

superintendence of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States. There is a blacksmith's shop at the mission, and an extensive farm under cultivation.

The stream on which we are encamped is called "Soldier Creek," from the circumstance, as I learned, that, some years since a company of traders having smuggled into the Indian territory a quantity of whiskey, were pursued by a detachment of United States soldiers, and overtaken at the spot where our wagons are formed into a *corral*. Their whiskey was taken and emptied into the stream; and the soldiers having encamped here during these proceedings, gave its present name to the creek. The bank of the small rivulet was lined at an early hour after breakfast with fires, kettles, washtubs, and piles of unwashed linen, showing conclusively that a general lustration was to be performed by the female portion of our party. The timber on the creek consists of oak, linden, and some maple trees. They are of good size, and in several places the bends of the stream are well covered with them. I had heard reports of the creek being richly stocked with a variety of fish; but after two trials of several hours each, without a single nibble at my hook, I was compelled to entertain strong doubts of the accuracy of the reports. The whiskey poured into the stream may have poisoned the fish, as it would have done the Indians, had the traders been successful in their designs.

The soil of the Kansas bottom, and where we are encamped, is a rich argillaceous loam, of great depth, and capable of producing any crop adapted to this latitude. The natural grasses grow with great luxuriance, but they are of a coarse species, and when matured must be rather tough, and not very nutritious.

A new census of our party was taken this morning, and it was found to consist of 98 fighting-men, 50 women, 46 wagons, and 350 cattle. Two divisions were made of the wagons, for convenience in marching. We were joined to-day by nine wagons from Illinois, belonging to Mr. Reed and the Messrs. Donner, highly respectable and intelligent gentlemen, with interesting families. They were received into the company by a unanimous vote.

A Kansas Indian village was visible from our camp on the plain to the south, at a distance of two or three miles. As soon as the sun was sufficiently low in the afternoon, accompanied by Jacob, I visited this village. The walk was much longer and more fatiguing than we expected to find it. While on the way we counted, for a certainty, on our arrival, to be received and entertained by the female *elite* of the Kansas aristocracy, clad in their smoke-colored skin costumes, and with their copper complexions rouged until they vied, in their fiery splendors, with the sun, seen through a vapor of smoke. We carried some vermilion and beads along with us for presents, to ornament the most unadorned, in accordance with the taste of the savages. But, alas! after all our toil, through the rank and tangled grass, when we approached the village not a soul came out to welcome us. No Kansas belle or stern chief made her or his appearance at the doors of any of the wigwams. We entered the village, and found it entirely deserted and desolate, and most of the wigwams in a ruinous state.

A large wigwam, or cabin, near the centre of the village, had recently been burnt to the ground. The whole number of the buildings standing was fourteen. They varied in dimensions, from twenty to thirty-six feet in length, by fifteen in breadth. The cabins are constructed by inserting in the ground hickory saplings, and bending them so as to form an arch about eight or ten feet in height at the top. These saplings are bound firmly together by willow twigs, making a strong, though light framework. This frame is shingled over with bark, peeled from the linden and other large trees, in strips of about twelve inches in breadth and five feet in length. Over this is another frame of saplings and willow-withes, securing the roof and walls, and binding the whole building together. Each cabin has one small entrance, about four feet in height, and three feet in breadth. We passed through, and examined four or five of them. The bark-walls, on the inside, were ornamented with numerous charcoal-sketches, representing horses; horses with men mounted upon them, and engaged in combat with the bow and arrow; horses attached to wagons; and, in

one instance, horses drawing a coach. Another group represented a plow, drawn by oxen. There were various other figures of beasts and reptiles, and some which I conjectured to be the Evil Spirit of the Indian mythology. But they were all done in a style so rude, as to show no great progress in the fine arts. None of the cabins which we entered contained a solitary article of any kind. I returned to our camp, disappointed in my expectations of meeting the Indians at their village, and saddened by the scene of desolation I had witnessed.

In reference to the present number of the Kansas tribe of Indians, I could obtain little satisfactory information. They appear to be wretchedly poor. The country they claim as theirs, and inhabit, affords little or no game; and so far as my observation has extended, they give no attention to agriculture. The number of warriors which the tribe can assemble, I heard estimated at three hundred; but I have no means of judging of the accuracy of this estimate.

May 20.—Our driver was helplessly sick this morning from the effects of an over-night's drunken frolic, upon some wretched, adulterated whiskey which he had procured somewhere in the camp. We were compelled to employ a new driver for the day, and to haul our old one in the wagon.

We travelled several miles over a flat plain, in some places wet and boggy. The Kansas river skirted with timber, with a rich and extensive landscape beyond, could be seen on our left; and on our right Soldier Creek, with scenery equally attractive.

I saw near the trail this morning, a solitary wild rose, the first I have seen blooming in the prairies, the delightful fragrance of which instantly excited emotions of sadness and tenderness, by reviving in the memory a thousand associations connected with home, and friends, and civilization, all of which we had left behind, for a weary journey through a desolate wilderness. It is not possible to describe the effect upon the sensibilities produced by this modest and lonely flower. The perfume exhaled from its petals and enriching the "desert air," addressed a language to the heart more thrilling than the plaintive and impassioned accents from the inspired voice of music or poesy.

We encamped at 3 o'clock, P. M., in a heavy rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning, which had been pouring down upon us three hours. Our camp is on the high ground of the prairies, a mile from wood and water, which necessary articles have to be hauled to it in the rain and through the deep mud.

The Indians have, thus far, made no attempts to steal our cattle. They generally keep a respectful distance, showing themselves in small numbers on the summits of the prairie, adjacent to the route of our train. I watched to-night until one o'clock. The howls and sharp snarling barks of the wolves; the mournful hootings of the owl, and the rush of the winds through the tree-tops of the neighboring grove, are the only sounds disturbing the deep solitude of the night. Distance eight miles.

May 21.—The views from the high elevations of the prairie, have, as usual, been strikingly picturesque. The country we have passed through for the last one hundred miles, presents greater attractions to the eye than any that I have ever previously seen. What the climate may be in winter, or how it may effect the health of settlers in summer and autumn, I have no means of judging. Its elevated and undulating surface, however, would seem to indicate salubrity.

About noon we arrived at another small creek, the banks of which on both sides are steep, and very difficult to pass. Our wagons were lowered down by ropes, and by doubling teams, they were all finally drawn out of the bed of the stream, and up the opposite bank. It was four o'clock when this was accomplished. We encamped in a bend of the stream, about a mile from where we crossed it.

The day has been delightful, and a more cheerful spirit seems to prevail in our party than usual. Mr. Boone, whom we have been expecting several days, came up and joined us this afternoon. The men amused themselves, after we encamped, by firing at a target. The distances were 80 and 200 yards. Among the best shots, with the rifle, were those of Brown of Lexington, Ky. At dark our cattle were driven into the corral

to prevent them from straying, and from being stolen by the Indians. Distance 6 miles.

May 22.—This morning thirteen wagons, about half of which belonged to Mr. Gordon, of Jackson county, Mo., separated from the main party, assigning as a reason therefor, that the company was too large, and that as a consequence of this, our progress was too slow for them. This is the second division in our party which has taken place since we started, and there is a strong probability that soon there will be others. A restlessness of disposition, and dissatisfaction from trivial causes, lead to these frequent changes among the emigrating parties.

The trail along which we have travelled to-day, has been dry, compact, and easy for our teams. It runs over a high undulating country, exhibiting a great variety of rich scenery. As the traveller rises the elevated swells of the prairie, his eye can frequently take in at a glance, a diameter of 60 or 80 miles of country, all clothed at this season with the deepest verdure, and the most luxuriant vegetation. We encamped for the day on what was called by some "Black Paint" Creek, by others "Sandy," a tributary of the Kansas river. The bottom on either side of the creek, is timbered with large and handsomely-shaped oaks.

Mr. Kirkendall and myself were two or three miles in advance of our train, when we commenced winding through the ravines of the bluffs, in order to descend to the bottom-lands bordering the stream. We were met here by four young Indians, apparently riding a race. They were mounted on fat ponies, which they urged forward at their highest powers of speed, until coming up to us they drew their horses in, and passing by a short distance, wheeled about and rode along at our side to the bank of the stream. Here we met some forty or fifty more Indians, and we soon discovered that about two miles below there were two large Kansas villages.

One of those whom we met at the creek was a very handsome young man, (a chief,) whose dress was much more cleanly and of better materials than his followers or associates. He carried in his hand a small looking-glass, which he consulted

with great frequency and earnestness, evidently much pleased with his personal appearance. A profusion of bone and tin trinkets ornamented his ears, and nose, and neck. A medal with the likeness on one side of "John Tyler, President of the United States," was suspended on his breast. On the other side there was a device of a pipe and a tomahawk, and the following inscription, "Peace and Friendship." This Indian appeared to have great influence over the young men of his tribe. I did not learn his name.

Our train came up and encamped, and it was not long before the two villages appeared to be entirely emptied of their men, women, and children. The camp was filled and surrounded by them. They numbered probably some four or five hundred. Those who last came from the villages were mostly in a wretched condition, so far as their clothing was concerned. An exceedingly foul blanket, more than half worn, and sometimes in tatters, with a pair of leggins, constituted their suits of garments. A large portion of the men were well-proportioned and above medium stature; and the countenances of many were prepossessing and intelligent, if not handsome. Some of them wore their hair long, and it presented a tangled and matted appearance. The heads of others (probably warriors) were shorn close to the skin, except a tuft extending from the forehead over the crown of the head down to the neck, resembling the comb of a cock. The faces of many were rouged,—some in a fanciful manner, with vermilion. The eyelids and lips only, of several, were painted; the cheeks and ears of others, and the forehead and nose of others. There appeared to be a great variety of tastes and no prevailing fashion. I noticed that the ears of a great number of the men were bored with four large holes in each, so large that the finger could be passed through the perforations, from which were suspended a variety of ornaments, made of bone, tin, and brass. Small globular and hollow metal buttons, with balls in them, were strung around the neck or fastened to the leggins of others, so that every motion of their bodies created a jingling sound.

Such as rode ponies were desirous of *swapping* them for the

American horses of the emigrants, or of trading them for whiskey. They all appeared to be most unblushing and practised beggars. There was scarcely an object which they saw, from a cow and calf to the smallest trinket or button upon our clothing, that they did not request us to present to them. Bread, meat, tobacco, and whiskey, they continually asked for; and the former we gave to them, the last we had not to give—and if we had had it, we should not have given it. Among these very troublesome visitors was Ki-he-ga-wa-chuck-ee, (words importing “the rashly brave,” or “fool-hardy.”) This personage is a principal chief of the Kansas tribe. His wife accompanied him. He appeared to be a man of about fifty-five years of age, of commanding figure, and of rather an intellectual and pleasing expression of countenance. I presented his squaw, whose charms were not of the highest order, with a dozen strings of glass beads, with which she and her spouse seemed to be much delighted. They both spoke and said, “Good! very good!” A turban; a soiled damask dressing-gown of originally brilliant colors, but much faded; buckskin leggins and moccasins, composed the dress of Ki-he-ga-wa-chuck-ee. He wore the usual quantity of bone and tin ornaments about his ears and neck, and the little jingling buttons or bells on his legs. His face was painted with vermilion.

The reputation of the Kansas Indians for honesty is far from immaculate among the emigrants, and a strong guard was placed around the camp and over our cattle, notwithstanding the pledge of Ki-he-ga-wa-chuck-ee, that none of his people should steal from or molest us in any manner. About 10 o'clock at night, two Indians were taken prisoners by the sentinels on duty. They were greatly alarmed when brought to the guard-tent, expecting immediate punishment. An investigation took place, and it turned out, that they had come into the camp by appointment with some individual of our party, who had promised to trade with them for a horse, for which they were to receive four gallons of whiskey. Their motive in coming late at night was, that they wished to conceal the trade from the Indians generally, as in the event of its being known,

they would be compelled to divide the whiskey among the whole tribe, whereas they wished to drink it themselves. The trade was broken off, and the Indian captives, much to their relief, were discharged. Several of the young men from our camp visited the nearest Kansas village after dark. They had not been in the village long, before the cry of “Pawnee! Pawnee!” was raised by the Indians, and several guns were discharged immediately. This alarm was probably raised by the Indians, to rid themselves of their white visitors, and the *ruse* was successful. The Pawnees, as I learned, had a short time previously made an attack upon the Kansas, and besides killing a number of the latter, had burnt one of their villages. Distance 18 miles.

May 23.—The Indians were in and around our camp before we were fairly aroused from our slumbers, begging with great vehemence for bread and meat. Ki-he-ga-wa-chuck-ee, and his wife, took their seats upon the ground near our tent, it being headquarters, and there remained until the train was ready to move. In consideration of the fulfilment of the promise of the chief that nothing should be stolen from us by his people, a general contribution was made, of flour, bacon, and sundry other articles, amounting in the aggregate to a large quantity, which was given to the chief to be divided as he saw fit among his people. This appeared to give general satisfaction to our visitors, and we left them in the full enjoyment of their luxuries.

The ford of the small creek on which we encamped last night was difficult, owing to its steep banks and muddy channel. We were obliged to fell small trees and a large quantity of brush, and fill up the bed of the stream, before the wagons could pass over. Our route for several miles was through a highly fertile valley, bounded on the east by a chain of mound-shaped elevations of the prairie, on the west and in front by “Hurricane Creek,” the timber skirting which is plentiful and large. The most enthusiastic votary of agriculture and a pastoral life, could here, it seems to me, realize the extent of his desires—the full perfection of rural scenery, and all the pleas-

ures and enjoyments arising from the most fruitful reproduction in the vegetable and animal kingdoms. Granite, flint, and sandstone are exhibited in boulders and a debris on the slopes of the highest elevations.

Several of the Kansas Indians followed us from our last encampment. One of them presented to me a root or tuber, of an oval shape, about one and one-half inch in length, and an inch in diameter. This root is called the prairie potato. Its composition is farinaceous and highly nutritious, and its flavor is more agreeable than that of the finest Irish potato. I have but little doubt, if this plant was cultivated in our gardens, it would be an excellent and useful vegetable for ordinary consumption; and very probably it would be so improved as to form a substitute for the potato. The wild rose, which is now in full bloom, perfumes the atmosphere along our route with a delicious fragrance. The wild tulip, (yellow and variegated,) a plume-shaped white flower, and several flowers of the campanella or bell-shaped classification, have ornamented the prairie to-day.

We crossed the creek on our left at 12 o'clock, m. Two hours were occupied in passing our wagons over it. Our route from the creek continued over an open and rolling prairie, broken by small branches and ravines;—the last of which are now dry, but seem to serve as aqueducts to convey the water from the rolling plains to the principal streams in rainy seasons, or during the melting of the snows early in the spring.

In the afternoon, near a small pond of water, we met four trappers from the Rocky Mountains, returning to the "settlements." They were accompanied by several Delaware Indians, all of whom spoke English so as to be understood. There were suspended from the saddle of one of the trappers, a wild turkey, a racoon, and several squirrels, which they had taken last night. To acquire the trapper's art, a long apprenticeship is evidently requisite. Although the country through which we are travelling abounds in all the natural vegetable riches which a most generous soil can be supposed to produce without cultivation, we have rarely seen signs of game of any description,

beast or bird. By the mystery of their art, however, these hunters of the mountains have contrived to supply themselves with a sufficiency of meat to keep themselves from starvation. They were packing several large sacks of fur-skins. They reported that on the Platte, some one or two hundred miles in advance of us, there were large herds of buffaloes, and that we should experience no difficulty while in this region in supplying ourselves with fresh meat. The costume of these men was *outré* surpassing description.

We encamped this afternoon in a small depression of the prairie, near a fine spring of cold pure water, surrounded by a few trees. The water of this spring was as grateful to us as nectar to the fabled deities of heathen mythology. Several of the Kansas Indians followed us all day, and are with us to-night. Distance 12 miles.

May 24.—The first five miles of our march was over a rolling prairie country, dotted with occasional clumps of timber. We then crossed a creek with a rapid and limpid current, flowing over a rocky and gravelly bed. This stream would afford fine water-power for mills. The banks above and below the ford are well supplied with oak, elm, and linden trees, of good size; and the land, which on the western side rises from the creek in gentle undulations, is of the richest composition, and covered with a carpet of the greenest and most luxuriant vegetation. We found here, gushing from a ledge of limestone rock, a spring of excellent water, from which we refreshed ourselves in draughts that would be astonishing to the most fanatical cold-water advocate.

Rising from the bottom of this stream, upon the table-land, the scenery for a long distance to the north and the south is surpassingly attractive. On the eastern bank of the rivulet, a chain of mound-shaped bluffs stretches far away to the right and the left, overlooking the gentle slopes and undulations on the western side. It is impossible to travel through this country with the utilitarian eye and appreciation natural to all Americans, without a sensation of regret, that an agricultural resource of such immense capacity as is here supplied by a

bountiful Providence, is so utterly neglected and waste. The soil, I am persuaded, is capable of producing every variety of crop adapted to this latitude, which enters into the consumption, and conduces to the comfort and luxury of man, with a generosity of reproduction that would appear almost marvelous to the farmers of many of our agricultural districts on the coast of the Atlantic. This fair and extensive domain is peopled by a few wandering, half-naked and half-starved Indians, who have not the smallest appreciation of the great natural wealth of the country over which they roam in quest of such small game as now remains, to keep themselves from absolute famine. Having destroyed or driven farther west all the vast herds of deer, elk, and buffalo which once subsisted here upon the rank and nutritious vegetation, they are now starving, and have turned pensioners upon the government of the United States, and beggars of the emigrants passing west, for clothing and food. Beautiful as the country is, the silence and desolation reigning over it excite irrepressible emotions of sadness and melancholy.

Passing over the undulations, in a few miles we discovered, on the right-hand of the trail, another spring of cold water, from which again we refreshed ourselves. At this point the country becomes much more elevated, and the view on all sides still more extensive, bounded by the far, far-off green hill-tops, without a solitary tree in the vast expanse. Where timber exists on these plains, it is usually in the ravines and bottoms, and along the water-courses, frequently entirely concealed from the eye of the traveller when surveying the country from the ridges.

I noticed this morning, in a ravine near our camp, a species of honeysuckle. Its blossom was white, and without fragrance. The wild rose, perfuming the atmosphere with its delicate and delicious fragrance, the sweetbrier, tulip, and the usual variety of other flowers, have exhibited themselves on our march.

The oxen, overcome by the extreme heat of the sun during the marches, are beginning to perish. I saw two dead oxen by the wayside, this morning, which belonged to some of the forward companies.

We encamped, this afternoon, in a hollow where there is a fine spring of cold, pure water, but no timber, with the exception of three elm-trees. A dead and fallen elm has been drawn to our camp, and divided among the several messes for fuel. This tree was entirely consumed by us, and the next three emigrating parties will consume the three standing elms. Our progress is very slow. But notwithstanding this, many of the wagons are late in reaching camp, and the train is frequently strung out several miles. I am beginning to feel alarmed at the tardiness of our movements, and fearful that winter will find us in the snowy mountains of California, or that we shall suffer from the exhaustion of our supply of provisions. I do not fear for myself, but for the women and children of the emigrants. Singular as it may seem, there are many of our present party who have no just conceptions of the extent and labor of the journey before them. They appear to be desirous of shortening each day's march as much as possible, and when once encamped are reluctant to move, except for the benefit of fresh grass for their cattle, and a more convenient and plentiful supply of wood for the purposes of cooking. There are several persons in camp ill with bilious complaints. Distance 10 miles.

May 25.—Our route to-day has been over a more broken country than I have seen since entering upon the prairies. The timber fringing the margin of Vermilion Creek, seen in the distance, has been the only relief to the nakedness of the country, with the exception of two or three solitary trees, standing isolated on the verdant plain. We reached the Vermilion about noon. The bank of this stream on the eastern side was so steep, and the ford in other respects so difficult, that we were detained several hours in crossing it. The Vermilion is the largest water-course we have crossed since leaving the Kansas. Its current is more rapid than has been usually exhibited by the streams of these prairies, and would afford very good water-power. The timber at this point on its banks, is about a quarter of a mile in width, and consists chiefly of oak and elm. It has been reported to be abundantly supplied with a variety of fish. Ewing and Nuttall, who encamped with an emigrant party

here last night, caught two good-sized catfish, but none of a different species.

Between this and the Big Blue, on the trail, there was said to be neither wood nor water, and consequently our water-casks were filled, and a supply of wood placed in our wagons, sufficient for fires at night and in the morning. We encamped this afternoon on a high elevation of the prairie, about five miles west of the Vermilion. Just as our wagons were forming the corral, a storm of thunder, lightning, rain and wind, burst upon us, drenching us to the skin, and nearly upsetting some of our wagons with its furious violence. The cloud rose from the west, and soon passing over to the east, within a hundred yards of us the most brilliant rainbow I ever beheld was formed, the bases of the arch resting upon two undulations between which we had passed. No Roman general, in all his gorgeous triumphal processions, ever paraded beneath an arch so splendid and imposing. The clouds soon cleared away, the rain ceased, and the brilliant meteor faded, leaving nature around us freshened and cleansed from the dust and impurities, which for two days past have been excessively annoying.

The ridges over which we had marched to-day, have generally exhibited a coarse gravel of flint and sandstone, with boulders of the latter, and of granite. Distance 15 miles.

May 26.—Our route to-day has continued over a rolling, and rather broken country, compared with former marches. We crossed a small stream about three miles from our encampment, the limpid waters of which flow merrily over a gravelly bed, and a few straggling trees ornament its banks. From this we continued to ascend over elevated ridges, until we reached the bluffs which overlook Big Blue River. Descending from these, and ascertaining that from the late rains the stream was so much swollen as not to be fordable, we encamped on a slope of the prairie, near the timber, at one o'clock, P. M.

The Big Blue in its present state, at the ford, is a stream about one hundred yards in width, with turbid water and a strong and rapid current. A large quantity of drift is floating on its surface. The timber on it at this point is about half a mile in

width, and is composed of oak, cotton-wood, walnut, beach, and sycamore. The trees are large, and appear to be sound and thrifty. A small spring branch empties into the main river, which here runs nearly from the north to the south, just above the ford. The waters of the branch are perfectly limpid, and with a lively and sparkling current bubble along over a clear bed of gravel and large flat rocks. In the banks and the bed of this small stream, there are several springs of delicious cold water, which to the traveller in this region is one of the most highly-prized luxuries. Should our government determine to establish military posts along the emigrant trail to Oregon, a more favorable position than this, for one of them, could not be selected. The range of bluffs on the eastern side of the river, about two hundred yards from it, overlooks and commands the entire bottom on both sides, forming a natural fortification.

The river has continued to rise rapidly since our arrival here, and at sunset the muddy waters were even with its banks. It is not probable that we shall be able to ford it for two or three days. The two companies immediately in advance of us, were so fortunate as to reach the stream last night before the great rise took place, and we saw them on our arrival wending their way west, over the high and distant ridges.

A fruit called the prairie pea, which I have previously noticed has been very abundant along our route. The plant which produces it is about eight inches in length, and has a leaf similar to that of the wild pea vine. The fruit, which varies from half an inch to an inch in diameter, has a tough rind, with a juicy pulp, the flavor of which resembles that of the green pea in its raw state. In the heart of the fruit there are a number of small seeds. Mrs. Grayson, having the necessary spices, &c., made of the prairie pea a jar of pickles, and they were equal if not superior to any delicacy of the kind which I have ever tasted. The wild rose with its delicate perfume, and the wild tulip, have been the most conspicuous flowers.

The afternoon has been devoted, by the female portion of our party, to the important duty of "washing." I noticed that the small branch was lined with fires, kettles, tubs, and all the

paraphernalia necessary to the process of purifying linen. The Big Blue is said to abound in fish, but its extreme height, has prevented much success with our anglers. A catfish about three feet in length was taken this evening by one of our party.

While I am writing, a public meeting is being held in the area of the corral. There is much speaking and voting upon questions appertaining to the enforcement of by-laws, and regulations heretofore adopted, but rarely enforced. We are a pure democracy. All laws are proposed directly to a general assembly, and are enacted or rejected by a majority. The court of arbitrators, appointed to decide disputes between parties, and to punish offenders against the peace and order of the company, does not appear to have much authority. The party condemned is certain to take an appeal to an assembly of the whole, and he is nearly as certain of an acquittal, whatever may have been his transgressions.

The day has been delightful. No disagreeable incident has marred the general harmony and good feeling. The new moon exhibited its faint crescent above the tree-tops contiguous to our camp, soon after the sun sank behind the western horizon. She was recognised as an old and familiar acquaintance of the great family of Adam, with whom our friends of the orient might be shaking hands at the same time that we were gazing upon her pleasing features. Distance 10 miles.

CHAPTER V.

Terrible storm—More legislation—Alcove spring—Honey—A death and funeral—Boat-launch—Blue River Rover—Soil and scenery along the Blue—Fresh graves—Pawnee country—Quarrels in camp—Withdrawal of the Oregon emigrants—Indian hunters—Indian appetites—More fighting—Antelopes—False buffalo chase—Blacksmithing on the plains.

MAY 27.—A terrific thunder-storm roared and raged, and poured out its floods of water throughout a great portion of the

night. But for the protection against the violence of the wind, afforded by the bluffs on one side and the timber on the other, our tents would have been swept away by the storm. The whole arch of the heavens for a time was wrapped in a sheet of flame, and the almost deafening crashes of thunder, following each other with scarcely an intermission between, seemed as if they would rend the solid earth, or topple it from its axis. A more sublime and awful meteoric display, I never witnessed or could conceive.

The river since last night has risen several feet, and there is now no hope of fording it for several days. At eight o'clock, A. M., an adjourned meeting of the company was held in the corral, to hear and act upon a report of a committee, appointed by the meeting last night, to draw up additional regulations for our government during the journey. As usual in these assemblies, violent language was used, producing personal altercation and much excitement. A motion having been made by one of the company, to appoint a standing committee to try the officers, when charged with tyranny or neglect of duty by any individual of the party, it was carried; whereupon all the officers announced their resignations, and we were thrown back into our original elements, without a head and without organization. I felt fully satisfied that a large majority of the emigrants composing our party were in favor of order, and a restraining exercise of authority on the part of their officers, and that they had voted without understanding the effects which must follow the measure adopted. Not having participated in the proceedings of the meeting previously, I moved a reconsideration of the vote just taken, and explained the reasons therefor. My motion was carried by a large majority; the resolution raising the standing committee was rescinded, and the officers who had just resigned were re-elected by acclamation! These matters I describe with some minuteness, because they illustrate emigrant life while on the road to the Pacific, where no law prevails except their will. So thoroughly, however, are our people imbued with conservative republican principles, and so accustomed are they to order and propriety of