is south of the line of travel of the Missouri traders, and north of such parts of the Comanche country as were known to the Texans, their

* Lieutenant Seavy was educated at West Point, had seen much service in Texas, and was one of the best officers connected with the Santa Fé expedition. He died of yellow fever at Puente Nacional, Mexico, much beloved by his brother officers as well as the common soldiers.

hunting-grounds probably not having been visited by the whites previous to our march across them. In their customs and manner of living they resemble, in every way, the Camanches, and may be said to be a branch of that large and powerful tribe. They lead a roving life, esteem the whites as their natural enemies, and never give them quarter. Like the Camanches, they are expert on horseback to an extraordinary degree, leaping from one horse to another while at full speed, and performing many feats upon the prairies never undertaken even by the best equestrians of the circus. In their attacks upon an enemy they expose but a small portion of their persons, riding along in parallel lines with their enemies, their bodies lying on the opposite sides of their well-trained steeds, and in this position they discharge their arrows directly under their horse's necks. If they meet with an unfortunate party whom they outnumber, they charge openly, despatching all with their lances. While encamped, they live in tents constructed of poles and buffalo hides. These can be struck at a moment's warning, and the whole party will move off in an incredibly short space of time. They appear to be on terms of peace with the New Mexicans so far as it suits their interest and convenience—no farther; at one time trading and exchanging their skins in amity, and almost in the same breath making a descent upon the unprotected frontiers, plundering and frequently murdering the inhabitants. When we passed through their country a party of Mexican traders were among them bartering meal, blankets, and trinkets for buffalo and deer skins. Some of these Mexicans we afterward saw, and from them learned that ten of their warriors, besides a principal chief, were killed by Lieutenant Hull and his brave companions before

they were overpowered. The traders also gave us an account of their ceremonies on returning to camp with their scalps and trophies. A wild dance was executed by the braves in celebration of their victory, while the women tore their hair and faces, and ran naked through the prickly pear and thorn bushes, in token of their grief for the loss of their husbands and brothers. Whether they considered our visit as hostile or not it is impossible to say; they had shed blood, and we well knew they would not cease murdering any of our companions they might dare attack. They have but a small number of rifles among them, and these are ineffective and useless in their hands: the larger portion of them are armed with shields, lances, and bows and arrows, weapons they use with surprising dexterity. Such are the most obvious features of a tribe of Indians occupying the prairies near the head waters of the Wichita, Colorado, Brazos, and Red Rivers.

The morning of August 31st was occupied in partially drying our meat over slow fires, and in making preparations for our departure. Horses were shod, bullets moulded, our rifles and pistols thoroughly examined, and nothing neglected in the way of that precaution our uncertain adventure demanded. We were placed in a position demanding some extraordinary effort. The repeated reverses that we had met with, the hunger and fatigue which we had undergone, and the impossibility of travelling farther with the wagons in any direction that would bring us nearer the settlements, formed a combination of evils for which a retreat or the plan determined upon was the only remedy. The indefatigable *go-aheadity* which characterizes the Anglo-Saxon race, no matter where or under what circumstances placed, prevented the adoption of the former plan—the same

spirit induced the officers of the expedition to adopt and carry out the latter. Almost every one appeared to rejoice when this course was determined upon. The harassing uncertainties which now encompassed all would speedily be removed, and we should soon know *where we were*.

As the advance party were about starting, we were all rejoiced by the appearance of Lieutenant Hann and his men. He had met with several small parties of the Indians, and endeavoured to induce them to come in and hold a friendly talk; but they were sulky and disposed to fight, although not strong enough to engage him. Up to this time he knew nothing of the murder of Lieutenant Hull's party. The other men who were missing, as I have since been informed, never came in, but were undoubtedly killed by the Indians.

CHAPTER XI.

Departure of the Advance in search of the Settlements.—Summit of the Steppe gained.—Level Prairie before us.—A lovely Scene.—Speculations in relation to Red River.—A Bear Chase.—Bruin noosed.—The March continued.—Sagacity of a Mule.—Arrival at a singular Chasm.—Impossibility of crossing.—A heavy Prairie Shower.—Appearance of our Men.—Description of the Chasm.—A Crossing found.—Loneliness of the Prairies.—Scarcity of Game.—Begin to suffer Hunger.—Arrival at another awful Abyss.—Farther Difficulty in crossing.—Hunger increasing.—Singular Birds.—Mustangs and Antelopes.—Their exceeding Shyness.—Curlews.—A Buffalo descried.—Preparations for a Chase to the Death.—Tom Hancock and his Skill.—Endurance of Jim the Butcher.—Description of the Chase.—Poor Prospects of a Supper.

THE sun had but a short hour to run, in order to finish his day's work on the 31st of August, when, in double file and close order, our provisions for the march