

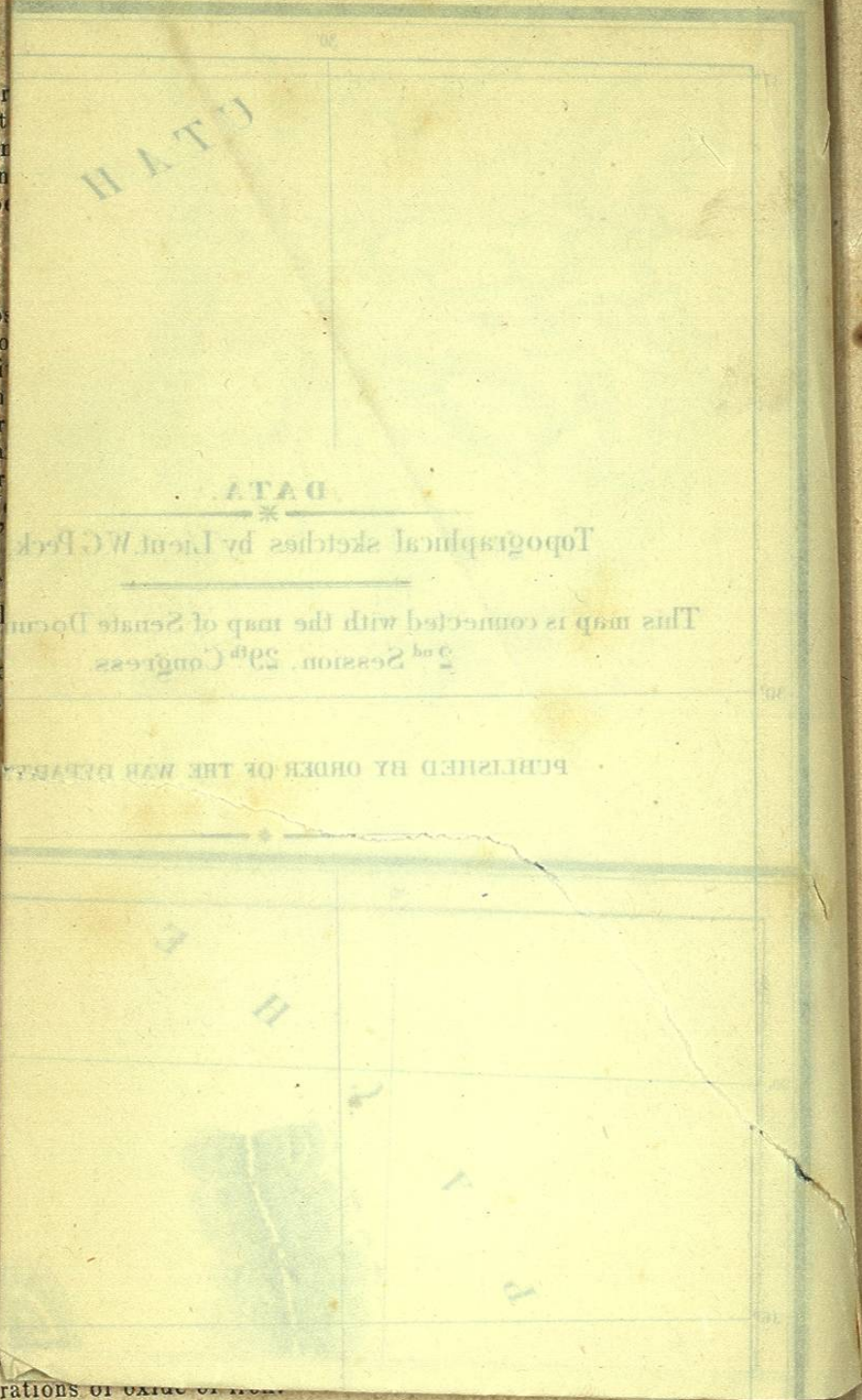
There are  
from Wett  
pebble from  
in sufficien  
microscop

The most  
1st. Fro  
ized grani  
2d. San  
3d. Pur  
4th. Ca  
specks, pr  
5th. W

washing.  
This is  
grains of  
acids, and  
pipe. It  
6th. Te  
compositi

The mi  
in themse  
of the mi  
consist o  
rarely sh  
chrysa  
names of  
in the fir  
1st. S  
easily by  
2d. Sa  
ride of s  
3d. B  
prisms.  
4th. F  
compact  
5th. F  
selenite.  
6th. I  
silinite.

7th. I  
e infiltrations of oxide of iron.




---

REPORT OF LIEUT. COL. P. ST. GEORGE COOKE

OF

HIS MARCH FROM

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO,

TO

SAN DIEGO, UPPER CALIFORNIA.

---



fr  
pe  
in  
mi

iz

sp

wa

gr

ac

pi

co

in

of

co

ra

ch

na

in

ea

rid

pr

co

se

sil

c

REPORT OF LIEUT. COL. F. ST. GEORGE

HIS MARCH FROM

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

SAN DIEGO, UPPER CALIFORNIA

## REPORT.

SAN LOUIS REY,  
California, February 5, 1847.

SIR: In obedience to army of the west order, No. 33, of October 2d, I returned from La Joya, New Mexico, to Santa Fé, to take command of the Mormon battalion. I arrived there on the 7th October.

I found that the paymasters, from whose arrival you anticipated a plentiful resource of money for the quartermaster department, had brought so little specie that no payment of troops could be made. The consequence was, that Captain Hudson's company of volunteers for California, which you had assigned to my command, could not mount themselves; and the quartermaster's department, which scarcely commanded a dollar, could hardly have furnished the transportation. Owing to these difficulties, the captain's new company was broken up by Colonel Doniphan, commanding.

A portion of the battalion of Mormons arrived the evening of the 9th October, under First Lieutenant A. J. Smith, 1st dragoons, who had, in the capacity of acting lieutenant colonel, directed its march from Council Grove. The rear of the battalion arrived the evening of the 12th. On the 13th, I assumed command, with the rank of lieutenant colonel, by virtue of your appointment. Its aggregate present was 448. I found that their mules were entirely broken down, and that as many as sixty men had, from sickness and other causes, been transported in wagons much of the march; and that there were twenty-five women, besides many children. The assistant surgeon of the battalion, Dr. Sanderson, and the senior officer of the department, Dr. De Camp, reported on the cases of a very large number, as subjects for discharge for disability. But the colonel commanding determined, under all the circumstances, to retain them in service, and ordered them to be sent to winter at "Pueblo," on the Arkansas river, above Bent's fort. There the Mormons have a temporary settlement, and there Mr. Smith had sent, from the crossing of the Arkansas, a party of ten, commanded by Captain Higgins, in charge of a large number of families, which had theretofore been attached to the Mormon battalion. This detachment had orders to join the battalion at Santa Fé. (They arrived after its march, and, I learned, obtained permission to return to the Pueblo.) About this time, I learned that you had left your wagons, in consequence of difficulties of the country; and was anxious, for the benefit of all, to disen-



cumber the expedition of the twenty laundresses. Learning that the most of them wished to go with the detachment to the Arkansas, I ordered them all to be sent there. With a sufficient number of able-bodied men (husbands of the women) to take care of it, the detachment amounted to eighty-six, and was placed under the command of Captain Brown.

I urged every preparation for the march, but it was impossible to complete them before the 19th of October; the battalion was paid, with treasury drafts, on the 16th and 17th. There was no salt pork in Santa Fé, and a sufficiency did not arrive until the evening of the 16th. Beef cattle, furnished under a previous contract for the battalion, were received the night of the 17th; and a quantity of pack saddles the same evening. On the 19th of October, I marched out of Santa Fé, and encamped at Agua Frio. At the earnest request of two captains and three sergeants, their wives were permitted to accompany the expedition; having their own wagons and mules, and provisions.

The rations had been issued to the companies, and each had three mule wagons, and one drawn by oxen; (these last were to be sent back on leaving the river.) The rations were sixty days of flour and salt, sugar and coffee; thirty days of pickled pork, and twenty of soap.

The mules furnished me were mostly poor and worked down; the half of them were utterly unfit to commence an ordinary march. A number, as well as of oxen, were left behind, unable to walk, in the first forty miles. Thus, I was obliged to exchange them two for one, and to purchase many others. For the first 150 miles, on the Rio Grande, there was, at that season, no grass deserving the name. I purchased, when I could, corn and fodder, but in very small quantities. I had 380 sheep purchased, near Socorro, and beeves, to make up the sixty days' rations.

About 75 miles below that point, I became convinced that the march must fail, unless some improvement was made. I was marching about eight miles a day, in as many hours, through the deep sand; the mules overworked, growing poorer, giving out, dying and left behind each day.

From the opinions of the guides, there was also reason to apprehend that the supply of provisions was inadequate; and the ox wagons were then to go back. There were twenty-two men on the sick report, who, with the arms and knapsacks of others, encumbered the wagons. I called on the assistant surgeon and company commanders for lists of those they believed worthless for the march; fifty-eight names were soon given to me. Captain Burgwin's camp was 58 miles above. I resolved, then, to send back these fifty-eight men, with twenty-six days rations, with one ox wagon, and to leave the other two there, to be sent for, retaining the teams; and to make another reduction of baggage. Many tents and camp kettles were left in the wagons, and all the upright poles, for which muskets were used as substitutes. (The backs of the tents were opened, and a piece inserted, so as thus to become very large and nearly circular, in which ten men were ac-

commodated.) The oxen I used in mule wagons; packed those unfit for draught, and also, though very lightly, the poor extra mules. The detachment went in command of a lieutenant, who received orders to report, for ultimate instructions, to the officer commanding in the territory. A calculation showed that by these measures, with increased means of transportation, the loads were reduced 20 per cent.; and also that the rations (or half rations) of the battalion were increased by eight days. Then, and only then, could I begin to see my way to the end, with confidence.

After these two weedings of the old, the feeble and sickly, from the battalion, lads and old grey-headed men still remained.

The numerous guides and hirelings you sent to me, I found at the lowest village; they had been idle for weeks; and I found I was to venture, with my wagons, into a wide region, unknown to any of them.

The river route improved greatly, and, opposite, was apparently a practicable gap in the mountain barrier, between mine and the Chihuahua road, (the fine but badly watered stretch known as the Jornada del Muerto.) About thirty miles lower, and in the vicinity of a point called San Diego, the mountains, which so far had confined the road to the river, break off, and then I turned short to the right, on the arid table land of Mexico, which I found studded with a profusion of isolated mountains, of volcanic origin. My method, now, was this: Leroux, with five, six or seven others, would get a day in advance, exploring for water, in the best practicable direction; finding a spring or a puddle, (sometimes a hole in nearly inaccessible rocks,) he would send a man back, who would meet me, and be the guide. This operation would be repeated until his number was unsafely reduced, when he would await me, or return to take a fresh departure. This was the plan, but, ever varying and uncertain, attended, of course, with much anxiety; and, sometimes, the inconvenience of neglect or tardiness on the part of the guides, making the road, once or twice, to vary from the better course, which a more thorough examination, in the first instance, would have discovered.

Such, with some vicissitudes of risk and suffering, and the accidental aid of a little confused information from a trading party we encountered, was the manner of my progress for about 250 miles, from the Rio Grande to the San Pedro, a tributary of the Gila; but I anticipate.

Thus I reached the Ojo de Vaca, about 26 miles south from the copper mines, on an old road to Yanos, used for transporting the ore. To the west appeared a vast prairie opening, between the mountains; it was the course; but the principal guides had each his dread of it, founded upon vague information, from Indians, of its destitution of water; and watering places might exist, and not be found by us. They had explored about 25 miles of it, finding an out of the way and insufficient hole of water, ten miles distant.

I ascended a high peak, and, there taking the bearings of distant landmarks, which they professed to know, earnestly consulted with them and the interpreter, who had lately passed through



Sonora, as to the best course to be taken. They were deceived themselves, as I believe, and so deceived me, as to the direction of Yanos; and gave a decided opinion as to the unsafety of venturing into the prairie; and, also, that it would be best to take the Yanos road, and thence, by an old trail, a road formerly used to connect the presidios or frontier garrisons, Yanos, Fronteras, Fruson, &c.

The next morning, having reluctantly assented, I took the Yanos road. A mile or two convinced me (and them) that its general direction was very different from their representations; and *east of south*. I then took the responsibility of turning short to the right, and ordered them to guide me to the water hole. I had some confused information of water to be found in the direction of San Bernadino. Mr. Leroux had been very decided that it would be necessary to go by this southern point, even if I ventured that far on the unknown prairie. I then marched 40 miles without water, except a drink for part of the men, where I had hoped to find enough for encamping. The battalion were not prepared for it, and suffered much. These were anxious circumstances, and the responsibility I had taken weighed heavily upon me; their safety and my success seemed both doubtful. Fortunately a large spring was reached the second night, after a continuous march of thirteen hours; and when men and mules were at the point of exhaustion, for the weather was quite warm.

I was joined here by a party of New Mexicans, who had been trading with the Apaches. I purchased twenty-one mules of them, giving a check on the assistant quartermaster at Santa Fé. I also hired one of them to conduct Leroux to the mountain valley, where they had left the Apaches, and sent him to seek an Indian guide. A day or two after, we found a trail leading toward San Bernadino; and the fourth day, early, just after Chabonnaux, the only guide then present, had very unwarrantably gone off hunting, we fell into what was believed to be the trail or road from Yanos to Fronteras; and it immediately led us to a precipitous and rocky descent, of perhaps a thousand feet, amongst broken, wild and confused mountain peaks, which extended as far as could be seen from our great height. I soon found the trail could not be made passable for the wagons; and I hunted myself for a more promising descent, and, in fact, saw a part of the proper one; but very inaccessible from the mountain height on which I then was. My next care was to seek the nearest ground suitable for a camp; fortunately I found water about a mile off. All pronounced the country before us impassable for wagons; I, nevertheless, immediately organized a large working party, under Lieutenant Stone-man, and sent him to make a passage. That night Leroux arrived, bringing an Apache chief, whom he had got hold of with difficulty, and probably great address; so shy were they found. Next morning, it was owing to Leroux's decided assertions and arguments that there could be and was no other known pass but the horse trail, that I did not *insist* on his thorough examination. He even asserted, but was mistaken, that he *had* examined the

opening I had seen and described, and believed might be a wagon road. Meanwhile, the party continued the second day hard at work with crowbar, pick, &c.; whilst I sent one company and about half the baggage, packed on mules, to the first water on the trail, in a deep ravine below. It was about six miles, and the mules were brought back in the evening. Next morning they took the rest of the loading, and I succeeded that day, with much labor and difficulty, breaking one, in getting the wagons to the new camp. Dr. Foster accidentally found the outlet of an old wagon road, (into mine,) and, following back, it led him to the verge of the plain, about a mile from our point of descent. He says this is called the pass of Guadalupe; and that it is the only one, for many hundreds of miles to the south, by which the broken descent from the great table land of Mexico can be made by wagons, and rarely by pack mules. I hold it to be a question whether the same difficult formation does not extend north, at least to the Gila. If it is so, my road is probably the nearest and best route. But if the prairie, to the north, is open to the San Pedro, and water can be found, that improvement will make my road not only a good but a direct one from the Rio Grande to the Pacific.

San Bernadino is a ruined ranche, with buildings enclosed by a wall, with regular bastions. It overlooks a wide, flat and rich valley, watered by a noble spring, which runs into one of the upper branches of the Huaqui river, which is but a few miles distant. Here I succeeded in meeting a few of the Apaches, and obtained a guide, who went about 20 miles, and described the rest of the route to the San Pedro. He was afraid to venture further, and return alone over the plain; the point where he turned back was within fourteen miles of the presidio of Fronteras. It was in the mountain pass that we first saw the wild bulls, from which the command obtained their exclusive supply of meat for about two weeks. They are the increase from those abandoned, when the two ranches of San Bernadino and San Pedro (on the river of the same name) were broken up, in consequence of incessant Indian attacks. They have spread and increased, so as to cover the country; they were as wild and more dangerous than buffalo.

I made the next 62 miles, to the San Pedro river, with little more difficulty than cutting my way through dense thickets of mezquite and many other varieties of bushes, all excessively thorny. It was but 27 miles without water over the last divide; there was snow one day, and for about two weeks, at that time, we suffered with cold. I descended the San Pedro 55 miles, to a point whence a trail goes to Tueson. The guides represented that it was 85 miles of very difficult, if practicable, ground to the mouth of the San Pedro, and one hundred from there to the Pimos; also, very bad, and little or no grass; and, on the other hand, that it was only about 90 miles of a good road, with grass, by Tueson to the same point. I reflected that I was in no condition to go an unnecessary hundred miles, good or bad; and that, if their statements were true, the future road must go by the town. I had previously sent Leroux, Foster and others to examine if there was water on the 30



miles, which was the estimated distance to Tueson. Leroux had just returned; he had found water at a "still-house," 20 miles from the river; and had encountered there a sergeant's party of dragoons. He had made up a story to get off; but, to give it color, Dr. Foster fancied it necessary to go on to the town. Leroux was told, by Indians, that 200 soldiers, with artillery, had been there concentrated. I reached the water next day, and probably surprised the sergeant's party. I found them cutting grass; but the sergeant, as if the bearer of a flag, delivered me a singular message from the commander, which amounted to a *request* that I should not pass his post. Next morning, I made prisoners of four others, who had come, probably, with provisions; and as Dr. Foster's long stay had made me uneasy for him, I dismissed one of them with a note, stating that I should hold the others as hostages for his safety; and promised to release the prisoners if he was sent to me that evening. Deceived as to the distance, but expecting to encamp without water, I marched late; and, having made twelve miles on a road very difficult in places, I encamped at sundown, on the high prairie. At midnight, Foster reached me; with him came two officers; one as a "commissioner," with written instructions to offer a kind of truce, by the terms of which I was to pass the town by a certain point, and to hold no communication with the people. I rejected them, and demanded a capitulation; which the commissioner, with great form, wrote, after his own fashion, in Spanish, and I signed it. The terms bound the garrison not to serve against the United States during the present war; and, as the only further tokens of surrender, to deliver to me two carbines and three lances; my men to enter freely and trade with the inhabitants of the town. After a tedious conference of two hours, in which we had been very friendly, but very cold, the officers departed, assuring me my terms could not be accepted. Believing I was eight or nine miles from town, I took measures to march at daylight; but unfortunately the mules being herded in mezquite bushes, and without water, the half of them, in the darkness of night, escaped the guard; and I could not possibly march, with any prudence, before 8 o'clock.

The distance proved to be sixteen miles. About five miles from town I was met by a dragoon, or lancer, who delivered me a letter, simply refusing my terms. I told him there was no answer, and he rode off. I then ordered the arms to be loaded. Immediately afterward, two citizens rode up, and reported that the place had been evacuated. I arrived at 1 o'clock, and, having passed through the fort, encamped in the edge of the town. Two small field pieces had been taken off, and all public property of value, except a large store of wheat.

The garrisons of Tubac, Santa Cruz and Fronteras had been concentrated, and, I understood Dr. Foster, there were altogether about 230 men; but I have lately learned that he only estimated them at 130. I remained in camp the next day, December 16. There was very little grass, and I fed my mules, cattle and sheep, on the wheat, (and brought off enough for two more days, in the adjoining desert.) That day, to cover some small parties of mule hunters, I made a

reconnoissance, with about sixty men, marching half way to an Indian village, ten miles off, where the enemy were stationed. (I intended attacking him under favorable circumstances, but the path led me through a dense mezquite forest, very favorable to an ambush. I learned, however, that this demonstration caused him to continue his retreat.)

The garrison attempted to force all the inhabitants to leave the town with them. Some of them returned whilst I lay there, and I took pains that all should be treated with kindness. The day I arrived there, a detachment of twenty-five men, who had been posted at the Pimos, to observe or harrass my march, having been sent for by express, passed unobserved round a mountain, near town, and joined the main body. (I afterward learned that they had made a threatening demand for the mules and goods left for me with the Indian chief. He refused, and expressed his determination to resist, by force, any attempt to take them.) On leaving T., I sent to its late commander, Captain Comaduran, by a citizen messenger, a letter for the governor of Sonora, (and I afterward received an answer that it would be transmitted.) It is appended. All things considered, I thought it a proper course to take toward a reputed popular governor of a State, believed to be disgusted and disaffected to the imbecile central government. It was intimated to me, whilst in Tueson, that if I would march toward the capital of the department, I would be joined by sufficient numbers to effect a revolution.

On the 17th, I marched late, as I did not expect to find water. At 8 o'clock, p. m., I encamped 24 miles from Tueson, with no water or grass. Ten or fifteen miles further there is a little water, in a mountain, close to the road, but it could not be found; and I marched, the second day, *thirty miles*, and, at 9, p. m., again encamped, without water; but the men, about sundown, had a drink from a small puddle, too shallow for the water to be dipped with a cup. On the *third* day, I marched, early, eight or nine miles, and encamped at rain water pools. The next day, I found it ten miles to the Gila, at a small grass bottom, above the Pimo villages. The mules were forty-eight hours without water; the men marched twenty-six of thirty-six consecutive hours, and sixty-two miles in rather more than two days, (in one of which no meat ration was issued.)

Thus the 90 miles of the guides turned out to be 128 *to the village*; 57 miles nearer than the reputed distance by the San Pedro. Excepting four or five miles, the road was excellent; but over a true desert. There is, however, a better watered road from Tueson, which strikes the Gila higher up. I believe this route can be well taken for six months in the year; and, that like much of the road on this side, it is impassable in summer, unless for travellers. It is a great gold district; rich mines have been discovered in many of the mountains in view; but it is so barren and destitute of water that even a mining population can scarcely occupy it.

I halted one day near the villages of this friendly, guileless and singularly innocent and cheerful people, the Pimos. There Fran-



cisco met me with your letter from Warner's ranche; he brought with him seven mules found on the Gila; and, altogether, I obtained, at the villages, twenty, which had belonged to the dragoons. They were not sufficiently recruited to be of much service. I traded the Indian goods, and every spare article, for corn. After feeding it several days, I brought away twelve quarts for each public animal, which was fed in very small quantities.

With the aid of a compass, and closely estimating the distances, I have made a rude sketch of my route from the point on the Rio Grande, where our roads diverged, to their junction, near the villages. It is herewith submitted. I have good reason to believe that, even with pack mules, better time can be made on my route than yours; and the *mules kept in good order*, for mine improved on the greater part of it. On the 27th December, (after making the forced march, without water, across the bend of the Gila,) in consequence of the information received in your letter, I determined to send my useless guides express, to give you information of my approach, &c; hoping thus, as I said, to meet orders at Warner's ranche on the 21st of January, and to be of service to your active operations. I also sent for assistance in mules, understanding that you had placed a number of them in that vicinity.

Sixty or seventy miles above the mouth of the Gila, having more wagons than necessary, and scarcely able to get them on, I tried the experiment, with very flattering assurances of success, of boating with two ponton wagon beds, and a raft for the running gear. I embarked a portion of the rations, some road tools, and corn. The experiment signally failed, owing to the shallowness of the water on the bars; the river was very low. In consequence of the difficulty of approaching the river, orders mistaken, &c., the flour only was saved from the loading, and the pontoons were floated empty to the crossing of the Rio Colorado, where they were used as a ferry boat. I passed that river on the 10th and 11th of January. On the first day and night, the loading of the wagons, and many men, were boated over. On the morning of the 11th, the mules were driven two miles, from grass; then drew the wagons through the long ford of a mile, nearly swimming. The wagons were then loaded in the willow thicket, and I marched 15 miles over the sandy road, to the first well, the same day; a great effort and labor. But as there was *no food* for the mules on this side, I deemed it so necessary that I forced it, against every obstacle; marching, in fact, when one company's wagon was in a hole in the middle of the river; the sheep and rear guard on the opposite bank. In the well I found *no water*; and, when obtained by digging deeper, it was in quicksand, and quite insufficient for the men. I had another well dug; and, against *hope* almost, when considerably below the water level of the old one, that of the river water suddenly boiled up.

I viewed this, as in other instances, a Providential deliverance. It was the most trying hour of my long military service. That water failing, the next well would also; and *all the circumstances well considered*, it will be found that on obtaining it not only de-

pendent my military success, but the lives of very many, who justly could hold me responsible.

When of no real use to me, some wagons, which were broken on the march, were left, in order to save the mules. At this first well I left three, because the mules were unequal to drawing them. I had then remaining one for each company, and two others. I sent forward a strong party to the next well, to prepare it and dig another. I arrived there the second day, soon after noon; and, during my stay, until 11, a. m., the following morning, I could not obtain enough of water. There I left two more wagons. (Arrangements were made for sending for all these wagons, the moment I arrived at the first ranche.)

I then took the direction of the "pozo hondo," the *deep well*; sending a party through the first day, and arriving, before noon, the second. Although a second deep well had been dug, the water was insufficient even for the men to drink. I had spent the night without water, and thirty miles of desert were still before me; the men way-worn and exhausted, half fed, and many shoeless. But I met there a relief of mules and some beeves. Mr. Leroux had sent back fifty-seven mules, which were chiefly young, unbroken, and as wild as deer, and the cattle, in one body, (and by poor hands.) So a day's time had been lost, and twenty of the mules.

I immediately had a beef killed, for a meal; a drink of water issued to the men; the wild mules caught, by their Indian drivers, with the lasso, thrown, haltered and harnessed; the poor animals, which *then* had not drank for thirty-six hours, struggling desperately during the whole process, which lasted above two hours, under a hot sun. Then I marched until an hour after dark, and halted to rest, until two o'clock in the morning. I had chosen a spot where there was some large bunch grass, which was cut for the mules. There was no moon, but, at two o'clock, the battalion marched again; and, at mid-day, having come 18 miles more, after long ascending its dry bed, met the running waters of the Carizita. The most of the animals had been without water about fifty hours. Here there was but little grass; and I marched, next day, 15 miles, through the sands, to the Bajocito; the poor men staggering, utterly exhausted, into camp. At this time there should have been half rations of flour for nine days; but, owing probably to inevitable wastage, the last of it was eaten here. I rested a day, and received, at evening, a letter from Commander Montgomery. It advised me of your march to Pueblo; of the tardy arrival of my express, and of communication with you being cut off.

Next day, I encountered extraordinary obstacles to a wagon road, and actually hewed a passage, with axes, through a chasm of solid rock, which lacked a foot of being as wide as the wagons. Two of them were taken through in pieces, whilst the work was going on. So much was I retarded that I encamped, at dark, on the mountain slope, making but seven miles, without water, and without being prepared for it. San Philippi was six miles on this side, but there was a ridge between, so rough with rocks, that, after much labor, it took extreme care to get the wagons over in day-