

to give him food, and, after he had left us, we found that he had carried off a powder horn and bullet pouch belonging to one of the men.

We had hard work all day, as the snow was deep. When we came to cross the ravines and beds of streams that unite with the Arkansas, we found that all the snow had drifted to the eastern bank, which we were obliged to ascend. These drifts were from five to six feet or more in depth; the mules sunk to their bellies and struggled through with great difficulty; the wagons sunk until their "beds" rested on the surface of the snow; still we crossed these places, although they were sometimes thirty or forty feet wide; and in the face of these difficulties we made a march of thirteen miles.

When we encamped, we were again obliged to suffer for the unpardonable negligence of persons who preceded us, for the prairies, for miles around, had been laid waste by fire. Fortunately, the ice was in such a state that we could cross to the opposite side, and to the islands; but we were obliged to work hard, in covering the ice with sand, so as to make a path for our mules. We found plenty of wood on the islands. It had been brought there by the river.

*January 30.*—Yesterday, the road was so covered with snow that we were obliged to guide our course by the river; but, this morning, we again found the road. It was, however, with great difficulty that we managed to keep in it. Although the sun shone, and the snow thawed very much, still our progress was difficult. It required the greatest perseverance to accomplish eleven miles. We encamped in a bottom of tall swamp grass; here we found some old wagons; we were obliged to burn them, for the river was in such a state that we could not cross upon the ice.

One of my men told me of a method of catching buffalo that I do not recollect to have ever heard; he says that the Ricarees make piles of buffalo dung so as to look like men, and arrange these piles in two lines which, gradually approaching, lead to a pen. Having driven the buffaloes between these two lines, the animals run on, without daring to cross these lines, and are caught.

*January 31.*—We have another day of brilliant sunshine; indeed, it seemed hot. The snow began to melt away rapidly.

After a march of five miles, we met Mr. Sublette who was traveling with important letters to Santa Fé. Soon afterwards, we met a train of six wagons belonging to Messrs. Buillard & Hook, of Missouri. It had been to the crossing of the Arkansas to raise some "caches," which some of the proprietors of this train had been obliged to make early in the fall.

We now received news of the conquest of Monterey, and we also heard that our forces were being concentrated at Tampico, preparatory to marching upon the city of Mexico.

Shortly after passing these people, we encountered some wolves following their trail. So intent were the wolves in their employment that they came quite close to us, holding their heads near the ground as they scented the tracks of the men, when one of my party levelled his rifle and killed the foremost. These animals have be-

come very daring; one of our mules came into camp this morning with its fore-leg badly bitten by them, and covered with clots of blood.

After a march of twelve miles we encamped near the fort which those men who were attacked last fall by the Pawnees had built, to protect themselves while they sent to Bent's Fort for assistance.

*February 1.*—The sun shone forth with warmth, and the melted snow made the ground quite muddy. After proceeding five miles we passed the "Arkansas crossing." We marched all day without seeing any good places to encamp. At length our mules became so worn out that we could scarce go any further, nor was the prospect of finding wood on this side of the river any better in advance of us.

One of the men had just killed a fine buffalo; I sent out a mule to bring in the meat, and we encamped. The river was in such a state that no one could cross without wading a good portion of the way, although the ice was in many places six inches in thickness.

The wind had been fair all day; it suddenly changed to the north, and began to blow with great violence, while dark clouds seemed in an instant to cover the sky.

I now saw it would be an eventful night for us. Our fires were blown out by the tremendous violence of the wind, and we were forced to get into our beds and there abide the fury of the storm.

*February 2.*—All night the storm raged with a fury as awful as that of the "tormentes" of Mt. Blanc. The particles of snow beat with wild rage against my tent, while the frail structure quivered, and the poles that supported it creaked and groaned so much that it was impossible for me to sleep. Such was the force of the wind, that it drove the snow through the canvass walls of my tent, and I found my bed and papers covered with it. During the night I heard one of the men, who had got his feet wet in attempting to cross the river, imploring some of his companions to let him get into the wagon with them. The night was terribly cold, and I feared that all of our animals would be frozen to death before morning. At length morning came, but when I looked out the snow was drifting along in dense clouds of hard icy particles, that flew along with the velocity of lightning. As the sun began to appear the storm ceased, and it was most fortunate for us that it did cease. I now forced my way out of the tent, which was banked with snow. When I looked around, a scene of utter desolation presented itself; most of my men had lain down on the ground to sleep, but now not one of them could be seen. I called aloud; they heard me not, being covered beneath the deep snow. I now went to the wagons; in one I found Pilka and Laing; in the other, two or three men, one of whom had been very ill ever since leaving Bent's Fort. He came rushing towards me half distracted, his shirt covered with snow, his head bare, and crouching at my feet, he implored me to take him to a house. "O, Lieutenant, take me to a house! I shall freeze to death! I'm freezing! I'm freezing!" His arms were drawn up and stiffened, his body almost paralyzed with cold. I took the poor fellow and put him in my

own bed, and covered him with blankets and buffalo robes; it was all I could do.

We now searched about and found the men by the aid of the cracks on the surface of the snow, caused by the movements of the restless sleepers; covered by the heavy mantle of snow they had kept extremely warm, and now the chill air felt to them more intolerable.

We managed to find a few pieces of wood that we had collected last night; the wind still blew so fiercely that we could not kindle any fire out doors; we succeeded in lighting some pieces of wood in the tent and then built our little fire on the leeside of the wagon; the men crouched around silent and shivering; I now called on two of my men to come with me, they were two of my best men; they had been hardened to peril in the service of the fur companies; men who would not flinch under the most fearful vicissitudes; they readily accompanied me, and we started down the river in search of some spot which would furnish us with fuel and shelter; we proceeded down the river some distance, but seeing no timber on this side, we crossed the river upon the ice, which was now sufficiently strong to bear us up; we built an enormous pile of logs and set them in a blaze, and I sat down to dry my moccasins and leggins, for I had broken through the ice while crossing a treacherous spot in the river.

My men were now sent back to collect all the property and to harness up the mules, and move down to a spot directly opposite the timber; many of them left their bedding, clothes, and guns buried beneath the snow, and, half crazed with their forlorn and weather beaten condition, hurried down to seek shelter.

At length the wagons arrived and we endeavored to drive the mules to the south side of the river, where they would have good pasture grounds; some, however, took fright (when half-way over) and rushed back, and one broke through the ice; we immediately passed ropes under the belly of the animal and soon drew it out of the river; to keep its blood in circulation we dragged it backwards and forwards; all would not do, its limbs became momentarily more and more stiff, and at last the poor beast fell to the ground; we put three buffalo robes upon it and left it.

My men now reported the full extent of our misfortunes; three of the mules were found frozen to death, and half hidden by the snow that had drifted upon their dead bodies; around this heap the other mules were gathered, to screen them from the storm, and the "laryettoes" of the living were entangled about the dead. It is more than probable that all of them would have met with the same fate, had the storm endured twelve hours longer; our mules were now driven to a spot about one mile below us covered with willows and swamp grass.

We built our fires on the southern bank of the river, in the bed of a dry creek, the banks of which afforded shelter from the wind; the night was clear and excessively cold; we were all obliged to sleep without tents, as the ground was frozen so hard that tent pins

could not be driven, and when we had softened the soil by building fires, the sand became too loose to hold the pins.

*February 3.*—This morning we arose at an early hour; packing up our camp furniture, we recrossed the river and marched a mile further down the Arkansas.

The mule that we had drawn out of the river had recovered sufficiently to regain its feet; some corn was given to it; but during the past night it had wandered off a few yards and was attacked by wolves, and devoured while endeavoring to regain the wagons; the saddle blanket that I had girted around it was torn to pieces. Poor mule! it met a cruel death after going through so many troubles; it was the last one of the set with which I left Bent's Fort on the 9th of last September.

To-day Brown was struck blind, from the effects of the glaring light reflected by the snow. We left him in camp until the afternoon, when I sent some men to gather up his clothing and lead him into our new camp.

Those who had left their property at the camp when the storm occurred, took spades and went and dug it out.

The men in camp overhauled the provisions and the bedding; although our wagons had each two covers, or sheets, they were full of snow.

On a fallen tree, against which we built our fires, we read that which follows: "J. Abrea, Y. Litsendorfer, C. Estis, March 11, 1846." "A storm." This gave us new encouragement, for we felt that other men, under the same circumstances, and in the same place, had felt, suffered, and thought as we had, and we felt that we, like they, could weather the storm.

In the evening, some of the men led Brown into camp. He said, that while lying near our old camp fires, listening to the bickering of the ravens and magpies, which were contending for the scraps we had left, he felt something give his buffalo robe a jerk, and looking round, he saw several wolves; they ran off a few steps, seeming to have but little fear of him; his eyes pained him so much that he did not attempt to shoot.

*February 4.*—We again started at our usual time, and in good order, leaving many articles which only served to encumber us. As our "mulada" was now weakened by the loss of the four frozen mules, our progress was slower than heretofore.

During the first few hours, it was with difficulty that we could keep the road, which was covered with deep snow; in many places it was a foot deep, although, now and then, we found little spots on the road that were perfectly bare, and in the river bottoms there was but little snow. At midday the sun shone forth with warmth, the snow began to thaw, and our progress became comparatively easy. We marched fifteen miles, and camped near a fine grove, where we found some dry wood and pretty good grass; although the buffalo, which had recently been here in great numbers, had much impaired the grazing.

The greatest inconvenience that we have suffered on this march has been caused by the negligence of others with regard to the

camp fires; which negligence having caused the destruction of the pasture grounds, our mules would wander off, and we frequently lost much of the day in catching them. It is no wonder that the Indian looks with hatred upon the whites, who go about spreading desolation, by their shameful waste of pasture grounds which the Great Being has planted. This winter the buffalo have almost deserted the river, because there is no grass for them; and the Indian, forced by the inclemencies of the season to seek shelter in the timber, which grows only on the banks of the river, must now travel a long way from his village before he can obtain meat enough for his subsistence. There should be some measures taken to protect the prairies from being set on fire.

*February 5.*—We had scarcely left camp, when the wolves and ravens clustered around the smoking embers of our camp fires. During the day Laing killed a wolf, and he also killed a badger, "*taxus labradoricus*." Continuing our march, we passed beyond the point where the road turns off which goes direct to Pawnee Fork, and passing three miles beyond Jackson's grove, encamped in the open prairie.

For fuel, we used the "bois de vache," and the pools of melted snow near our camp supplied us with water. In the evening we twice heard the report of a gun; but, as we had noticed during the day fresh signs of wagons and oxen, we supposed we had overtaken a party of teamsters who had gone on from Bent's Fort, and who had taken the direct road to Pawnee Fork.

*February 6.*—This morning when we arose, the buffalo were numerous all around our camp. We began to get every thing ready for the march, and sent off the guard for the mules; it returned without them, and reported that not one of our animals could be found.

I now sent Pilka; in a few hours he returned, and reported that the Indians had carried off our mules; he had found their trail, which led off to the north. This trail was perfectly straight; there were no signs of any mule having turned aside to crop the tempting grass, through which their course sometimes led. We no longer doubted that the mules had been carried off by the Indians. I questioned the guard, and learned that the mules had run into camp as the day was dawning, but they were driven out again, as they were tearing the wagon covers with their teeth, and destroying every thing they could get hold of. Had the guard been used to travel among Indians, the conduct of the mules would have caused them to have caught them, and to have secured them to the wagons.

What were we to do? To pursue the Indians on foot was vain. We were now left with our wagons containing our bedding and provisions, and a sick man who had not been able to walk for the last week. What now was to be done with all the geological and mineralogical specimens, and the collection of objects of natural history, which had been obtained in New Mexico? I thought of "caching" every thing, and walking into the States; but what was to be done with the sick man? Some of my men proposed leaving him with the provisions, to abide his chance on the prairie; "for," said they, "must we all die for this one man; is it not better that

one should die?" But I determined not to leave the poor fellow, without certain provision for his safety. We were off from the usually travelled road; it was necessary that we should return to it. Once I thought of remaining until I could receive mules from Fort Leavenworth, but in bringing them to me they would again be liable to be stolen by the Indians.

Near our camp we found two broken down oxen. We hitched them to one of the wagons, and with the help of the men we moved to a spot that would be easily defended, and where we would be sheltered from any storm that might come.

*February 7.*—I now determined to proceed at any rate, depending on the resources which yet remained to me, without involving myself with new uncertainties.

I again sent out a party to reconnoitre the country, wishing "to make assurance doubly sure." It was hard to believe that our evil stars had been so dominant; not a trace of the lost mules could be seen, for the little spots of snow which yesterday bore their vestiges had to-day melted away.

But nothing annoyed me more than the idea of losing my various specimens, which had already cost so much time, labor, and anxiety.

At last I determined to destroy one of the wagons, and to throw away everything that we could possibly dispense with, and then to put ourselves into the traces and drag the lightest wagon as far as Pawnee fork; there I should leave the sick man, with some persons to take care of him, and the rest of the party would pack their provisions and bedding on their backs, and start for the settlements.

*February 8.*—We begun our preparations; the warm clothing that we had brought to protect us from the rigors of winter was thrown away. The men destroyed their buffalo robes, retaining only one for every two men of the party. I parted my wardrobe amongst my men, and no one reserved any apparel, except that which he had on his back; everything was now disposed of except our powder and lead and our provisions.

We now drove up the two steers which fortune had thrown in our way; we fed them bountifully with the corn we had treasured up so carefully. Having found that the oxen could not work in mule harness, we manufactured a yoke, by driving into a bar two pieces of wood; these pieces were in pairs and had holes in the ends, so that cords being passed through the holes, they were tied under the throats of the oxen. A long rope was attached to the tongue of the wagon, and the men formed loops of ropes or bricoles which they passed over their shoulders, and then attached at intervals to a long rope which was fastened to the end of the tongue.

We now started amid the loud exulting cheers of the men, as they thus triumphed over our difficulties, when we seemed to have reached the "ne plus ultra" of misfortune. To have seen us, one would have thought that we were on some lively frolic, whereas we had undertaken to haul a loaded wagon from Jackson's grove to Pawnee fork, which is a distance of 64 miles by the river route, the one which we pursued.

We marched a distance of 13 miles, and at night were obliged to encamp in the open prairie. Our fires of "bois de vache" served well enough to boil our coffee, but very little heat was to be obtained from the burning of this kind of fuel.

*February 9.*—To-day we marched fifteen miles; a slight rain that fell last night made our progress more difficult than that of yesterday. Just as the sun was setting, and while I was searching out a fit place for our little camp to halt for the night, I looked back and saw a dense group of men suddenly rise up from behind the river bank, where they had been secreted; they now spread out to display their numerical strength; they had a little flag displayed in token of amity, and they made signs to us that they wished to approach. We now permitted two of them to come forward, and I went out with Laing to meet them. They offered us the hand, telling us that they were Pawnees, striking their breasts and crying out Pawnye! Pawnye! The one who styled himself the "captain" asked why we were pulling the wagon, and wanted to know if all our oxen had died; and added, that if we wished he would furnish us with mules, for he had a great number on the opposite side of the river. He said that if I would encamp now, that in the morning he would bring some of his mules across the river. As amicable relations were now established, he signed for his party to approach, and we went on to the wagon. Finding that the Indians were mingling amongst my men, I told the chief in a loud tone to order them to keep away; they instantly obeyed him. We now encamped; all the Indians crossed the river except the chief and five others. I invited the chief to stay with me all night; he consented, but still retained his five attendants. I told him that they must not stir about at night, for my guards were always on the watch for thievish Indians, and they might be shot by mistake.

At night they all crowded into my tent, and slept coiled up in a little space scarce roomy enough for me alone.

*February 10.*—The morning was extremely cold and threatening, clouds were flying rapidly across the sky. Our Indian friends, as soon as they looked out, raised their hands high above their heads, and, permitting them to hang loosely from the wrist, shook them as one shakes water from the tips of his fingers, and then they would touch some white object; by these signs they meant that "white rain" would fall when the sun was at such a position in his path, which position they indicated to us. They asked my permission to go to their own lodge until the snow storm should have passed, and they begged me to accompany them. I determined to go, although the ice was not strong enough to bear a man's weight; but I suspected that these very Indians had stolen our mules. Accompanied by the six Indians, I started across the river. A strong north wind was blowing on our backs; this helped us along, for we were obliged to keep our feet wide apart, in the position of those of a person who is sliding on the ice; but, nevertheless, we all broke through constantly, and where the current was deep and rapid we were forced to wade. The air was freezing cold, and as soon as we reached the southern bank of the river, we set

off in a hard run to keep our wet clothing from freezing our limbs. The Indians were not less wet than myself, for they had tied their leggins close around their ankles to protect their legs from being injured when the ice broke through. After a run of a quarter of a mile, we arrived at the Indian lodges. The chief called three of his party, who took my socks and leggins and moccasins; with little sticks they beat off the ice; they wrung the water out of my clothes, and dried them by the fire. In the meanwhile I was obliged to sit with as little clothing on as ever any Indian wore. The Indians soon fixed a place for me to sit. In a short time they cooked some buffalo meat, and gave me the largest share of fat and of lean, which they placed on a flat stone in fault of a plate.

Feigning after a while that I wanted to re-cross the river, I stepped out to reconnoitre. The snow storm had caused the Indians to collect their mules in the little gorges which abound among the sand hills that are found on this side of the Arkansas; the mules were also covered with skins of wolves and buffaloes to protect them. I could not see any thing of the mules I had lost. The snow storm now raged fiercely, and I returned to the camp of the Indians, telling them that the storm raged too furiously for me to cross the river. We laid down to sleep, which was now and then interrupted by the entrance of some of the Indian sentinels, who reported every change in the weather, or any movement among the buffalo; although the latter were very numerous, still these Indians were almost without food; and while I was with them some of the subordinates came to dance the "beggar's dance" before the chief's lodge. I asked him what the dancers meant, and was told that they wanted something to eat. The chief then gave them some buffalo meat. This confirmed me in the suspicion that these fellows had stolen our mules. It was now evident that they were here for some mischievous purpose, and would not fire at the buffalo for fear passers-by should hear their guns, and track them to their lair. I asked them why they did not kill buffalo. They answered, without hesitancy, that their guns might notify parties of Cheyennes, which were continually making "war paths" through their country. I asked them what they were doing here on the Arkansas. They said that there was no grass towards the northern region where they lived, and that they had brought their mules here to graze; but, be it known that they were without their women and children, and without lodges, not travelling like a peaceful grazing party, but prepared for war and robbery.

In the evening the storm cleared away; and, with the polite guidance of the Indians, I managed to cross the river without breaking the ice, which was still weak, although much stronger than it was this morning.

My men had lain abed all day, in order to keep warm, for there was no wood to be had on this side of the river with which to build fires. I told them that they could get plenty of wood on the opposite side; but they broke through the ice, and were obliged to return; we were fain to use "buffalo chips."

*February 11.*—This morning my men arose early and crossed the

river without trouble, where they got plenty of wood; the snow storm we had yesterday, and the discomfiture produced by the hard labor of hauling the wagon, had put them in no very pleasant humor. They wished that I would let them kill the Indians as soon as they came across the river; the Indians came; they entered our camp, and seemed instantly to perceive the feeling that was burning in the hearts of my party; they stood off without daring to approach our fires; there was but six or eight with the chief now, but he approached at last and offered his hand, and immediately the confidence of the rest seemed to be restored.

In my own mind, I did not doubt but that these fellows had robbed us; still I could never kill any of them in cold blood, nor would I consent that my men should shoot them down.

We told them to bring over some of their mules; they brought two, but refused to let us have them, unless we gave them much more than they usually get in fair trade.

We had left our harness near Jackson's grove; the mules could not then be attached to the wagons; and, as to buying a mule for myself, which my men insisted upon my doing, I felt perfectly willing to share the hardships of my party, and unwilling to countenance what I considered an imposition on the part of the Indians.

The Indians left us in high irritation, on account of the trouble they had had to get their mules across the river; they immediately recrossed, and we prepared to take up our line of march. We now found that an axe which had been lent to the Pawnees, with which to roughen the ice, had not been returned; the Indians stood gazing at us from the opposite bank, while their mules, scattered along the river side, were quietly grazing. I called the men together; and, leaving two of them in charge of the wagon and sick man, the rest of us started off in pursuit of the Indians, who no sooner saw this movement than they hastily gathered their mules and set off for the sand hills. To pursue these fellows was evidently vain, and we were forced to give up our axe, and again put ourselves into the traces.

We marched twelve miles. During the first half of our journey, some of the Pawnees continued to dog our trail.

The language of the Pawnees bears a great resemblance to that of the Ricarees. I had a person in my party who once traded with the last mentioned tribe. He recognized many of the words that the Pawnees used. Our communications were, however, carried on by the means of the pantomimic language, a knowledge of which is of very great value, as the various signs seem to be universally adopted as typical of the same things among all the prairie Indians.

*February 12.*—Notwithstanding the snow storm of the 10th, the ground was almost entirely free from snow, except in the ravines and beds of creeks where it was not exposed to the wind. The sun shone forth with great vigor, and we marched more rapidly than we had done on any preceding day. At ten o'clock we crossed the mouth of "Coon creek," and about five o'clock we formed our

camp on the banks of the "Pawnee fork." This day we marched more than twenty-one miles. On the road we found two more steers. With them we replaced those which we had started with in the morning, and which were almost exhausted. When we first came in sight of the timber on "Pawnee fork," my chief anxiety was to keep my men from laboring too severely; the wagon ran along at the rate of three miles an hour, and I was obliged to walk rapidly in order to keep out of the way.

My whole party had done their duty bravely; in the most literal sense, we had worked like horses. I could not ask my men to do more. Should a heavy fall of snow come it would be impossible to proceed with the wagon. I, therefore, determined to give each one as much provision as he would choose to carry on our coming pedestrian excursion to the settlements. We had now between 280 and 300 miles to march. We determined to accomplish this journey in twenty days.

Two of my men, Brown and Preston, agreed to stay with the sick man. They were now on the high road, where they would see every one who passed, and would have, before a great while, an opportunity of joining the return party, which was preparing to leave Santa Fé when my command set out. While here they would have everything they could wish. There was an abundant supply of timber, a never failing stream of good water, and we would be obliged to leave a large quantity of provisions, as no one would care to load his own back for the gratification of his stomach.

*February 13.*—We now set earnestly to work, making our packs of provisions and bedding as light and compact as possible. We baked all the bread we intended to carry. Each one provided himself with 20 biscuit or rolls, one for each day. We also took a few pounds of dried buffalo meat, which is light and compact, but swells up in boiling water. We each had a tin cup, which would, on an emergency, answer for a coffee pot. We, therefore, added the luxuries of coffee and sugar. As for bedding, a buffalo robe and a blanket were all that any one would be willing to carry three hundred miles, when he recollects the additional weight of his provisions. But I adopted a plan which made my blanket worth two. I had it sewed so as to form a bag. This, trifling as it may seem, greatly augmented my comfort.

We were all of us very careful to dry our clothing before going to bed; no one who observes this precaution, and who is provided with a buffalo robe, need ever get frozen.

*February 14.*—I still found means to carry my New Mexican specimens further on. My books and some of my papers were put into a box and "cached;" for greater safety the spot was fixed so as to resemble a grave, and a tombstone of board was erected to mark the spot, and engraved with the name of "Tom Poco," who with "Tom Bien" were, according to some of my men, the most famous persons in New Mexico; perhaps these persons originated only in their metamorphoses of the words "tampoco" and "tambien."

The most valuable box was lashed to the fore axle of the wagon;