

ing I took the guides with me up a hill three or four hundred feet high, to look at the country.

Whilst there, a Mexcan trading party arrived from the vicinity of San Bernadino. After a close examination, the following is the amount of their information: That it is seventy or eighty miles there, and that it is above thirty miles from the water hole discovered (and out of the route) to the next water, which they believed, certainly, insufficient for our stock; and that there is one more watering place between that and the vicinity of the old ranch San Bernadino. I had a long and anxious consultation with the guides. They agree that if *there* (at San Bernadino) it would be still very uncertain whether we could reach the Gila on our course; they say, (and Dr. Foster, the interpreter, who was there in July last, agrees with them) that Janos is southwest of this point; that there is a wagon road leading there, and beyond to Fronteras; that from Yanos (six or seven day's travel from here) the route is direct to the San Pedro and Gila—a travelled one, where there is a trail, and that it is certainly better and surer than the more direct course; that it would make not more than four day's difference in the whole route—four days further; and, finally, they advise that that course be taken. (I have no guide for the other.) I have reflected long and anxiously. The General wished me to come the Gila route, that a wagon road might be established by it. The guides which he sent me would not attempt it, and aim to go some three hundred miles, and then strike the San Pedro, its tributary, and this at a distance of from fifty to a hundred miles from the Gila, the whole distance.

What difference if this distance is doubled if it is a better route? I shall stike the Gila all the same by either at the same point. I think there will scarcely be a wagon road for commerce between Santa Fé and the Pacific. If the continent is thus crossed in this vicinity it, will be through El Paso, from which my road may be available. I have travelled a month with ten or fifteen men to help each wagon; and I am now nearly south, of Santa Fé. If I had been supplied with *good* fat mules it might be safe to keep directly on in this wilderness; but it should be noticed that making a wagon road for thirty or forty miles without water is equal to going fifty or sixty with a road. This is done, with good mules, once or twice in a long journey. I have determined to follow the Yanos road until I can turn off—probably two days on this side—as the best road or route to the same point of the Gila, which I should strike in any route—all my guides agree in its being so. An Indian was in the vicinity, when Teson arrived yesterday, alone; but he would not allow himself to be approached. This trading party report that they parted with a party of Apaches, sixty or seventy miles from here. I sent for the two senior captains, and told them all the information on the subject of the routes. They agree with me as to the best. In fact, I find now that there is no difference of opinion amongst all the staff officers. Mr. Hall, who was with the guide, thinks the country impracticable for us. This water is a spring, in a quaking bog, where there is danger of animals falling through. I discover that the maps are worthless; they can be depended on for nothing. Mitchell's and Tanner's, both published this year, disagree two degrees of longitude in the relative positions of Santa Fé and San Diego. Some of the officers represent that the ration is insufficient, &c., and I find that the stealing of provisions has become very troublesome. I have increased it to ten ounces flour and twenty-eight ounces of fresh meat.

That leaves me, by calculation, seventy-seven days' rations of meat, and seventy-nine days' of flour. Of this party I have obtained eight tolerable good mules—six by exchange, and two by purchase. Of six (the owner being not here) he was given his own price, which was fair, and a certificate that he was required to sell to us. The mules we disposed of were worthless to us, and, unfortunately, we have quite a number more of the same sort.

November 21.—I marched this morning by the road, of which the guides had pointed out the course. I found it took a different one, 25° E. of S., going over a ridge and leaving smooth prairie to the right. Whoever reads what I wrote yesterday will perceive, that relying upon the information of my guides and interpreter, that Yanos was to the S. W. I was balanced in my judgement as to my best course, and followed their advice. I have followed them in almost every direction but east. After going a mile and a half towards that point, I decided to turn to the right and go to the hole of the water they had found ten miles on the way to San Bernado; I then sent back to get the Mexican as a guide, on the terms he agreed to yesterday. At half-past one, coming ten miles towards the west, I encamped at the foot of the mountain, the water being two miles up a narrow valley right away from my course. Whilst encamping, some servants, to my great relief, found enough water for cooking, &c., within a quarter of a mile; the animals are herded near the holes of water and there guarded. Leroux and Charboneaux arrived at the same time from the spring, without the Mexican—he would not come. Their information is very obscure, if not contradictory; they can convey no ideas of distance, but it would seem that my greatest risk is not to find enough of water the day after to-morrow, after encamping to-morrow night without any. I have directed Leroux and Weaver, and three others, to go on to the second water to-morrow, and send back to the first information; also, to keep on to the creek which the trading party left a day and two halves of days before we met. There they left other Mexicans trading with Apaches, who were in the mountains close by; he will endeavor to speak to them to get information, guides, and to induce them to trade with us.

November 22.—At half-past seven, I sent up the teamsters to water and bring down the animals as soon as possible, calculating to march at 10 o'clock; four or five different holes of water were found within a mile or two of camp, which, altogether, supplied a deficiency. Five minutes before 10 o'clock I marched. Mr. Hall had gone an hour before with three men, with a spade, to dig at a dry creek which he reported to me he had found about eight miles westward of this camp, and where the sand was full of water. Leroux said it would not be more than three miles from our course. At 8 o'clock, Leroux, with his four assistants, went ahead. Winding out of our narrow valley, I found that Charboneaux and the pioneers had taken a course about 22° W. of S. Reaching the head of the long column of men and wagons, I found that the trail of the Mexican trading party had not yet been struck, and that the guide had given Mr. Stoneman a point of mountain to go toward, and was absent looking for the trail and for water far to the left. Much dissatisfied with the course, I kept a constant watch for the trail, and became convinced we should see nothing of Mr. Hall. At 10 o'clock, on a flat mound near our

direction, Charboneaux came to us; he assured me that Leroux was still to our left; that he had not found the trail, but he had found an old one which he was sure would lead to water. He left us to continue the same course, and went off again to the left, to renew his researches. Thus we continued until near 4 o'clock, following always a strait course towards the hills and mountains in our front; the great plain directly on our right lying in our true course. I was very much discouraged, certain of finding no water to-night, I feared, for to-morrow night. Suddenly, at 4 o'clock, exactly before us, at perhaps 15 miles, we saw a white smoke springing up, I knew then it was Leroux, who had spoken of making a smoke at the little water hole. I kept on, better satisfied, until sundown, when I encamped in a smooth low place, with the usual gamma grass and enough Spanish bayonet for fuel, but no water. Since dark, Charboneaux has come in, having found the trail leading to the smoke, and he says it is still six miles to our left. He says he saw Leroux and party a moment before the smoke arose; he thinks it not more than twelve miles from this place; his mule give out, he says, and he stopped for it to rest and feed half an hour when, going to bridle it, it kicked at him and ran off; he followed it a number of miles and finally shot it, partly, I suppose, from anger, and partly, as he says, to get his saddle and pistols, which he brought into camp. Mr. Hall also come up after dark; he found, by digging, probably, a plenty of water, and in a good course; then, seeing nothing of the column for a long time, he, supposing we had not yet marched, went back to the old camp; he got separated from the men, and they have not yet come—8 o'clock. Two oxen gave out, and were left to-day; two wagons with ox-teams have just come up. The road, or rather country, was smoother than usual to-day; the same gravel and clay well covered with grass. It has been mostly a gentle descent. After all have passed, we leave a very good road. I directed to-day that the three wagons of each company and those of the staff should head alternately an hour and a half, each set stopping after leading so long, until all passed; it has answered very well. The old guard was, very provokingly, caused an unnecessary search of some hours for a mule, which Weaver took off, leaving his own in its place, without giving information of it. The weather has been, unluckily, rather warm to-day and very calm. The march about fifteen miles. The country in this direction is much smoother than that examined by the guides, more to the west, and in our proper direction.

November 24—Morning.—A severe trial has been undergone—forty miles without water! Yesterday morning, reveille and breakfast was before daylight. The march had begun when the sun rose, and all admired its singular and unusual beauty; but once or twice before on this march had the mirage been observed—it results in part from heat and moisture. Now the sun rose over a distant range of mountains, and the mirage formed a vast luminous sea or lake, to which the outline of the mountain gave a far shore, and then the higher mountains became a grand city, fortified and castellated, and with churches and spires, and the masts and sails of shipping, which rested upon the bright and placid bosom of its bay. Our course, as I said, bore yesterday directly for the white column of smoke, which rose from amidst the hills at the base of a small mountain, so we proceeded again from our dry camp. About 9 o'clock, a very strong and cold, but welcome, west wind sprung up—ten miles over good ground, but mostly up hill,

brought us to the trail of the trading party, where it had fallen into many well-worn paths, which made quite a road, which led to the water and the mountain pass. I found a fine place to encamp; but, unfortunately, the water hole turned out to be scarcely a spring at all, and in rocks instead of sand, as I had been led to believe. The mountain was fruitlessly searched, and the hole enlarged before the wagons came up, which was after 12 o'clock. There was not enough of water for the men to drink, and it leaked slowly into the little crevices of rock and stones. They eagerly watched, and dipped it up by spoons! Many had none, nor coffee that morning. The assistant quartermaster had failed, so it was reported to me, to furnish two of the companies with kegs at Santa Fé. Charboneaux had been running over the mountain, searching the trail and best passage for the wagons; he had seen the distant sand-bar beyond, where the Mexicans had reported a small supply of water; but as to distance, they, as usual, had been able to convey no definite idea. I sounded the advance, and the poor animals dragged the wagons up the rocky defile of the mountain. Six miles on this side I met a guide, sent back by Leroux, who reported an abundance of water at three leagues. We came in sight of a river, apparently, but we believed it sand. For hours I rode on, approaching it obliquely, but it *seemed* not at all. At last I struck it and found it the most extraordinary ground that had ever been seen: the dry bottom of a vast shallow lake, of indurated light-colored clay. It was nearly as smooth and hard as polished marble! I sent back the sergeant major to direct the wagons to turn out of the trail, to this strange plain, which was easy as a railroad; it came in very obliquely from the right. I found it two miles to pass it; it gave no track, and with the sight a little averted I could hardly realize that it was not ice. I arrived at dark at the shore, where it is a great bed of springs and swamp. The wagons arrived from half-past 7 to 8 o'clock, having come forty miles without water for thirty six hours, and having been thirteen hours in motion that day? Two wagons with ox-teams and two other wagons of one of the companies did not come at all; the latter stopped four miles back and sent on the mules; they have just come up—at 10 o'clock. Here were Leroux and Weaver, who had found the other Mexican party, who attempted to get away, believing us enemies. They have twenty mules, which I have directed the assistant quartermaster to obtain by trade for ours, that are utterly poor and worn down. The news by the Mexicans was very encouraging. They report good ground for a road to San Bernadino, with plenty of water, at four days journey; (my guides thought it about a day off!) and they say that one of them can go with some of my people and bring the Apaches there; and that they have plenty of mules, just stolen, *captured*, at Oposura. The grass here, however, is poor and distant. This "dry lake," which I shall call it for want of other name, is at least thirty miles in extent, and averages perhaps a mile wide. Mr. Hall came round the mountain we crossed, and it is nearer from the last camp but one, if travelers could forego the watering place in the mountain. Thus, too, in dry weather, great advantage could be taken of the dry lake. That hole of water, it is thought, would answer for a party with fifty animals. As I have often had occasion to observe, this dry lake seemed providential to us; without it we could not have reached water for twelve hours longer; and if, as was to be expected, it had been sand, what an obstacle it would have presented.

Twelve o'clock.—Twenty of the mules have been purchased for \$666 66,

and another for \$50. The party would not trade; but the Apaches probably will. The two ox-teams did not pass the spring last night, and are not yet up. I have engaged the Mexican as a guide to San Bernadino, and an assistant in opening communication with the Apaches. We pay him \$30 for his services, he using his own mule. Leroux and he, and four others, are going immediately to San Bernadino to examine the road, and send back when necessary, and thence to find the Apaches and bring them to meet me there. The whole surface of the ground about here is whitish with salts, probably of different sorts. The ox-wagons have come in since dark. The Mexicans say that a month ago a military expedition from Chihuahua was near this spot and returned. [Very near here, ten years ago, occurred a very extraordinary and treacherous massacre. An American, named Johnson, with seventeen persons of many different nations, (with, also, a Mexican captain and four soldiers who withdrew from fear, it is said, before the occurrence) had come from Sonora, probably to plunder from the Apaches—the captain and soldiers ran off the night before, when there was much difference in the party, and six opposed the horrible deed. Johnson engaged the village, of probably a hundred and fifty warriors, besides women and children, in trade and they gathered round closely and unsuspectingly; he had hidden a swivel on a bag of flour, with another on top of it: it was loaded to the muzzle with balls and a chain. A man sat pretending to smoke, and at a signal uncovered the breech and fired, and this was followed by two volleys of small arms. At this explosion, seemingly from the ground, and as unexpected as an earthquake, the Indians, not killed or mangled, fled in consternation. Johnson's party, so few in number, soon retired likewise, and were pursued or waylaid, by a small party of Indians who had rallied. They were fired on at a short distance, with only the loss of a mule. Johnson's party then killed seven of them, but reached Yanos in a rapid retreat in a day and a half. Three women are said to have been killed by the balls and chain. This fruitless, as well as base and treacherous, attack on so large a force is very strange. Even those of the party who opposed the deed were overruled, and had, for self-preservation, to go through with it. They took from the body of the Chief Juan José, who was an educated man, some orders which President Santa Anna had sent to his generals then invading Texas. The Indians had captured them. Johnson still lives in Sonora, conscience-stricken, it must be believed, with the horrors of this base and fiendish deed.]

November 25.—It was exceedingly cold last night, although there was no wind; it is believed the thermometer would have indicated between ten and fifteen degrees. About seven miles brought us to the defile of the mountain; it is very long and quite rocky. It took the wagons about two hours and a half, and was probably three miles over. Charboneaux, who had killed an antelope before the column reached the mountain, I found near the summit, whilst the baggage was slowly crawling up, in pursuit of grizzly bears. I saw three of them far up among the rocks, standing conspicuously and looking quite white in the sun, whilst the bold hunter was gradually approaching them. Soon after he fired, and in ten seconds again; then there was a confused action and we could see one fall, and the others rushing about with loud and fierce cries that made the mountain ring. The firing having ceased, whilst the young

bears were close by, I was much alarmed for the guide's safety; and then we heard him crying out in Spanish, but in was for more *balls*, and so the cubs escaped. The bear was rolled down and butchered before the wagons had passed. From the last hill on this side, the guides showed me a gap through which we will pass, the second march from this; it bore S. 40° W.; we then had a fine plain to cross, generally descending. We met to-day, first the plant called nopal, like the "Spanish bayonet;" it seems a variety of the palm, as the cabbage tree is said to be. It has a cabbage-like head, just above ground, eighteen inches in diameter, this sends out immense green leaves, forming a sphere of points, which would probably transfix a man. The edges of the leaves, curved up nearly into cylinders, are jagged as the saw of a mill. The second year, probably, it sends up a stem. We find them twenty-five feet high and five inches in diameter at the base. This "cabbage" is a good article of food, but it takes vast quantities of wood and a day or two to cook it, by roasting it in the ground, it is then very palatable, and called "mezcal." Brandy is also distilled from this plant. Our course brought us to a stream, the Los Animos, where it was dry, though sufficiently wooded, chiefly with sycamore. Charboneaux found running water three-quarters of a mile above, near the mountain, but just as I turned it was found that it again made its appearance lower down and more in the course. Making the same right angle that I had, in spite of sounds and signals, the baggage got into camp about sundown. A hard day of nine hours, and about seventeen miles. The loss of several mules and oxen, from breaking down, has been reported this evening, and there is more complaint than ever before of insufficiency of transportation; this after a purchase yesterday of twenty-one mules. The forty miles without water, and the cold, and the bad grass of the last camp, have told, I fear, very seriously. Here, there is, as usual, gamma grass, and close by plenty of fuel. The soil to-day was more barren than usual. We passed close under the bare peak of the mountain, of *granite*, I think. We cross, as usual of late, many trails of Indians and the cattle, &c., they constantly drive off from Sonora. We have now a high wind from the S.E. To complete my account of wild animals, I would mention that there have been seen in this same mountain a dozen black-tailed deer. To-day we passed a prairie dog village, and saw a wolf skulking around its "suburbs;" we also saw some large hares, the same as on the Platte and Arkansas rivers. There is much that is strange on this vast table land, studded with peaks and mountains of every shape; but this afternoon all must have been struck with the quiet beauty of the scene before us. The mountain passed, before us was a smooth plain inclined always to the right, but unbounded in front; waving with the south wind, the tall gamma and buffalo grass received from the slant sunshine a golden sheen, and the whole had a rich blue and purple setting of long mountain ranges on either side, the light, the shadow, and the varying distances, gave variety and beauty of hue; the near heights dotted with cedar, the silvered granite peaks and the distant lofty summits of the Gila mountains. The sun, with its pencil of rays, touched all with the bright effect of the skilful painter, whilst the tree tops of the Los Animos gave the promise, which the bracing air welcomed, of the well-warmed bivouac and the hours of rest.

November 26.—It was not so cold last night and to-day, although we always find ice at the watering places in the *evening*. The road this

morning bore to the right to enter a narrow flat valley, but it was for some six miles stony and over many spurs from the high ground at the foot of the mountain to the left; so that it would have been better to have turned more to the right at starting and gone further round. After that, we fell into a well-worn trail, which led over hard gravel or smooth clay soil, an excellent road, though slightly ascending. This evening it turns the shoulder of the mountain to our left and bends to the south. It seems inevitable that wind among the mountains as we will, or can, the south is ever before us. The camp is on a stream that runs down into the Los Animos, a little below our last night's camp, and this is the first water found in it. Just below us is a short cañon of rugged rocks, covered with the new species of oaks, with the diminutive leaf; it seems an evergreen. The march is about twelve miles; the soil to-day is pretty good; the high mountain range to our right is remarkably well wooded. A guide has come in, and reports it five or six leagues to the next water; and the next day, he says, we fall into the Yanos and San Bernadino road, which last place we will reach that night. The wind is high and from the south.

November 27.—Very cold last night, and a bright frosty morning, and calm. I marched at 8 o'clock, following the same trail *due south*; ground good. Three or four miles from camp I came to water and swampy ground, which finally compelled me to pass a low but sharp point of the hill; this is one of the head springs of the same creek we followed up yesterday; then turning 20° to the west, we came five miles over a smooth low table land, and then turned S. W. towards a gap among some rather broken mountains, where we found water running a few hundred yards before it sinks; here I have encamped. At the last angle, round a rocky spur of the mountains, there were appearances of iron ore, and I found the needle to vary 20°. The soil seemed rich, and a dark brown, but in large spaces of it no grass grew. We passed very extensive prairie dog villages; in fact, they lined the road nearly all day, and I never remarked them before in apparently rich ground. The buffalo grass of late disputes predominance with the gamma. The oaks first descending from the mountains to the hills are now beginning to be found even dotting the vallies; and we saw a very extensive grove to our left; on the verge of the valley there is also cherry. A very high wind from the S. W. has rendered it very disagreeable since mid-day. Black-tailed deer and antelope are plenty; a number were killed.

November 28.—Marched through an easy pass to the west of the little mountain and the open valley to the left, (a direct road would have kept it, but we turned up last evening about two miles out of the way for the water.) After following then a southern course a mile or two, we fell into a trail running W. 20° S., and said to be an old road from Yanos to San Bernadino; thus ascending for a mile, and having made about five miles in all, we came to the verge of a great descent, which led us, as far as the eye could reach, into mountains and rocks, rough and confused beyond description. I had the wagons stopped below, whilst Manuel, an assistant to the guides, as well as myself, was searching the country. Having heard of water in the edge of the valley, back and to our left, I proceeded there, and encamped about 11 o'clock; the range of mountains running six or eight miles to our left, and about 20° W. of S., seems to have some

little open country on this side of it, which may afford an outlet. I have sent Manuel to examine down in that direction. Charboneaux I have not seen since 8 o'clock; he is either examining the country or hunting. Leroux was, at the least, to have sent a man to meet me to-day; he went two days ago with the new guide into the mountains to the left to seek the Apaches; Weaver, Tesson, and two others are with him. I have some apprehensions for their safety. This San Bernadino seems to elude us like a phantom. There is very little water here, but I have discovered more about a mile off; there are some small oaks for fuel; we have seen them, to-day, quite large trees. Deer and antelope are plenty; the former are very beautiful, and of a dark iron grey color. It is overcast, warm, and promises rain. Leroux came in with his party at 7 o'clock this evening; he reports that the trail we followed to the brink of the table land, is *the* trail or road, and there is no other. What seems impracticable now becomes practicable. I have directed Mr. Stoneman to take a large pioneer party, with all the tools we have, to go to work very early in the morning. Leroux says that it is about eighteen miles to San Bernadino; that the three first miles from here are the worst, and that there is water half way, and some much nearer. I have directed Mr. Hall to go early, and find the distance to it, and whether the wagons, being lightened, can be taken with two or four mules. I have determined to pack the whole of the mules to the first water to-morrow, and then bring them back. Leroux brought with him a chief of the Apaches—that is the best of his mission—he thinks that if he had not managed to get within a fourth of a mile of their village undiscovered, that he would not have succeeded; and I am told the chief would probably not have come, but that he was drunk when he set out, and that he had shown signs of a strong inclination to return. The Apaches promised to meet me at San Bernadino, and to trade mules; they said, however, that they had not many. They have lately returned from an inroad to Oposura; they were warmly pursued, and lost a part of their spoil, and speared many of the mules. A young Apache told Leroux he had come from beyond the Gila, and that it was a good prairie between it and San Bernadino, with springs. Dr. Foster assures me that there is no other pass practicable for wagons for fifteen hundred miles to the south (a little west) of the edge of the great table land of Mexico. He passed down a similar place to this at Caretas, near Bavispe, only passable for mules, and describes the change of climate and vegetable productions as very great and sudden. San Bernadino is on the Huaqui, one of the largest rivers of Mexico, and which runs into the Gulf of California. Manuel came back, and reported that he was in view of the stream, which seemed a thousand yards below, and in a chasm. Leroux speaks of all the country he has seen in his last reconnaissance, (and he was on the lofty range to the south called the "Long Mountain,") as being very much more broken and impassable than the pass we turned back from. Charboneaux has not come in to-night.

November 29.—*Same camp, 4, p. m.*—It rained gently most of the night. It is warm to-day, and nearly clear. I sent Mr. Stoneman at sunrise with twenty-one men to make or improve the road. About 9 o'clock, I got off one hundred and forty mules, well packed, for the first water. One company went, leaving its wagons. At 1 o'clock I sent a note to Mr. Stoneman to keep on, and sleep with his party at the cañon

camp. At half past 3, I received an answer that he had worked only a mile, and thought he would be nearer this camp, and that empty wagons might, with much difficulty, be got through; he thinks rather the worst is passed. I shook hands with Manuelita, the Apache chief, this morning. I told him we were friends, and that I was glad to see him; that my great chief had gone on to California with a few men to meet a great many who came by the sea; that he would take the country from the Mexicans; that I was going to join him; that my mules were tired, and I wished to trade with his people for others; that this same chief and myself had met Apaches last year beyond the Arkansas, and treated them as friends; that the men he called Americans, and who led the Mexicans to war against the Apaches, were men who had run off from their country and become Mexicans; that we did not own them; that the true Americans had now conquered New Mexico, and would treat the Apaches as friends. We, too, are at war with Mexico, and if any of their war parties came (as they apprehended) soon, while I was with them, our cause would be the same. Leroux represents the bad road as ten or twelve miles, and that it is then prairie again. He thinks, from the accounts of the Indians, that it is less than a hundred miles to the San Pedro. He said, to-day, in answer to me, that Carson told him, in presence of the General, not to attempt to strike the Gila nearer than the Pedro. Charboneaux came in this afternoon; he had been a great circuit looking for game, at the country, and finally, for my camp—that is, he was lost. He thinks the country impassable for wagons. Game is very plenty; he killed two deer close together, and saw wild cattle. One of the wagons has hounds so broken as to be spoiled for a mule wagon; two others have tires very loose. The hospital wagon is large and heavy; so Major Cloud, who has a small light wagon, will pack from here; it is his choice. Dr. Sanderson takes the little wagon. The Doctor's wagon I have directed broken up for repairs to the others which need them. The pack mules got back about sundown. Lieutenant Stoneman came in with his party soon after; he had made rather more than two miles of road, and thinks that by returning at daylight with a new party, he can get on fast enough to enable me to take the wagons, &c, to the first water of the creek. I sent Leroux forward to San Bernadino early to meet the Indians, explain our delay, &c., and examine the road; he will send back Charboneaux to be our guide. Weaver will go to the last water in the cañon, return and report distances, and serve as a guide so far; the reports are so confused that I cannot tell the relative distances, nor whether it will take two or three days to San Bernadino. The wagons will be very nearly empty, and Lieutenant Stoneman thinks it necessary, and that there will be great difficulty. He has found the crowbar invaluable. It is a *portage*.

Mr. Hall went some fifteen miles, he thinks, and returned this evening. His report is rather favorable. He is very willing, active, and enterprising. The sick report is increasing fast; in fact, the men are not sufficiently clothed—no great coats—but the weather has been much more moderate for two days, and the descent we now make is perhaps one or two thousand feet. The soil here is soft and dark, and seems rich. We would have moved to-day, with great disadvantage, under ordinary circumstances; the tents wet, and the ground accumulated so on our shoes in *walking*, as to make it a matter of difficulty.

November 30.—I got off the empty wagons and packs by 9 o'clock this morning; it was a mile and a half to the verge of the plain. The first three-fourths of a mile was very bad; in one place, particularly, the descent was steeper than I have ever known wagons to make, (ropes of course were used;) one was very near turning over the hind part over the forepart. The rest of the road, six miles to this camp, where one company came yesterday, is only exceedingly rough. I had at times two, and at times four, mules in a wagon. One wagon had its hounds snapped in two, and I ordered it left, (one company, much smaller than the rest, can do very well with two wagons;) another was slightly broken. Weaver came back and reports that it is about seven miles to the last water, where the trail leaves the mountain stream we are on, and that the road is much better—for road *it is*. Above and below this are indications and even tracks of a wagon. But I am mortified to find that there was much better ground for two or three of the first miles, where our track was so bad, and the road, in fact, formerly passed over by wagons. Dr. Foster followed back a ravine putting in on our left, (as we came,) and found the road—and a practicable one for loaded wagons—to the plain we came from. My guides are ignorant of the country. Being led to believe, two mornings since, that it was a good road by the trail, Charboneaux went off hunting. Leroux had been on a mission to seek the Apaches, as much as to look for a road, and came in late, and tired the night before last. Yesterday morning I sent for him, and told him I thought I had seen from a high elevation a valley to our left, which promised well, and wished him to go and examine it. He assured me he had examined, he believed, the same one, and that there was no outlet to it; and remarked that from the information of the Indians, and from the fact of the old trail, which undoubtedly passes over the best ground in so difficult a pass, it certainly was the only one; and then spoke of the *extreme* roughness everywhere else, (and he had passed all round, I may say, and had been on high mountains which he pointed out.) As Lieut. Stoneman was then hard at work two miles off, I did not insist, but rather doubtfully. Then Charboneaux came in with no better information, reporting that the country was impassable for wagons. I am glad to record that there is a better road, varying from mine for three or four miles, and a very practicable one for loaded wagons.

The scenery to-day was grand and picturesque. At one spot there is a pass not thirty yards wide on one side. A vast rock overhangs the road; just opposite, on a verticle base of solid rock, forty feet high, rested another rock of a round cubical form, of about twenty-five feet dimension; on its top rests still another of spherical form about twelve or fifteen feet in diameter. The mountains and sharp ravines were well covered with the new species of oak of large size, cedar, sycamore, &c. Spanish bayonet, mezquite, and other shrubs, all of a bright green. The march about eight miles. We have descended about one thousand feet. A man named Allen, it is believed, has deserted. I have no doubt now but that I *saw* the upper part of the valley of the proper road the day before yesterday, described it to Mr. Leroux, and requested him to go and examine it, (next day,) and he replied that he had. The direction for it is this: To leave the plain we came from about a mile to the south from our road, and a mile and a half from the old trail. In *returning*, to *keep* the dry branch where our road turns to the left to go over high hills, it passes just there between two high rocks, with a pass less than twenty feet between, and