

tions according to circumstances. They are one of the most powerful tribes of Indians west of the Rocky Mountains, and have hitherto on all occasions manifested a most friendly disposition towards the emigrants passing through their territory. Many of the men we saw were finely formed for strength and agility, with countenances expressive of courage and humanity. They evinced fine horsemanship, and a skilful use of the bow and arrow, their principal weapon in hunting and war. I do not know that the United States government has made treaties with the Snakes. The Indians rode along with us to our place of encampment for the day.

We encamped on the bank of the Big Sandy, in a handsome bottom formed by a bend of the river. The general aspect of the country through which we have passed to-day is much the same as yesterday. The table-land of the plain produces little vegetation except the wild-sage, and this is stunted and seems to be dying from drought or the poverty of the soil. On the narrow bottoms of the river there is grass; and immediately on its banks there are clumps or thickets of small willows, from half an inch to an inch in diameter, and from five to ten feet in height. The lupin is in bloom around our camp. Distance 30 miles.

CHAPTER X.

Green River—Terrific storm—Desolate scenery—Black's Fork—Rainbow bluffs—Remarkable butte—Arrival at Fort Bridger—Messrs. Hastings and Hudspeth—Traders and trappers from Taos—Capt. Walker—Californian horses—Snow showers on the mountains—Resume our march by the new route via the Great Salt Lake—Cold weather—Ice in July—Bear River—Difficult passage through the mountains—Elephant statue.

JULY 15.—About eight miles from our last encampment we struck and forded Green river, the head of the Colorado or Red River of the West, which empties into the Gulf of California.

The river at the ford is between fifty and one hundred yards in breadth, and the water in the channel is about two and a half feet in depth. The bed of the channel is composed of small round stones. The stream runs with a clear rapid current. Cotton-wood and small willows border its banks as far as we travelled upon it. These, with some green islands, afford an agreeable and picturesque contrast to the brown scenery of hill and plain on either side. Continuing down the river we halted at noon to rest our animals under the shade of some large cotton-wood trees. There was but little grass around us. A dark cloud, across which there were incessant flashes of lightning, rose in the west soon after we halted.

At half-past two o'clock, P. M., resuming our march we travelled about two miles farther down the stream, and left it near a point where I saw the ruins of several log-cabins, which I have since learned were erected some years ago by traders and trappers, and have subsequently been deserted. The trail here makes a right angle and ascends over the bluffs bordering the valley of the stream, in nearly a west course. We had scarcely mounted the bluffs when we were saluted by a storm of rain, lightning, thunder, and wind, which raged with terrific fury and violence over the broken and dreary plain, for several hours.

It is scarcely possible to conceive a scene of more forbidding dreariness and desolation than was presented to our view on all sides. Precipitous and impending cliffs of rock and concrete sand and clay, deep ravines and chasms plowed out by the torrents of water or by the fierce tornadoes which rage with unrestrained force and fury over this desert, with a few straggling and stunted sage-shrubs struggling for an existence in the sandy and gravelly soil, were the prominent objects that saluted our vision. Far to the left of us, the Utah mountains lift their summits covered with perpetual snows, presenting to the eye a wintry scene in the middle of July.

While travelling onward at a slow pace, being some hundred yards in advance of the main party, (the storm having in some degree subsided,) with skins thoroughly wet and in no very

cheerful mood, one of the party behind struck up in a sonorous voice the serio-comic elegy of "Lord Lovell and Lady Nancy." Shouts of merry laughter succeeded the rehearsal of each stanza, and the whole party, from being in a most gloomy and savage state of mind, were restored to the best possible humor. The strong contrast between the sublime which they had seen and felt, and the ridiculous which they heard, operated upon them something like a shock of galvanism on a dead body.

Just before sunset, we reached the summit of the ridge between Green river and Black's Fork, a tributary of the former. From this, at a distance of six or eight miles, we could see the last-named stream, and the smoke rising from the fires of an emigrant encampment. We reached Black's Fork of Green river, and encamped upon it some time after dark. There was no wood except some small green willows which resisted ignition; and weary and wet, we soon made our beds and fell asleep. Distance 35 miles.

July 16.—Black's Fork is a stream varying in width from fifty to one hundred feet. Its waters are limpid and cold. The trail crosses this stream several times during the day's march, leaving it as often to cut off the bends, and returning to it again. The scenery along our route to-day has been interesting, although the soil of the country for the most part is frightfully sterile.

The bluffs, assuming the forms and elevation of *buttes*, which border the valley of the stream through which we are travelling, are composed of soft sandstone and a concrete combination of sand and clay. Their perpendicular walls are colored with nearly all the hues of the rainbow, in stratified lines. Red, green, blue, yellow, and purple are distinctly represented. These bluffs are worn by the action of water and wind into almost every conceivable shape. A very remarkable isolated elevation or *butte*, rises abruptly from the flat surface of the plain, about eighteen miles from our last encampment. Its shape is irregularly oval. It is about two or three miles in circumference, and its extreme height is probably five hundred feet above the level of the plain. In general shape and orna-

ment it presents the appearance of a magnificent structure erected by human labor, but crumbling into ruins. Surrounding it there are a multitude of columns of unknown architectural orders, (orders of nature,) and grotesque figures in statuary, and carvings in *alto* and *basso relievo*. Some of these would be substitutes for the sphynxes of Egyptian architecture; others for caryatides, etc., etc. But it is useless to multiply similitudes, for there is scarcely a prominent animal figure in nature, or a distorted and unnatural shape conceived by man for architectural ornament, that has not some feature represented here, sculptured and carved upon the soft rock by the winds and the rains. A well-defined cornice surrounds the western and southern sides of this temple of nature, and its roof is surmounted by three immense domes, in comparison with which those of the Capitol, St. Peter's, and St. Sophia are toys. A few miles beyond this, there is a labyrinth of columns formed in the bluffs by the action of water and wind, through which when you enter it, the voice and sound of footsteps are echoed and re-echoed a long distance.

The *mirage* displayed here its illusory invitations with great distinctness. The presentations of this phenomenon were not, however, different from those previously noticed. Just before sunset, we once more struck the stream on which we were travelling, and had a view of the landmarks which, we supposed, were near Fort Bridger. The trail at this point diverged again from the stream, and we travelled over a barren plain, with no vegetation upon it except the wild sage. We were overtaken by darkness some miles before reaching our destination for the day. The trail was lost by my mule, upon the natural instinct of which I relied more than upon myself, in the dark. We proceeded onward, and finally saw the faint light of camp-fires, apparently very near, but really at a long distance. Striking in a direct line for them, we met many obstacles and obstructions, some of which were imaginary, others real. We were at last successful in crossing, in the dark, a ravine, bordered on each side by timber, and entering upon the bottom of grass where the lights appeared that we had so intently watched.

Proceeding on, we reached the encampment of Mr. Hastings about eleven o'clock at night. A shower of rain, which fell during the afternoon, had wet us to our skins, and shivering with the dampness and cool temperature, we let our mules loose, and gathered around a miserable fire, the fuel of which was composed of small, green willows. Distance 40 miles.

July 17.—We determined to encamp here two or three days, for the purpose of recruiting our animals, which, being heavily packed, manifest strong signs of fatigue. We pitched our tent, for the first time since we left Fort Laramie, near the camp of Messrs. Hastings and Hudspeth. These gentlemen left the settlements of California the last of April, and travelling over the snows of the Sierra, and swimming the swollen water-courses on either side, reached this vicinity some two weeks since, having explored a new route, via the south end of the great Salt Lake, by which they suppose the distance to California is shortened from one hundred and fifty to two hundred miles. My impressions are unfavorable to the route, especially for wagons and families; but a number of the emigrant parties now encamped here have determined to adopt it, with Messrs. Hastings and Hudspeth as their guides; and are now waiting for some of the rear parties to come up and join them.

"Fort Bridger," as it is called, is a small trading-post, established and now occupied by Messrs. Bridger and Vasquez. The buildings are two or three miserable log-cabins, rudely constructed, and bearing but a faint resemblance to habitable houses. Its position is in a handsome and fertile bottom of the small stream on which we are encamped, about two miles south of the point where the old wagon trail, via Fort Hall, makes an angle, and takes a northwesterly course. The bottom produces the finest qualities of grass, and in great abundance. The water of the stream is cold and pure, and abounds in spotted mountain trout, and a variety of other small fish. Clumps of cottonwood trees are scattered through the valley, and along the banks of the stream. Fort Bridger is distant from the Pacific Spring, by our estimate, 133 miles.

About five hundred Snake Indians were encamped near the

trading-post this morning, but on hearing the news respecting the movements of the Sioux, which we communicated to them, most of them left immediately, for the purpose, I suppose, of organizing elsewhere a war-party to resist the threatened invasion. There are a number of traders here from the neighborhood of Taos, and the head-waters of the Arkansas, who have brought with them dressed buckskins, buckskin shirts, pantaloons, and moccasins, to trade with the emigrants. The emigrant trade is a very important one to the mountain merchants and trappers. The countenances and bearing of these men, who have made the wilderness their home, are generally expressive of a cool, cautious, but determined intrepidity. In a trade, they have no consciences, taking all the "advantages;" but in a matter of hospitality or generosity they are open-handed—ready, many of them, to divide with the needy what they possess.

I was introduced to-day to Captain Walker, of Jackson county, Missouri, who is much celebrated for his explorations and knowledge of the North American continent, between the frontier settlements of the United States and the Pacific. Captain W. is now on his return from the settlements of California, having been out with Captain Fremont in the capacity of guide or pilot. He is driving some four or five hundred Californian horses, which he intends to dispose of in the United States. They appear to be high-spirited animals, of medium size, handsome figures, and in good condition. It is possible that the trade in horses, and even cattle, between California and the United States may, at no distant day, become of considerable importance. Captain W. communicated to me some facts in reference to recent occurrences in California, of considerable interest. He spoke discouragingly of the new route via the south end of the Salt Lake.

Several emigrant parties have arrived here during the day, and others have left, taking the old route, via Fort Hall. Another cloud, rising from behind the mountains to the south, discharged sufficient rain to moisten the ground, about three o'clock, p. m. After the rain had ceased falling, the clouds broke away, some of them sinking below and others rising

above the summits of the mountains, which were glittering in the rays of the sun with snowy whiteness. While raining in the valley, it had been snowing on the mountains. During the shower the thermometer fell, in fifteen minutes, from 82° to 44°.

July 18.—We determined, this morning, to take the new route, via the south end of the great Salt Lake. Mr. Hudspeth—who with a small party, on Monday, will start in advance of the emigrant companies which intend travelling by this route, for the purpose of making some further explorations—has volunteered to guide us as far as the Salt Plain, a day's journey west of the Lake. Although such was my own determination, I wrote several letters to my friends among the emigrant parties in the rear, advising them *not* to take this route, but to keep on the old trail, via Fort Hall. Our situation was different from theirs. We were mounted on mules, had no families, and could afford to hazard experiments, and make explorations. They could not. During the day I visited several of the emigrant *corrals*. Many of the trappers and hunters now collected here were lounging about, making small trades for sugar, coffee, flour, and whiskey. I heard of an instance of a pint of miserable whiskey being sold for a pair of buckskin pantaloons, valued at ten dollars. I saw two dollars in money paid for half a pint.

Several Indians visited our camp, in parties of three or four at a time. An old man and two boys sat down near the door of our tent, this morning, and there remained without speaking, but watchful of every movement, for three or four hours. When dinner was over, we gave them some bread and meat, and they departed without uttering a word. Messrs. Curry and Holder left us to-day, having determined to go to Oregon instead of California. Circles of white-tented wagons may now be seen in every direction, and the smoke from the camp-fires is curling upwards, morning, noon, and evening. An immense number of oxen and horses are scattered over the entire valley, grazing upon the green grass. Parties of Indians, hunters, and emigrants are galloping to and fro, and the scene is one of

almost holiday liveliness. It is difficult to realize that we are in a wilderness, a thousand miles from civilization. I noticed the lupin, and a brilliant scarlet flower, in bloom.

July 19.—Bill Smith, a noted mountain character, in a shooting-match burst his gun, and he was supposed for some time to be dead. He recovered, however, and the first words he uttered upon returning to consciousness were, that "no d—d gun could kill him." The adventures, hazards, and escapes of this man, with his eccentricities of character, as they were related to me, would make an amusing volume. I angled in the stream, and caught an abundance of mountain trout and other small fish. Another shower of rain fell this afternoon, during which the temperature was that of a raw November day.

July 20.—We resumed our march, taking, in accordance with our previous determination, the new route already referred to. Our party consisted of nine persons. Mr. Hudspeth and three young men from the emigrant parties, will accompany us as far as the Salt Plain.

We ascended from the valley in which Fort Bridger is situated, on the left of a high and rather remarkable *butte* which overlooks the fertile bottom from the west. There is no trail, and we are guided in our course and route by the direction in which the Salt Lake is known to lie. The face of the upland country, after leaving Fort Bridger, although broken, presents a more cheerful aspect than the scenery we have been passing through for several days. The wild *sage* continues to be the principal growth, but we have marched over two or three smooth plains covered with good grass. The sides of the hills and mountains have also in many places presented a bright green herbage, and clumps of the aspen poplar frequently ornament the hollows near the bases of the hills.

We crossed a large and fresh Indian trail, made probably by the Snakes. Many of their lodge-poles were scattered along it, and occasionally a skin, showing that they were travelling in great haste. As usual for several days past, a cloud rose in the southwest about three o'clock, p. m., and discharged sufficient rain to wet us. The atmosphere during the shower had a

wintry feel. On the high mountains in sight of us to the left, we could see, after the clouds broke away, that it had been snowing.

We reached a small creek or branch called "Little Muddy" by the hunters, where we encamped between four and five o'clock. Our camp is in a handsome little valley a mile or more in length and half a mile in breadth, richly carpeted with green grass of an excellent quality. An occasional cotton-wood tree, clumps of small willows, and a variety of other shrubbery along the margin of the stream, assist in composing an agreeable landscape. The stream is very small, and in places its channel is dry. The wild geranium, with bright pink and purplish flowers, and a shrub covered with brilliant yellow blossoms, enliven the scenery around. The temperature is that of March or April, and winter clothing is necessary to comfort. Many of the small early spring flowers are now in bloom, among which I noticed the strawberry. Large numbers of antelopes were seen. Distance 15 miles.

July 21.—Our buffalo-robes and the grass of the valley were white with frost. Ice of the thickness of window-glass, congealed in our buckets. Notwithstanding this coldness of the temperature, we experience no inconvenience from it, and the morning air is delightfully pleasant and invigorating. Ascending the hills on the western side of our camp, and passing over a narrow ridge, we entered another grassy valley, which we followed up in a southwest course, between ranges of low sloping hills, three or four miles. Leaving the valley near its upper end, or where the ranges of hills close together, we ascended a gradual slope to the summit of an elevated ridge, the descent on the western side of which is abrupt and precipitous, and is covered with gnarled and stunted cedars, twisted by the winds into many fantastic shapes. Descending with some difficulty this steep mountain-side, we found ourselves in a narrow hollow, enclosed on either side by high elevations, the bottom of which is covered with rank grass, and gay with the bloom of the wild geranium and a shrub richly ornamented with a bright yellow blossom. The hills or mountains enclosing this hollow, are composed of red and yellow argillaceous earth. In the ravines there

are a few aspen poplars of small size, and higher up some dwarfish cedars bowed by winds and snows.

Following up this hollow a short distance, we came to an impassable barrier of red sandstone, rising in perpendicular and impending masses, and running entirely across it. Ascending with great difficulty the steep and high elevation on our right hand, we passed over an elevated plain of gradual ascent, covered with wild sage, of so rank and dense a growth that we found it difficult to force our way through it. This ridge overlooks another deeper and broader valley, which we entered and followed in a southwest course two or three miles, when the ranges of hills close nearly together, and the gorge makes a short curve or angle, taking a general northwest direction. We continued down the gorge until we reached Bear river, between one and two o'clock, P. M.

Bear river, where we struck and forded it, is about fifty yards in breadth, with a rapid current of limpid water foaming over a bed so unequal and rocky, that it was difficult, if not dangerous to the limbs of our mules, when fording it. The margin of the stream is thinly timbered with cotton-wood and small willows. The fertile bottom, as we proceeded down it, varying in width from a mile and a half to one-eighth of a mile, is well covered with grasses of an excellent quality; and I noticed, in addition to the wild geranium, and several other flowers in bloom, the wild flax, sometimes covering a half acre or more with its modest blue blossom. Travelling down the stream on the western side, in a course nearly north, six miles, we encamped on its margin about 3 o'clock, P. M.

The country through which we have passed to-day, has, on the whole, presented a more fertilized aspect than any we have seen for several hundred miles. Many of the hill-sides, and some of the table-land on the high plains, produce grass and other green vegetables. Groves of small aspen poplars, clumps of hawthorn, and willows surrounding the springs, are a great relief to the eye, when surveying the general brownness and sterility of the landscape. I observed strawberry-vines among the grass in the hollows, and in the bottom of Bear river; but

there was no fruit upon them. We have passed the skeletons of several buffaloes. These animals abounded in this region some thirty years ago; but there are now none west of the Rocky Mountains.

Brown shot three antelopes near our camp this afternoon. A young one, which was fat and tender, was slaughtered and brought to camp; the others were so lean as not to be considered eatable. The sage-hens, or the grouse of the sage-plains, with their broods of young chickens, have been frequently flushed, and several shot. The young chickens are very delicate; the old fowl is usually, at this season, lean and tough.

McClary has been quite sick with a fever which has prevailed among the emigrants, and frequently terminated fatally. This afternoon he was scarcely able to sit upon his mule, from weakness and giddiness. Distance 25 miles.

July 22.—Cold, with a strong wind from the snowy mountains to the southwest, rendering the atmosphere raw and uncomfortable. We rose shivering from our bivouacs, and our mules picketed around were shaking with the cold. McClary was so much relieved from his sickness, that he considered himself able to travel, and we resumed our march at seven o'clock. Crossing the river bottom on the western side, we left it, ascending and descending over some low sloping hills, and entering another narrow, grassy valley, through which runs a small stream in a general course from the southwest. We travelled up this gradually ascending valley about twelve miles, to a point where the stream *forks*. Near this place there are several springs of very cold water. Following up the right-hand fork some miles farther, in a northwest course, we left it by climbing the range of hills on the right hand, passing along an elevated ridge, from which we descended into a deep mountain gorge, about one o'clock, P. M.

The mountains on either side of the *cañada* or gorge are precipitous, and tower upwards several thousand feet above the level upon which we are travelling. At 3 o'clock we crossed a small stream flowing into the *cañada* from the northeast. Continuing down, the space between the ranges of mountains be-

comes narrower, and choked up with brush, prostrate trees, and immense masses of rock (conglomerate) which have fallen from the summits of the mountains, affording us no room to pass. We were compelled to leave the bottom of the gorge, and with great caution, to find a path along the precipitous side of the mountains, so steep in many places that our mules were in constant danger of sliding over the precipices, and being thus destroyed.

The snows have recently disappeared. Their fertilizing irrigation has produced a verdant carpet of grass in the bottoms of the small hollows, bespangled with a variety of blooming plants and shrubs. The geranium, wild flax in bloom, and a purple phlox, have been the most conspicuous. In some places the blight of recent frosts is visible. I noticed several fir-trees in one place, while descending through the gorge, from 20 to 100 feet in height. Some of them were standing upon inaccessible projections from the mountain-side. The mountains on either side of us, during our march this afternoon, have raised their rocky and barren summits to a great height, presenting in places perpendicular walls and impending projections of red sandstone and conglomerate rock. Immense masses of many thousand tons' weight have fallen from the sides, and rolled from the summits into the trough of the gorge, where they lie imbedded deep in the earth, or shattered by the concussion of the fall. In other places, the soft red sandstone has been worn by the action of the atmosphere into many remarkable and sometimes fantastic shapes. Some of these are spiral and columnar; others present the grotesque forms of nondescript animals and birds. A very conspicuous object of this kind, of colossal magnitude, exhibited the profile of a rhinoceros or elephant. We named it the "Elephant's Statue."

The dislocated skeletons of buffaloes which perished here many years ago, have been frequently seen. Large flocks of antelope have been in sight during the day's march. We have seen as many as five hundred. A red fox, and an animal of a brown color, which I never saw described, approached within a short distance this afternoon.

Just before sunset we reached a small opening between the mountain ranges, covered with a dense growth of willows, wild currants, and wild rose-bushes. The mountain-sides presented clumps of hawthorn, and a few diminutive and scattering cedars. Here we encamped in the small openings among the willows and other shrubbery, where we found grass and water sufficient for our animals. Distance 35 miles.

CHAPTER XI.

More extreme cold weather—Ogden's Hole—Utah Indians—Weber River—Cañons—Indian visitors—Disgusting practice—Great fires in the mountains—First view of the great Salt Lake—Salmon-trout—Great Salt Lake—A sunset on the lake—Broke my thermometer—Indian chase—Warm sulphur springs—More Indian visitors—Indian fruit-cake—Grasshopper jam—Mode of taking grasshoppers by the Indians.

JULY 23.—Ice froze in our buckets and basins one-fourth of an inch in thickness. On the surface of the small shallow brook which runs through the valley, the congelation was of the thickness of window-glass. At home, in the low and humid regions of the Mississippi valley, at this stage of the thermometer we should suffer from sleeping in the open air. But here the atmosphere is so elastic, dry, and bracing, that we experience no inconvenience.

Continuing our march down the narrow defile in a southwest course, generally along the side of the mountain, (the bottom being choked up with willows, vines, briars, and rose-bushes,) we crossed the channels at their mouths, of two small streams emptying into the branch upon which we are travelling. These streams flow through narrow mountain defiles which, as far as we could discern, were timbered with cedars and poplars. One of these gorges presents a most savage and gloomy aspect. It is so narrow and deep that the rays of the sun never penetrate to its bottom. Mr. Hudspeth thinks this is what is called by the hunters, "Ogden's Hole." It derives

this name from the circumstance that a trapper by the name of Ogden concealed himself here from a body of pursuing and hostile Indians, and perhaps perished. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the facts to relate them with accuracy. The romantic interest of the story is doubtless much enhanced by a view of the wild and forbidding spot where its incidents and catastrophe occurred.

The ranges of mountains, as we proceeded down the gorge, became more and more elevated, but less precipitous. I noticed, at a height of six or eight hundred feet above the level of the stream, numberless small white fossil shells, from half an inch to an inch in diameter. In places bare of vegetation, the ground was white with these crustaceous remains. About eleven o'clock, we passed through a grove of small poplars, at the upper end of a triangular valley. The stream down which we have been travelling, here runs through a perpendicular *cañon* of great elevation, and empties into the main Weber river, which flows into the Great Salt Lake, running in a nearly west course. Ascertaining by examination that we could not pass this *cañon*, without following a considerable distance the rocky channel of the stream, we crossed some low hills, or a gap in the mountains at the northeast corner of the valley. While marching over these hills, we were overtaken by five or six Indians mounted on horses. The Indians rode up and saluted us with much apparent friendship and cordiality. They were a small party encamped in the valley that we had just left, whose animals and lodges we had seen at a distance in the brush skirting the stream. After riding two miles, we entered a fertile valley several miles in length and breadth, covered with luxuriant grass, through which flows Weber river; but tracing the channel down to where it enters the mountains, we found a *cañon* more difficult to pass than the one we had just left. Observing at a distance a party of Indians, whose encampment was some two miles up the valley, coming towards us, we determined to halt for an hour or two, and gather from them such information as we could in reference to the route to the Salt Lake.