

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF

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NEW PLANS

CHAPTER I

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While in New York I sought out and found some of John Jacob Astor's Oregon men for the purpose of gaining information from them about that country. There were the Messrs. Seaton's who sailed around Cape Horn and to the Columbia River and assisted in establishing the trading post Astoria, and Ramsey Crooks, who conducted the land party for him across the continent, reaching Astoria the second year. They told me much of their experiences there. I then went to Philadelphia and Baltimore and made collections in each place for the oil cloth contracts, for my sister, and sent her back after my leaving, in all, some three thousand dollars.

Notables in Washington

Having the time, before the arrival from Boston of my Oregon traveling companions, I went for the first time to Washington. Put up at Brown's Hotel, standing there almost alone, on the Avenue, Washington then being comparatively but a village. General Ashley, who had long been in the fur trade from Missouri to the Mountains, was stopping at Brown's. So I took the liberty to call at his room and inform him of my intended journey and asking from him advice and information. He kindly answered many inquiries. But finally said, "Young man, it would be as difficult to tell all about it, all that may occur or be needed on such a journey, as for a carpenter to tell every blow he had got to strike on commencing to erect a house." He had sold out his fur business to William Sublette of St. Louis and others, and had been elected a member of Congress.

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While thus spending a few days at Washington I took the opportunity with other things to attend the sitting of the United States Supreme Court. And then I listened to Chief Justice Marshall's celebrated decision of the Georgie and Cherokee case, with regard to the Cherokee lands. And, of course, attended the sitting of the houses of Congress, Calhoun, then Vice-President, presiding over the Senate, in which Benton, Clay, Webster and other celebrities were then members. As a presiding officer I have never seen Mr. Calhoun's equal, or a finer man to look on. And, as then constituted, it was indeed an august body and in the House were then Adams and Choate. The latter I knew well at College and there were others in both houses with whom I might without impropriety have claimed acquaintance. But no, I poked about as a stranger. And as such presumed to call on General Jackson at the White House without any introduction. He however received me kindly.

President Jackson

Then, as always through life, I neglected to make use of men in place and of notoriety, as I perhaps might have done to my great advantage. Had I then told the President and others of my proposed journey they might have taken such interest, as to have given some aid, or more notoriety to my

journey and personal advantage after its performance. But so it has always been, I have never felt much deference for men barely on account of holding office or claiming consequence. Had I studied to make use of such and shown them more regard and aid, who knows but some more notorious place might not have been mine. But there is this consolation, I have no less self respect, and may have escaped more severe troubles than have now been my lot.

Captain N. Wyeth

After spending a few days at Washington I returned to Baltimore and awaited the coming from Boston by seas of Mr. Wyeth and his party. And they in a few days arrived, numbering about twenty. Mr. Wyeth I found a man of some intelligence and great energy in his undertakings. He had been a shipper of ice from a pond, Clear pond, in Cambridge. But his men were such loafers and laborers mostly as he had picked up in and about Boston by high representations of the pleasures of the journey and the fortune-making result of the enterprise, none of them, as time showed, at all understanding what they were going into. A Mr. Sinclair, myself and one other, I think, joined them here. While at Baltimore I stopped at Belsover's, where was one of the best tables I ever sat at. And I made the best of it, knowing when I left it, I should go into camp life. I had always liked Baltimore, so beautifully located and its fine fountains of water.

Leaves Baltimore

Having arranged matters for our journey, about the middle of March we left Baltimore on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad for Frederick, sixty miles, by horse power. That sixty miles was then more than all the other railroads in the Union. It had been built at enormous labor, graded down, and part of the way through the mountains to a dead level and the stringers, on which was riveted strap iron, were of cut granite rock. But they had been so moved out of place by the frost of the previous winter, that the cars moved roughly over them. From Frederick we took our journey on foot, having a wagon for our baggage. In fact commenced our camp life, sleeping at night under tents and cooking our grub at a fire by the roadside. And so for some days we trudged on. At Cumberland visited the coal mines, which to me were quite new and interesting as were many other things on our way, for I had never been before in these parts. And so we continued along on the National Cumberland road to Brownsville on the river Monongahela. There we took a steamboat for Pittsburgh, where on arriving we looked about to see its wonders; for from its history, its commanding location, at the junction of those two mountain streams to form the Ohio, and its coal and iron made it one of the most marked places in the country. In passing thus slowly the Alleghenies, I noticed with much interest the geology of the country.

Bound for St. Louis

From Pittsburgh we took passage in a steamboat bound

for St. Louis. And as we descended the river I noticed its high bluffs, where at first the openings to the coal mines were high up the same, but as we sailed on, they gradually opened lower and lower, till the coal veins passed below the river. We stopped for a time at Cincinnati; which was then but a village, with few buildings but of wood and these of no great pretensions. That spring the river had been so high as to flood much of the town, doing a good deal of damage. Among the passengers on the boat, bound to Cincinnati was the Reverend (End Page 61) Lyman Beecher, and one pleasant day, as we were smoothly gliding down the stream, he and also Wyeth and myself were promenading the deck which had no bulwarks. We noticed that he turned many steps before he reached the stern of the boat, while we went so near that our next step would have been overboard. My companion remarked, "How is it that Mr. Beecher is so much more cautious than we sinners?" Implying that Mr. Beecher doubtless claimed that all would be right with him should he be drowned, while with us we made no pretensions in that direction.

We had a pleasant sail down the river, running the rapids at Louisville, and stopping there and at a few other places, but not at Cairo, for there, all was swamp about the mouth of the Ohio. And when we entered the Mississippi we found it a muddy instead of a clear stream like the Ohio, and that we made much slower progress in stemming its current. The first sight of this mighty river strikes one as a thing almost sublime, thinking of the thousand streams so far away that make up its rushing volume. Arriving at St. Louis, I found it then but a village, mostly consisting of old French buildings along the levee and a street near the river, but few good buildings in the place. Draw a line then from there to, say Detroit, and the entire white population beyond I do not think was ten, if five thousand. I saw a steamboat sail, while there to go up the Illinois River, with the United States soldiers to fight Black Hawk, who was overrunning the country about where Chicago now is. (End Page 62)

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ACROSS THE PLAINS CHAPTER II

Sail up the Mississippi

Here we expected to settle about the manner of performing our further journey. We did not propose to undertake it, without guides or inducing some experienced mountaineers to join our party. And we learned that a Mr. William Sublette of St. Louis, successor with Smith & Jackson, of Gen. Ashley in the mountain fur trade business, was now fitting out in the upper part of the state for their annual trip. So thinking that we might probably join his party in the journey, we determined to go right on up the country. So took a steamboat for Lexington which is in the west part of the state and near where was then his party. So we sailed up the Mississippi in company with the boat with the United States soldiers to fight Black Hawk, and parted with it at the entrance of the turbid waters of the Missouri into that river. It is a very interesting thing to observe long before you reach the junction, the clear waters of the Mississippi of the east side of the river and the

turbid waters of the Missouri of the east side of the river and the turbid waters of the Missouri commingling with them, giving the riled look to the whole river.

The Missouri

64 The waters of the Missouri I have compared in color to that of your creamed coffee or kind of ash color. For the purpose of cookery and drinking if one chooses, the waters of the river are put into a cask and left to settle. But I noticed that the boatmen preferred it fresh from the river, drinking it down with apparent relish--and this, though when left to settle in the bucket there would be an inch of sediment at the bottom. On drinking it raw I could perceive the grit between my teeth. It comes sweeping along for thousands of miles from the summit of the Rocky Mountains. The country to the foot of those (End Page 63) mountains seems to the sight not to rise, still there is sufficient ascent to give a constant and rapid current to its waters, so rapid that we found our boat checked in its velocity the moment we entered the same. And we steamed on, day and night, varying our course to avoid snags and sand bars.

The country along the lower part of the river seemed well improved and occasionally a small village. And when we got a short distance above Jefferson we came to a bar that extended entirely across the river, with no place over three feet of water, and our boat drew six. And the way in such cases is to run the boat's bow hard into the sand and when the water has washed it away about the same, push it in farther and in that way, in time, work through it. But some of us tiring of this slow navigation, quit the boat and journeyed on foot. And thus got to Lexington first. This gave us the opportunity to see more of the country and the ways of its inhabitants. The country seemed rich and then but thinly settled, woodland and prairie interspersed. There were but few taverns along the road, but when we called at the cabin, the most were constructed of logs, we were hospitably received and lodged and fed in their best manner and at a very reasonable rate. As to their mode of cookery I noticed one thing to me peculiar, they cooked thin bread as well as meat and vegetables at each meal. It was a corn hoe or Johnny Cake or wheat flour biscuit, and the Johnny Cake made only with salt and water. Some think such is not good but I do.

Joins Fur Traders

When all had arrived at Lexington, we went on to Independence, near which Mr. Sublette and his party were in camp. And on meeting him he readily consented that we might join them on this condition: that we should travel fully under his command and directions, and under the most strict military discipline; take our due part with his people in guarding camp and defense in case of attack by the Indians, which he rather expected, from a personal dislike they had to him. They charged him with leaving the year before a horse in the country packed with infected clothing to give them the smallpox. I hardly think he could have been guilty of it. We then traversed the country and purchased horses and mules for our journey over the plains and mountains. Rigged them with saddles for (End Page 64)

riding and packing, made up those packs by sorting out the goods; for Wyeth's party had brought on much more than they could pack. But for myself I had brought but little so had nothing to throw away. But Wyeth would start with so much, that he had to drop some things by the way. Among them a small anvil and blacksmith's tools.

Order of March

A Mr. Campbell of St. Louis also with some men joined Mr. Sublette's party, making in all some eighty men and three hundred horses. For with the traders, each man had the care in camp and charge in marching of three horses, one to ride and two with packs. And besides they took an extra number to supply the place of any that might fail in strength or be stolen. And thus rigged and ready we started on our march from Independence, on what was then in much use, the Santa Fe road or trail, leading off in a southwest direction, crossing the west line of the state some twelve miles south of the Missouri. Our order of march was always double file, the horses led, the first attached to the rider's and the third to him. So when under way our band was more than a hundred horses long--Mr. Sublette always giving all orders and leading the band, and Mr. Campbell as lieutenant bringing up the rear and seeing that all kept their places and the loose animals did not stray away.

Leaves Last Settlement

Our last encampment, before crossing the west line of the state, was at a Mormon settlement. They had come and settled here the previous fall, on this extreme border of the settled world. We procured from them some milk and they otherwise treated us very kindly. They thought then that they had found a permanent home. But no, like all new religionists, they were doomed to much persecution. I remember when the Methodists were slighted. It was the 12th of May that we left this last settlement and continued our march on said Santa Fe road over a beautiful prairie country, some two or three days, then left it and turned to the northwest and in a few days more came to the Kansas river, at a point I think near where is now Topeka. Here we found means to cross the river and swim our horses. For here was one white man, acting I think as a gunsmith for the Indians. He was the last white man we saw except of our own party. (End Page 65)

Kansas River

We continued our march up the Kansas river along the edge of the prairie back of the timber bordering the river. For on most the larger western rivers and often on the smaller, as far as the land is moist, there is timber, but beyond grass. And in the spring or fall, the fire sweeping through this grass kills the timber on its border. But then it will, if the seasons are wet spring up again. So there was a constant warfare between the fires and the trees till these prairie fires were stopped by the settlers.

At this time I think the Indians were away, but we passed

one of their villages where I noticed their mode of building. They dug holes in the dry ground some five or six feet deep and then built a roof of split plank, so made quite a warm winter house. When we had reached near the mouth of the Big Blue river, we left Kansas and traveled for days over the rolling prairies, encamping at night on that stream. One day on this prairie march with our band of packed horses, we overtook General or Captain Bonneville, who had also started out on a trading excursion, but with wagon, and with which he went all the way to the mountains, but with much difficulty. we halted for a few minutes to salute them and passed on, traveling with double the speed. The last time we encamped on the Blue, it was but a stagnant pool. And the next day's usual march, about 20 or 25 miles, brought us to the Platte about where is now Fort Kearney.

On this first part of our journey we did not depend at all on game for subsistence, but on supplies packed along on our horses. Mr. Sublette's party had also driven along cattle to slaughter on the way; as the horses never went faster than a walk, they could keep up. Then were some deer seen, but as yet no buffalo, so there was no reliance on game, or intended to be, till we should reach the buffalo. And now we continued our march over the smooth bottom of the turbid Platte river on the south side, the river riley, broad and rapid, no falls, but a sufficient descent in the country to give a rapid current--from a half to a whole mile wide and very shallow. It gives its full share of the mud of the Missouri--some timber on its islands and on its shores, bottoms broad and rich, bounded by broken bluffs and all the country beyond rolling. (End Page 66)

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• Hunting for Provisions

Our provisions were becoming nearly exhausted and we were daily expecting to see our future resource, the buffalo, but none were met with, till the day we reached the forks of the Platte, when nearly our last meal on hand had been consumed. And the same day too, we had the last shower of rain of any account. Up to this time, about the first of June, we had occasional rains, and the prairies had become green affording good feed for our animals and the wild ones too on their native range. Not far above the junction of the North and South Forks of the Platte our band forded the south branch without any serious difficulty, the depth of water not being so great as to come over the saddles or wet many of the packs. But there being some fears of a quicksand bottom, its safe accomplishment gave great satisfaction. A short ride over the bluffs brought us to the north and main branch, in all its characteristics like the main river below the junction.

Mode of Encampment

Now came a march of day after day up this North Platte of great sameness. The main band keeping straight on the way, when the buffalo were not met with crossing our tracks. A few of the best hunters, each with two horses, one to ride and another on which to pack the meats, would leave the band and range the country back, kill and dress the animal and bring the meat to our night's encampment.

And I should have before described our mode of encamping. Mr. Sublette leading the band, always selected the ground, having reference in doing so to water, always encamping on the river or other stream, to feed for horses and the safety of the place for defense in case of an attack, which he seemed to rather expect. And if such place was reached by that time, he usually ordered "halt" by the middle of the afternoon, so as to give the horses time to feed and make full preparation for night. The horses were unpacked and men or messes arranged in a manner to leave a large hollow square, the stream forming one side. And then the horses were immediately hobbled, four feet tied together, and turned out of camp and a guard placed beyond them, to keep them from straying too far or drive them in if attacked. Then about sundown he would cry out "ketch up, ketch up" always repeating (End Page 67) his order. Then each man would bring in the horses he had charge of, keep them still hobbled and tie them to short stakes carried with us, driven close into the ground, giving each one as much room as could be without interfering with others, so that they could feed also during the night. Then a guard, changed every three hours, sat for the night. As soon as light in the morning the order would be "turn out, turn out." And all would rise from their earthly beds, turn the horses out to bite, get a hearty breakfast, then the horses were saddled and packed and formed in line and the order given to "march." And as a reward for their expedition, the first ready took their place nearest to the commandant. In the middle of the day a stop was made, the horses unpacked to rest them, but not turned out, and a lunch taken by the men, if wished, of meat already cooked, and in half an hour pack up and march on.

Buffalo

We had now reached the region where there was no growing timber even along the river. And our fuel for cooking was the dry buffalo droppings. We usually in this part of our journey cooked our meat by boiling it in our camp kettles. And it was rather hard fare, for the buffalo were still lean in flesh, they getting quite reduced in flesh during the winter from their poor chance. The men felt the change from common food to this lean meat only and without even salt very severely, and rapidly grew weak and lean. The men would almost quarrel for any part of the animal that had any tallow, even the caul. But as soon as the buffalo improved in flesh and we got where there was wood to roast whole sides by, the men rapidly improved. I was a little surprised that I stood this change of life and living about as well as the mountaineers, and better than most of the new ones at it, and as to a camp life I rather enjoyed its ways. I had for bed purposes, the half of a buffalo robe, an old camlet cloak with a large cape, and a blanket. I spread the robe on the ground, wrapped the blanket about my feet and the cloak around me, throwing the cape loosely over my head to break off the moonshine, and a saddle for my pillow. And oh! I always slept most profoundly. We had tents, but it never raining and but little dew, we did not use them. I felt less discomfort from the change of life than I expected, and much enjoyed every day's (End Page 68)

march. For at every mile I met with much that to me was interesting, while Wyeth's men dwelt on the hardships and privations and cursed the day they were induced into the undertaking.

North Platte

At times we would not see a buffalo for a day or two, and then in countless numbers. One day we noticed them grazing on the opposite side of the river on the wide bottoms and the side bluffs beyond like a herd of cattle in a pasture, up and down the country on that side as far as we could see, and continued the same during our twenty-five miles' march and no end to them ahead, probably, 10,000 seen in that one day. The greatest unevenness of the endless plain, the bottoms of the river over which we were marching, were the buffalo paths made by following one path, direct from some break in the bluff, back to the river. For they range far back for their feed, but must come to the river for their drink. We saw not a spring or crossed a stream in traveling hundreds of miles up the North Platte. But we crossed many what are called dry rivers--beds of gravel and sand--where torrents must have run at the melting of the snow in the spring. And after many days on the close-fed plain and bluffs of earth back we came to an interesting change. We saw a whole day's march ahead on the plain, what looked a big castle, or small mountain. But on nearing it, we saw that it was a big tower of sand-stone far detached like an island, from the bluffs back, which had now all become of that kind of rock, high and perpendicular, and strangely worn into many fantastic shapes. The detached mass first seen is called the Chimney Rock, a striking landmark in this prairie sea. The upper, perhaps 100 feet of naked rock and the lower 50 a spreading pedestal, well grassed over. (End Page 69)

THE MOUNTAINS

CHAPTER III

Crossing the Laramie

Finally we came to a big, rapid, turbulent tributary, the Laramie from the mountains of the same name, and to a dead halt at the point where since has been Fort Laramie. For here we had to make what proved a serious undertaking, a crossing of said river. And fortunately here was plenty of timber, out of which we made rafts on which to take ourselves and our goods across, and made the horses swim the river. It was so broad, say half a mile, turbid and turbulent, they were unwilling to go in, but were drove in and then headed back until they were compelled to seek the other side, but were so swept down by the current they landed far below. And I do not know that we should have got them to head across at all had not two or three courageous men mounted some and made them swim ahead to give a lead to the rest. There was still snow in sight on the Laramie mountains, the melting of which made the high water of the river. With some difficulty we all got safely over, but some of the traders' goods were lost.

Now for two or three days' march there was a great change in the country, hilly, brooks of water, partially wooded, and better feed for horses. And we traveled back from the

river. What we are crossing is a spur of the Black Hills, that extended to and far beyond the Platte toward the great bend of the main Missouri. It was a pleasant change from the monotonous plain. But we came again onto the river with its bottoms, but hills and mountains all the time in sight to the south. And after some more days; march we came to where it comes from the southwest, and our route required its crossing. And here we crossed it, but with less difficulty, in the same manner we had the Laramie. And the next day we reached the Sweet Water, a branch coming in from the northwest and encamped at the Independence Rock, a granite boulder the size of two or three meeting houses, having got its name from some prior party having stopped here and celebrated the 4th of July on it. From it you behold a grand mountain and valley scene. And we now continued on our march up the valley of the Sweet Water, a beautiful, clear, cool stream, a great luxury as one may judge after quenching our thirst so long from the warmer, turbid waters of the Platte. It comes down a plain some few miles wide between high ridges of naked rocky mountains. And up this valley we wound our way till the stream was but a rivulet that you could step across--and so high we overlooked all the mountains we had passed, and snowdrifts around, though the middle of the summer.

South Pass

Here we were at the celebrated South Pass of the Rocky Mountains, said by his political friends, when a candidate for President, though he was not there till ten years after, to have been discovered by General Fremont. And it was by no means then new to our fur traders. It has its name from Lewis and Clark and other early travelers always keeping on the main Missouri which led them to a crossing far north and more difficult. In two or three hours from our leaving this head-water of the Sweet Water that flows eastward to the Mississippi and to the Gulf of Mexico, we struck a small stream, a branch of the Colorado that falls into the Gulf of California. And here we were traveling over as level a prairie as I have ever seen, except bottom lands--stretching far away south and west with hundreds of buffalo feeding on the same. But stretching off to the northwest we looked out on the towering snowclad Wind River Mountains; the very crest of the Rocky Mountain range. For on the north of this, rise all the higher main branches of the Missouri; and on the west, branches of the Columbia river; and on the south, these waters of the Green and Colorado rivers.

And we continued our journey off northwest as near the foot of these mountains as the traveling was good, crossing the cool snow-formed streams of the Green river for perhaps one hundred or more miles. But our trappers now moderated their march, expecting before this to have heard from their mountain partners, who had passed the winter there or rather (End Page 72) farther west, trapping and trading. For they knew the time they might expect Sublette out and the route he would come. And they were to send an express to meet him and inform him where they had rendezvoused to receive him. One of these days while we were laying over, a few of the party went out to hunt, and our horses were quietly feeding in the brook valley

where we were, only a short distance from our camp. And these hunters, for mischief, as they came on the bluff gave an Indian whoop and fired, and the horses all came to camp for protection like scared children.

Indian Attack

One night in this part of our journey when we were encamped in the usual way, in messes all around, leaving quite a space within for our horses to feed, and the usual guard. But unperceived by the guard, Indians approached near camp and raised their whoop and fired guns and arrows, and so frightened the horses that they all broke loose from their fastenings and rushed by us out of camp. And all were instantly on their feet ready for fight. For myself the first consciousness I had, I found myself on my feet with my rifle in my hand. For always all were required to sleep with their rifles by their side, well loaded for action. But the Indians were not to be found. And we soon collected our horses and tied them and laid down to sleep. At least I did so, showing how a man will become, in a measure, indifferent to danger. I felt some fears before getting where there were Indians, but felt but little after. But this time we found in the morning, they so far did what they aimed at, had stolen some dozen or more of our best horses, those probably which ran farthest out.

Fremont's Trip

The only means I had to ascertain our altitude was the temperature of boiling water by my thermometer, and which I made in that way to be between 8,000 and 9,000 feet. But Mr. Fremont, who was sent out by government, supplied with barometer and all needful instruments, made it something less. His account of that exploration is very interesting. He was an intelligent and industrious traveler, but sometimes too rash and venturesome. As in this case in crossing the Nevadas in the deep snow, and still worse when he was sent on a railroad exploration, and was caught in midwinter in the mountains and escaped into New Mexico. (End Page 73)

No rain of any account in all this part of our journey. Sometimes a small cloud would form attended with thunder, and rain be seen falling part way to the ground, and all evaporate. Perhaps a few drops of rain or hail would reach it. Nights clear and cold, often below freezing and days, hot sun and up sometimes to 80 degrees. But on the 4th of July as we approached and arrived at the first waters of the Columbia, we had an hour or two of snow.

Hunger

Now we came into a rough and mountainous country, more difficult than any we had experienced. And to add to our troubles our animals had become, from their long journey, much worn out, and the men though in like feeble condition had to walk. And foot too became short, for we met but few buffalo, but some game of other kinds. And nothing came amiss. And we ate of everything that fell in our way, but the snakes, I think. Sublette had before this met with some of his

mountain trappers who guided us on our way to their rendezvous. And in four days of hard working our way through ragged ravines and over steep ridges brought us out on to a fine grassy plain among the mountains, called Pierre's Hole and to the grand encampment, where they had for some time been awaiting our arrival.

Grand Rendezvous

Here we found not only Sublette's traders and trappers, but a party of the American Fur Company, and bands of Nez Pierce and Flat Head Indians, who had by appointment met the traders here with their furs and five or six hundred horses. Many of them they sold us to take the place of our lean ones. They would allow something for the lean ones for with them, in their slow way of journeying they would recruit. But the full price of a pony was but a blanket and a cheap knife. So we supplied ourselves with all we needed. These mountain horses are of the Arabian stock, brought to Mexico by the early Spanish settlers--light of limb and fleet. It was a grand sight to look on their immense herd out on the prairie of all colors from white to black and many spotted ones. For during the day they would send them out on to the open prairie to feed (End Page 73) with the mounted guard with them, to run them into camp, if the Blackfeet, in whose country we were, should make a dash down the mountain side to steal them. At night they would bring them into camp where they would quietly remain among their owners' tents till morning.

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Pierre's Hole

Here in Pierre's Hole was for us a grand time of rest and recruit. The Indians had an abundance of good, dried buffalo meat which we bought of them and on which we feasted, took a bite of the fat part with the lean, eating it like bread and cheese, uncooked or slightly roasted on the coals as we chose. And I never witnessed such recuperation of men as during the two weeks we lay at our ease in this camp, feeding on the dried buffalo meat, and our drink the pure cool mountain creek, a branch of the Lewis river, on which we were encamped. And among us, a varied congregation of some two hundred white men and perhaps nearly as many Indians, there was quite a social time, and a great exchange of talk and interesting indeed, from the wide and varied experiences of the narrators. There were cultured men from city and country down to white men lower than the Indian himself. Men of high-toned morals, down to such as had left their country for its good, or perhaps rather personal safety.

Some made the season's trip from the miasmic air of the Mississippi and its city follies to recuperate their bodily and mental derangement. And it proved a grand specific. This mountain-pure air and ever-shining sun is a grand, helpful thing for both soul and body, especially when feeding on only meat and water.

And here we had the best of the horses of the Indian.

And here we had the test of the honesty of the Indian. When we had purchased a horse and it had got back into the immense herd, we could never have reclaimed it, or perhaps known it if seen, but they would bring them back to us, and again and again, if needed. And if any of our property, tools or camp things seemed lost, they would bring them to us, were in all things orderly, peaceful, and kind. And the Flat Head chief used of an evening to mount his horse from which he would give his people a moral lecture. A white man who had been some years in their country and well understood their language, told us what he said. And it was of a high, moral tone, telling them to be punctual in their dealings with us and orderly among themselves.

Here we were more than a thousand miles from the white settlements and had met no natives till now. And not having then ever seen much of them, I observed with much interest their ways. Their usual dress was a frock and leggings and moccasins made from dressed deer skin, and a well dressed buffalo skin with the hair on for a blanket, to ride on and sleep in. The frock of the women was longer than that of the men. Both had their dresses somewhat ornamented by a projecting edge of the leather, cut into a fringe, shells, feathers and beads, when to be had, worked into their dresses, or in their hair. The women, these mountain women were extremely diffident, would blush if looked at. And though they and their friends deemed it quite an honor to be married by a white man--one of these traders or trappers, who had passed years in their country--they, that is the father or nearest male relative, would never consent to any intercourse with these women, but for life. But I fear that the more virtuous and honorable Indian was sometimes betrayed into an alliance that the white man betrayed and annulled when he quit the country.

Sublette Returns

Mr. Sublette had here reached the end of his journey, and in a few days, but not till we left him, would commence his march back to St. Louis with his seventy horses packed with beaver, worth as he estimated, some \$50,000 in the New York market. No other fur was deemed worth packing so far, not even the otter. And the pressing question arose with us Yankees as to the manner and safe means of our future and further journey. Many of Mr. Wyeth's men had long before they got here become disheartened and disgusted, but they could not stop or return alone. But now they decided to return with Mr. Sublette's party. And all decided to go no farther, except twelve. For myself I never turned my face back for a moment and resolved to go on, if it was in the company of the Nez Pierces whose country was down near the mouth of the Lewis river. But a Mr. Frapp and Milton Sublette with a trapping party of Sublette's men were to go off trapping somewhere westward, so we resolved to go on, joined their party of some forty whites, half-breeds and Indians, and so keep on, thinking some way to bring out rightly.