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# Expedition of Captain Fisk to the Rocky Mountains

James Liberty  
Fisk, United  
States. War Dept

US 32428.64.10  
B



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For the Secretary of the  
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38TH CONGRESS, }  
1st Session. }

SENATE.

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No. B

*Mr. Etymology. See  
Carter, S. S. O. Macgovern*  
EXPEDITION OF CAPTAIN FISK TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

LETTER

FROM



THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

IN ANSWER TO

*A resolution of the House of February 26, transmitting report of Captain Fisk of his late expedition to the Rocky mountains and Idaho.*

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, March 15, 1864.

*Resolved*, That five thousand copies of the report of Captain James L. Fisk, of his Northern Overland Expedition from St. Paul, *via* Fort Abercrombie, to the gold fields of the Territory of Idaho, be printed for the use of the Senate.

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
*Washington City, March 2, 1864.*

SIR: In compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives dated February 26, 1864, I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of the report of Captain J. L. Fisk, assistant quartermaster, of his late expedition to the Rocky mountains and the gold fields of Idaho.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
EDWIN M. STANTON,  
*Secretary of War.*

Hon. SCHUYLER COLFAX,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, *January 28, 1864.*

DEAR GENERAL: Herewith you will find report of the second overland expedition placed under my charge, and which is respectfully submitted to your consideration. I shall in a few days report in person.

With respect, I have the honor to be yours, very truly,  
JAMES L. FISK,  
*Captain, Assistant Quartermaster, Commanding.*

General L. THOMAS,  
*Adjutant General U. S. A., Washington, D. C.*

Official copy.

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1864-22-1934

## NORTH OVERLAND EXPEDITION, FOR PROTECTION OF EMIGRANTS, FROM ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA, VIA FORTS ABERCROMBIE AND BENTON, TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS, IDAHO, &amp;c.—1863.

*Report of Captain James L. Fisk, assistant quartermaster, commanding.*

SIR: In accordance with instructions from the Secretary of War, I proceeded in May last to St. Paul, to organize an escort for emigrants from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton, and the mountain country beyond.

I selected St. Cloud as the rendezvous for the emigrant train, considering that place, in view of the Sioux troubles, to be the most safe and convenient point for assembling. Appointed June 15 as the date of departure from St. Cloud, and accordingly on that day started the train, arriving at Fort Ripley on the evening of the 19th of June. Remained at Fort Ripley until the 25th June, waiting for emigrants that I had heard were on the road. From Colonel Rogers, commanding the post, I procured some additional transportation, commissary stores, &c., requisite, and also a 12-pound howitzer with ammunition.

We were joined at this place by Messrs. Major, Hesse and Hannay, of Washington. These gentlemen were commended to my protection by the Secretary of War, and were to form part of an expedition for the survey of a portion of the Oregon boundary.

While remaining in camp here I daily exercised the mounted guard in the simpler cavalry manoeuvres.

On June 25 we broke camp. Previous to starting, I crossed the river to the fort, with my assistants and the guard, to salute and take leave of Colonel Rogers and the garrison, after which the guard rejoined the train, which then moved on. Passed the Indian agency at Crow Wing on June 27, camping on Crow Wing river, and remained in camp Sunday, June 28. Mr. Morrill, Indian agent at Crow Wing, visited our camp this day, and I assembled the emigrants and guard and read to them the rules and regulations of the camp.

Reached Wadina crossing of Crow Wing river July 1, having been much delayed by repairing bridges and roads. Remained in camp at Wadina crossing until July 5, waiting for Major, jr., and Colonel Jones, of the Oregon surveying party. These gentlemen not arriving, I started the train July 6. The bridges on the road from Wadina crossing to Otter Tail lake were all broken, and the necessary repairs considerably retarded the progress of the train.

July 8.—We passed Otter Tail City at noon of July 8, and found the city entirely deserted on account of the Indian massacre of last year. A few Chipewya Indians were prowling around. Our camp this evening was on Otter Tail lake. The country around the lake is very fine rolling land, covered with short sweet grass, and sufficiently wooded, the trees growing in park-like clumps. This section seems admirably adapted for stock-raising, and is probably not surpassed in the State.

July 9.—Passed a chain of beautiful lakes—Wood lake, Battle lake, &c.—camping at night on Long lake. The water of these lakes is excellent, and the scenery of their shores and surroundings is magnificent. The country, like that near Otter Tail lake, is in regular rolls or hills, with good grazing, and groves of noble trees.

July 10.—Our road lay through a thick wood of oak, elm, bass-wood, &c., some of the trees being very large. The latter part of the day this forest was on fire on either side of the narrow road, and the train had some difficulty in passing, on account of the fallen trees and excessive heat. On emerging into the open country we discovered that the prairie was on fire for many miles. All the grass was burned, and we had to push on until evening. Camping on Bass lake, we found good water and plenty of feed and wood.

*July 11.*—Travelled over a beautiful rolling prairie to Dayton, (Wausietta,) where we nooned. Here we saw further results of the Sioux massacre. The place was deserted, and had been burned. The bodies of Mr. Smith and others, murdered by the Sioux, are buried here. The scene was most melancholy. A dismantled mill, broken wagons, farm implements, and scattered ashes, were all that remained of the once thriving little settlement. We camped at night on the old crossing of the Otter Tail river, where we met a mounted escort to bearers of despatches from General Sibley's expedition.

*July 12.*—When the cavalry escort on the other side of the river started, a stampede of our horses took place, delaying us about two hours. The road this day passed over an elevated, level prairie, and we camped in the evening on the Red River of the North, four miles below Breckinridge, which place was also deserted.

*July 13.*—Travelled over a level prairie until noon, and halted one and a half mile from Fort Abercrombie. In the afternoon we passed the fort, and camped on the Wild Rice river, four miles out. The bed of the river was dry at the crossing, (where we built a bridge the year before,) and we were only able to get poor water from a small pool lower down the stream. The grass was also rather scanty, owing to the extreme dryness of the season. There was, however, plenty of wood.

#### FORT ABERCROMBIE—COMMANDANT—ORDER OF MARCH, ETC.

We observed to-day small pieces of shale on the prairie, before reaching Fort Abercrombie.

*July 14.*—Remained in camp all day. This camp we named in honor of Major Camp, commanding the post at Fort Abercrombie. Obtained to-day some necessary quartermaster and commissary stores, repaired wagons, and shod the horses and mules. In the evening I assembled the guard and emigrants, and addressed them as to the order of march. The wagons were to be kept closed up, the van and rear guards in their places, and the flankers out two to three miles on either side. The scouts were to ride ten to fifteen miles ahead of the train each day. I also cautioned them as to vigilance each night. We should form a "corral" in the evening on camping; the tents pitched outside the wagons; the cattle secured inside the corral, and the horses to be picketed outside, and near the tents. I also stated that there would be a password after dark, without which no one would be allowed to leave or enter the camp. The guards would have their arms loaded, and would fire on any person not answering the challenge. All lights and fires were to be put out at "taps," and every man was to sleep with loaded arms beside him. I advised the emigrants to help one another on the march, and abide by the rules for the safety and comfort of the whole party. The bugle, the drum, and the flag were our means of signals and calls, used in communicating with scouts, flankers, and train guards, for rallying, halting, marching, corraling, &c., &c.

#### OFFICERS OF EXPEDITION.

We thus completed all arrangements for the journey. Both emigrants and guard showed the greatest readiness to comply with the regulations. My officers were: George Dart, first assistant; S. H. Johnston, second assistant and journalist; William D. Dibb, M. D., physician and surgeon; George Northup, wagon-master; Antoine Freniere, Sioux interpreter; and R. D. Campbell, Chippewa interpreter. The guard consisted of fifty men. Our wagons were marked "U. S.," and numbered.

#### CROSSING OF SHEYENNE.

*July 15.*—Broke camp, passed the bend of Wild Rice river and Mud lake, and forded the Sheyenne river without much difficulty, after grading its banks.

#### 4 EXPEDITION OF CAPT. FISK TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

The river was about forty feet wide, and the depth of water was from two to three feet. One stringer of last year's bridge still remained, the rest having been swept away by the winter flood. We camped at the edge of a small wood on the other side of the river. The feed was pretty good, and the wood and water plenty.

*July 16.*—Travelled over a level prairie without wood or water, to Maple river, where we camped. There was but little water in the river this summer, the stream being from ten to fifteen feet wide, and one to two feet deep. We found sufficient grass and wood here.

#### GAME.

*July 17.*—Before leaving camp this morning we loaded the wagons with three days' supply of wood, as there is none to be found between Maple river and the second crossing of the Sheyenne. We halted at noon on a small stream, a branch of Maple river, at about nine miles and three-quarters from our last camp. Near here the first buffalo was killed, by Antoine Freniere, our Sioux interpreter, from which we obtained a supply of fresh meat. In the afternoon we saw several small herds of buffaloes, and five bulls were killed by members of the train; we saw no cows in these herds. A herd of antelopes also passed us at some distance off. Reaching the second crossing of Maple river, we camped for the night. The country travelled over this day is a level prairie, very dry, but with pretty good grass.

*July 18.*—Broke camp at 6½ a. m. Rain falling; wind southwest. We passed over a low country of marshy pools, (all dry this season,) until noon. Antoine Freniere killed another buffalo near here, and we got the hump, tongue, liver, and other choice parts. We camped at night on a hill, near a small lake, about eight miles from the Sheyenne river, with water and grass, but no wood.

#### WOLVES.

The wolves at night kept up a most dismal howling, one ambitious lupine always coming in with a high alto, some octaves above the rest. One of our party, known by the soubriquet of "Big White Turtle," (so named by the Chippewas from his size and complexion as seen when bathing,) made a good long shot at one on a distant hill, causing him to hug the grass and stop his noise. The buffalo-wolf is very large, of a greyish dun color, with a dark back; he follows the vast herds of buffaloes that roam the plains, and when one gets far separated from the rest, several wolves fasten on him, bring him down, and soon despatch him.

#### SHEYENNE RIVER, SECOND CROSSING.

*July 19.*—The road to-day was over a rolling prairie to the second crossing of the Sheyenne river. The river here (this summer) is thirty to forty-five feet wide, with little water, and is easily forded. We passed some small lakes, of good water, and after fording the Sheyenne, camped on the other side. We struck General Sibley's trail to-day.

*July 20.*—Travelled over a rolling prairie, with small lakes and good feed, until noon. About five miles out we came upon one of General Sibley's intrenched camps, of earthworks for cannon and rifle-pits connecting them. This camp was extensive, and laid out and constructed on scientific principles. We picked up yesterday two dilapidated mules, and to-day a horse that the birds had evidently roosted on for some days. A "black snake" (whip) brought him on his legs, and a little water and grass kept him there for the time. We hope to save him. Halted at noon on a small lake, fifteen miles and a half from the second crossing of the Sheyenne river. The road this afternoon lay over an undulating prairie, and we camped in the evening at another of General Sibley's intrenched camps, which we found rather roomy for our small party. There

was a small pool of water near, with grass, but no wood. We used water from wells dug by the general's men.

LAKES LYDIA AND JESSIE.—MILITARY CAMP, DINNER WITH THE SOLDIERS, ETC.

*July 21.*—Road over rolling prairie to Lakes Lydia and Jessie, where we camped at noon and remained to rest stock, &c. The water of Lakes Lydia and Jessie (twin lakes) is slightly saline, soda and magnesia prevailing. There is, however, a good spring three-quarters of a mile southwest of our camp, in a ravine on the shore of Lake Lydia. Shale crops out at the edge of the lakes, and one of our party discovered coal on Lake Jessie. Both of these lakes are very beautiful; they are surrounded by bold bluffs, well timbered. Our camping place was between the two lakes on a small eminence. In the wood at the back of camp we heard an incessant noise of birds, and we found the trees full of nests; it was a perfect rookery; there were cranes, crows, gulls, storks, shite-pokes, &c., &c., with plenty of ducks and geese on the lakes beyond. Some of our boys were soon at work securing a meal. Our scouts reported that there was a large camp a mile or two to the south, which they supposed to be General Sibley's, and shortly afterwards several officers belonging to General Sibley's expedition visited our little camp. From them we learned that part of the general's forces were camped on Lake Atchison. We found abundance of wild cherries in the thickets round camp, and one of our party discovered an arrow, painted red, on the top of the highest hill near. It was laid on a large flat stone, pointing south. Antoine Freniere described it to be a "medicine arrow"—an offering to the God of the Rock. Some of the party had a very pleasant swim in Lake Lydia; the water is delightful for bathing.

*July 22.*—Camp Lydia.—This camp we named in honor of Mrs. Fisk. We laid over to-day to recruit stock, &c. In the afternoon, by invitation, the officers and others of our expedition dined at General Sibley's camp. We received a most cordial welcome from the officers and men of the expedition. We learned here that the general had gone south to the Coteau du Missouri, with some 2,200 of his forces, leaving the remainder in this camp, which was strongly fortified. General Sibley was in pursuit of the Sissiton Sioux, who, it is said, wished to surrender to him.

*July 23.*—Broke camp at 6½ a. m. My little guard took their posts, and we started the train. Some of General Sibley's officers and men accompanied us a short distance this morning, and bade us all a hearty farewell, at the same time expressing great fears for our safety. They said we "must be either heroes or madmen." We crossed Stevens's great slough and passed Bartlett's spring, which is on the south side of the slough about 40 rods west of the crossing. The water of this spring is most delicious, and is almost as cold as ice-water. We filled our water casks here, as the water is slightly saline in most of the ponds between this place and James river. We halted at noon on a small almost circular lake, which we named Lake Dibb, in honor of our most excellent doctor. The water of the lake was a little salt. Grass good; no wood. In the afternoon we travelled over a rolling prairie, with many ponds and marshes, and camped in the evening near a small pool, with pretty good water and grass; still no wood.

*July 24.*—Road over a rolling prairie to Lake Townsend, (so named in honor of our worthy Assistant Adjutant General U. S.,) where we watered our animals. Grass good. We passed a small dry stream, a branch of James river, and halted to feed near a small pond with pretty good water. In the afternoon we travelled over an undulating prairie to the Riviere á Jaques, or James river, where we camped.

SOME INDIANS.

*July 25.*—Travelled over a fine level prairie until near noon, and halted at a small pool, with good water and excellent grass. The trail in the latter part of



the day lay over an undulating prairie, and we camped at evening on Trinity lake, so called by us from being divided into three lakes of nearly equal size, and which are doubtless united in rainy seasons. Two of our scouts to-day saw six Sioux—five men and a squaw; they were unarmed and apparently friendly. My men unfortunately neglected to bring these Indians into camp, or we might have obtained some information from them. We, however, learned subsequently from Red River Hunters, that there were twenty or thirty Sioux lodges to the south of us yesterday, but the Indians moved camp last night, hearing of our approach. The weather so far has been cool and pleasant; we have only had two or three hot days. We have found woollen clothes to be indispensable on the trip. It has rained the whole afternoon. Our camp to-night is an excellent one, and very easily defended, having lakes on two sides of it and a marsh on the third. Feed and water plenty; no wood.

*July 26.*—Passed many small ponds and marshes; the country was rolling. Crossed Sheyenne river (third crossing)  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles from camp. The bed of the river was almost dry, only small pools of water remaining. The grass on the route was good. In the latter part of the day our road lay over a level plateau to the Butte de Morale, near which we camped on a small lake on the north side of the mount.

#### DESERTERS.

This day George Northup, (son of Ans. Northup, of Minnesota,) wagon-master, George Geire (French Canadian, of Pembina,) and Richard Duncan Campbell, (half-breed of Pembina,) basely deserted the party, taking with them three valuable horses, a mule, their arms, carbines and revolvers, saddles, bridles, &c., all United States property. As they were in the rear, they were not suspected until evening, and it was then impossible to pursue them, as they had doubtless travelled fast, and we could not spare men or horses from our small party in the heart of the Sioux country. The execrations of the whole company followed these men, as they had been most kindly treated. It rained slightly all day, with a cool wind from southwest.

*July 27.*—Travelled over a more level prairie to Basswood island; this is not, properly speaking, an island, but is a small tract of high land surrounded by low marsh country. This is a very good camp; the grass is excellent; there is fine water in a spring at the foot of the bluffs, with plenty of wood in the neighboring coulés. It is through this range of highlands, some fifty miles in length, that I discovered last year a beautiful and very level pass. We camped here at noon. Some of the boys chased a small herd of buffaloes this afternoon within sight of the camp; they wounded one of them, and he took to the middle of an adjoining lake, imagining himself perfectly safe with only his nose out of water. The boys blazed away, however, until he thought he had better come out, when he was soon despatched.

#### RED RIVER HUNTERS.

*July 28.*—Our road to-day was over a fine rolling prairie, passing a chain of lakes called White Wood lakes, which extend almost to the Mouse river. Our scouts discovered a large camp of Red River Hunters, two or three miles to the south of our track. I determined to visit their camp, and accordingly rode over, with some of my assistants. The camp was large, and looked exceedingly picturesque. The carts were formed into a circular corral, being placed side by side, with the hubs adjoining, forming an almost impassable barrier. Inside of this defence were pitched their skin tents, which are conical, with an opening at the top for the smoke to escape. All around the outside of this circle was a framework of stakes, which was covered with buffalo meat drying in the sun. The meat dries in this way, without salt, in about two days. These erections looked in the distance like a red wall around the camp. The

hunters, about six hundred, were almost all absent, hunting the buffalo on the adjacent plains. We found only old men, women and children, in camp. The women were hard at work, cutting up meat, and chopping pemmican. In making pemmican they mince the meat and fat tolerably fine, put it in a buffalo hide, pour in boiling fat, and close it up; it eats well, if prepared with care. They were also drying little cakes of wild cherries and berries, to eat with dried buffalo meat and pemmican. We saw some of the young girls seated on buffalo hides, which were stretched tight on frames, removing the fat, &c., from the skins with a sort of a knife or scraper. These women, mostly half-breeds, are many of them pretty, rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed, decently dressed, and modest in their manners. Everything around this camp looked neat. The people were polite, and evidently did not lack for anything. They had many oxen, cows, and ponies, feeding near. This party was from Pembina and vicinity. When at home they are farmers. They were now hunting for meat. In the fall they hunt for robes, as the buffalo hides are then thick and well covered with hair, or fur. Most of these people were Roman Catholics, and were under the command of their captain, Edward Harman.

I gave authority, in writing, to Captain Harman, to take the horses, mules, arms, &c., from Northup, Geire, and Campbell, (deserters,) should he find them at Pembina, where we suppose they have gone, Harman to have one-half the value of the stolen goods, and to forward the remainder to me at Saint Paul, Minnesota. The captain feels sanguine of catching them, and says he will take them, dead or alive.

#### MORE INDIANS.

In the course of conversation with the Red River Hunters, I learned that we had alarmed a small party of twenty Sioux yesterday; they had fled in the night. The half-breeds also reported that over one thousand Sioux were one day's journey to the south of us; they had visited their camp the previous day. We supposed these to be Sissiton Sioux, travelling towards the Missouri.

*July 29.*—Passed over a hilly country, with small ponds, mostly dry. Near Wintering river we came upon a herd of several thousand buffaloes, and soon captured all that were needed by our party for the next twenty-four hours. Crossed Wintering river without difficulty, the bed being dry; but it is difficult to ford this stream in a wet season, the bottom being miry, and the water usually from three to five feet in depth. The channel is here two or three hundred feet in width. We camped in the evening on a small lake. Good water and feed. Three or four Red River voyageurs visited our camp this evening. One of their number struck up lively tunes on his violin; our boys dancing "French Fours," and having a merry time. (These men were from the main camp mentioned before.) We have with us several French Canadians, belonging to the guard, &c.; they are quite accustomed to prairie life, attend well to their duties, and are gay and light-hearted when the business of the day is over.

Saw to-night a most beautiful halo round the moon; there were three circles, showing all the prismatic colors very vividly.

#### MOUSE RIVER—LARGE HERDS OF BUFFALOES, ETC.

*July 30.*—Train journeyed over a very rolling prairie. In descending towards the Mouse river, we saw a splendid sight: the whole valley, as far as we could see, was covered with buffaloes, feeding, drinking at the lakes, or rolling and playing; there were probably upwards of ten thousand. As soon as our advance guard and flankers came near them, there was a general stampede, and a most exciting chase. Almost the whole of the buffaloes starting off in line, several were killed, and we had abundance of buffalo ribs, cooked in hunter fashion in the evening.

We place the ribs, supported by bent stakes, on either side of a large fire, and so roast them; they are delicious cooked in this way. The train passed

in sight of herds of buffalo the whole of the day. There are numerous coulés on this day's journey, running down to Mouse river; most of them have timber, grass, and water. Our course avoids descending these coulés, and is along the plateau at the head of them. We camped in the evening on the site of the "old camp" of 27th of July last year; it is a good camping ground, on the top of a high bluff. In the coulé below is an excellent spring, and grass and timber are found along the sides of the valley.

WRITING HOME.

The captain of another Red River camp, with several followers, was brought in to-day. They will stay with us to-night, and take our letters towards home *via* Pembina to-morrow.

July 31.—Remained in camp to-day, to recruit the stock and repair wagons. Our camp is on high ground, at the head of a coulé running down to the Mouse river. This river is about five miles distant, and we are in sight of the Côteau du Missouri. This is a most excellent spot for camping for a few days. I this morning sent to Pembina, by the Red River Hunters previously mentioned, a short letter to General L. Thomas, Adjutant General United States army, giving an account of the progress of the expedition, as follows:

"CAMP GRANT, NEAR HEAD OF MOUSE RIVER,

"July 31, 1863.

"GENERAL: I take the opportunity of the visit of a Red River Hunter to communicate to you the progress of the expedition from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton under my charge. Since leaving Fort Abercrombie our journey has been most satisfactory. Notwithstanding the extraordinary drought this season, we have not suffered so far from the want of either grass or water, proving, I think, the great superiority of this route to the Rocky mountains and Pacific country. Our party is in excellent health, and the cattle and horses are in fine condition. The expedition received no assistance whatever from General Sibley, and I started with a guard of fifty men to travel the Sioux country. Near Lake Jessie I found General Sibley's camp, and learned that the general had gone to the Côteau du Missouri with the bulk of his forces, in pursuit of a large band of Sioux, who, it is said, were wishing to surrender to him. The general had left about 1,500 men in camp, strongly intrenched and defended by cannon. I left there with my little band, passed within about eighteen miles of Devil's lake, and am now camped for the day near the headwaters of Mouse river, about two hundred and sixty-eight miles west of Fort Abercrombie. We are almost through the hostile Sioux country, and I think that there is now little to apprehend for the expedition. It is a source of great satisfaction to me that in this unparalleled season we should have found my old trail so practicable. I wrote you in detail from Fort Abercrombie as to my organization, embarrassments, &c.

"In haste, I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

"JAMES L. FISK, *Captain and A. Q. M.,*

"*Comd'g Northern Overland Expedition for Protection of Emigrants.*

"General L. THOMAS,

"*Adjutant General United States Army, Washington, D. C.*"

I paraded the guard in the afternoon, inspected arms, and afterwards made a few remarks to the men, thanking them for the cheerful alacrity with which they had obeyed all orders, and stating that we were almost through the Sioux hunting-grounds; that I now apprehended no danger from that nation, but that, of course, we could not relax our vigilance in any respect in passing through the Assiniboine, Gros Ventres, and Blackfoot country, for, if they feared to attack our party, their constant aim would be to steal our animals. The guard

afterwards shot at a mark, with rifles and revolvers, for a prize. The *voyageur* who took our mail this morning was a Canadian, of middle age, and of excellent quiet manners. He spoke good French, and was most animated and even eloquent in his description of the scenery of the Côteau du Missouri and Côteau du Nord. His dress will give a good idea of the costume and appearance of the Red River Hunter. He wore a felt hat, with a gay wreath; a dark blue coat, with a hood; drab leggins, fringed with scarlet and black cloth, with bead-work and gilt buttons on the outside; and moccasins embroidered with stained porcupine quills. To this, add a crimson sash around his waist; cross-belts (for his shot-pouch and powder-horn) covered with beautiful work in colored beads; a knife sheath and shot-pouch similarly ornamented; a powder-horn, with bright colored tassels and brass nails; and a hunting knife and rifle. He rode a well-trained hunting Rob Roy pony, and had a buckskin saddle or pad, with elegant designs in colored beads; also, a blue broadcloth saddle cover, with red fringes, and decorated in the same way as the saddle. This description will apply to most of these French-Canadian *voyageurs*. They combine, in their dress, the Indian and the Frenchman; they are dashing buffalo hunters, frequently surrounding the herd and killing almost every animal. They are much feared by the Indians, from their courage and skill with the rifle, and as horsemen. The half-breeds have a great deal the same appearance and character, with more or less of the Indian. The French-Canadian hunters live mainly by the chase, and in the intervals amuse themselves by horse-racing, playing on the violin, dancing, singing, &c. They are a gay, light-hearted race, and are generally reliable, hard-working, enduring, and faithful employes.

*August 1.*—Broke camp at 6.30 a. m. Our road to-day was over a high, level prairie, with coulés on the right, running down to Mouse river, which stream was distant from five to seven miles, and the hills of the Côteau du Missouri, on the left, about seven to ten miles off. We halted at noon on a coulé, with a spring, good feed, and a little wood, and camped in the evening on the brow of a very deep coulé, with no water. We, however, dug a well and got a supply of tolerable water by morning. Feed was good in the coulé. In digging the well our men found *coal*, and further down the coulé it cropped out on the face of the bluff. The seam was eighteen inches to two feet in thickness of fair bituminous coal; we tried it and it burned freely. We passed herds of buffalo all day; probably 20,000 at least. Our table was plentifully supplied with meat—roast ribs and hump steaks, and now and then a feast of tongues. Our course to-morrow will be more towards the côteau. I sent Lieutenant Johnston and Antoine Freniere on a short reconnoissance to the Mouse river this morning. They report that they found the river nearly full; it was from one hundred to one hundred and twenty feet in width, with apparently a depth of from six to seven feet. The banks of the stream were heavily wooded with oak, elm, ash, and maple, and were bordered on either side with beautiful green meadows. The buffalo was ranging through these pastures in countless herds. The view of the valley from the heights was enchanting. Mouse river is a fine stream, tributary to the Red River of the North, and is the most important between the Mississippi and Missouri. It flows through a deep valley more than two hundred feet below the prairie level. This valley varies in width from one-half mile to two miles, and is very fertile, having a rich alluvial soil. Deep coulés run up into the prairie for fifteen or twenty miles. There is abundance of good timber, and our exploring party was informed that there is coal along the river. This is a most eligible spot for farming, and I have no doubt that the whole valley will be settled in a few years.

*August 2.*—Our course to-day was towards the Côteau du Missouri. The mirage this morning was most deceptive along the côteau; the resemblance to lakes of water was perfect; several of our party started to water their horses, and did not discover their mistake until they had ridden several miles. The small lakes which were so frequently found in the basins between the hills were

covered with wild geese, ducks, and snipe; occasionally, too, we saw white cranes, but these birds are very shy. Their plumage is of a snowy white, with black tips to the wing feathers; these feathers the Indians value highly. Passed many herds of buffalo on our route.

#### AN INCIDENT—INDIANS' FIXINGS, ETC.

Rather an amusing incident occurred to two of our party, Messrs. Johnston and Major. They rode down a coulé leading to Mouse river, very narrow, with bluffs on either side from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet in height. The bottom was thickly wooded, with dense underbrush, and the buffalo path in the centre would only admit of one horseman at a time, and was completely shadowed with trees. These coulés are a refuge for a few "grizzlies," and in passing along a very narrow path an immense black monster suddenly leaped out in front of Mr. Major's horse, which jumped round, Mr. Major calling out "grizzly," and unslinging his carbine. It turned out, however, to be a big bull buffalo, who was asleep under the bush, and poked out his shaggy head on hearing them approach. Before the ponies could get over their fright the bull was up the heights. It would have been an awkward spot to have met a real "grizzly." Whilst scouting in the afternoon, Lieutenant Johnston discovered a kind of scarecrow. It consisted of a large stake, about seven feet high, planted in the ground, having another stake across it like arms. The whole was covered with wolfskins, and the head of a wolf was on the top. On the wolf's head was a scarlet cloth cap, worked with beads, and above this a woollen cap with a metal chin-strap. On the arms of the figure were hung small arrows, tobacco, &c. Antoine Frenier states that this is a war sacrifice of the Sioux. We camped in the evening on a small lake, with water and grass pretty good.

*August 3.*—Travelled over a high, level prairie, and camped in the evening near three lakes; the water of one of them was good, the others were saline.

We were passing herds of buffalo the whole morning; they stretched in every direction as far as the eye could reach, and a field glass showed other herds in the distance. The mountains of the coteau were covered with them. They looked like swarms of flies. Certainly over one million were in sight during the day.

We were much amused this evening in watching a weazel hunting ground-squirrels. He was a pretty active little fellow, as elastic as a snake, and seemed to take little notice of us. He dived down all the squirrel holes to see if any one was at home; finally unearthed one, and there was a great race; the squirrel, however, doubled and got out of sight. The weazel's rage at losing his prey was most comical; he turned a summersault in the air, whirled round, and performed all sorts of gymnastic feats. His sight did not seem to be very good; he hunted more by scent.

We shot some hares to-day. One of our party got a bad fall hunting buffalo. His pony put her foot into a wolf hole, while going at full gallop, and threw him on his head. He was, however, able to mount, and secured the buffalo that he was after. These falls are frequent, the ground being full of holes—badger, fox, and wolf—nearly covered with grass. None of our party, however, have, so far, been materially injured. We had another grand serenade of wolves to-night.

*August 4.*—Our course to-day was a little nearer the hills of the Coteau du Missouri than last year, on account of the scarcity of water, the lakes at the foot of the bluffs generally having some water in them. The prairie was high and rolling. The *Riviere des Lacs* was about two miles to our right. We found the bed of it perfectly dry. This river is little more than a chain of lakes connected with each other in ordinary seasons.

#### LEAVE THE OLD TRAIL.

In the afternoon we left the "old trail," determining not to pass near Fort Union, as we did last trip. We camped in the evening near three small lakes,

with water and grass. Mr. Major, with two barrels, killed twenty snipe this evening. They abound on these small lakes.

*August 5.*—The train travelled through a part of the Côteau du Missouri, taking a westerly course. We passed towards noon a lofty hill, the highest of the range in that portion of the côteau; it had served as a landmark all of the morning, and we named it "Mount Freniere" in honor of our Sioux interpreter and chief scout, who shot a white crane here. We halted at noon near this hill; feed good, and several lakes around the mount. We observed round "Mount Freniere" the marks of an old Indian encampment; there were traces of some 300 lodges; they surrounded the base of the hill to the northwest. On the top of the mount was a pile of stones, serving as a cover for scouts. The circles of stones surrounding the lodges abound among the mountains of the côteau. In some cases it is evident that these camps are very old, as the stones are half buried.

In the afternoon we passed out of the côteau into the prairie, and took a northwesterly course. A point of the côteau juts out here to the north, which we shall have to pass round to-morrow and then take a due west direction.

*August 6.*—Our course until the afternoon was through the côteau. We came out again on the prairie in a northwest direction, and camped on the site of our "old camp" of August 3 and 4, 1862, the train moving with tolerable ease through the valleys of the côteau. This is a good camp; there is plenty of grass, and a cold spring (tasting slightly of sulphur) rises in an adjacent coulé.

#### FRUIT, A MEDICINE LODGE, ETC.

We gathered black currants, cherries, and raspberries in this coulé. This little taste of fruit was of great service to the men. Near our camp were the remains of a large medicine lodge. The centre-pole was still standing, the bark being cut in zigzags; and wands, with part of the bark removed and the wood colored red, were lying round. The lodge was about 25 feet in diameter, and round it were quite recent traces of about 30 tepees.

*August 7.*—To-day we struck out into the prairie a little to the north of the côteau, passing a good-sized lake a few miles to our right, and travelled over a tolerably level plain, camping at night on a coulé, with poor grass and scarcity of water. We had, however, a supply of water with us sufficient for this evening and to-morrow morning.

It is a good plan to invariably fill all spare casks with water before starting in the morning.

#### AN INDIAN, WITH PROSPECTS OF MORE.

*August 8.*—Road was over a rolling prairie, and our course was a little north of west to avoid a promontory of the Côteau du Missouri. About three miles from our morning's camp Messrs. Dibb and Johnston brought in an Indian, who proved to be one of "Broken Arm's" canoe band of the Assiniboines. He stated that there were 145 lodges of these Indians a few miles north of our trail, and that they would try and meet us when we camped in the evening.

We halted at noon near a small stream, almost dry, a tributary of White Earth river, with pretty good feed. In the afternoon we travelled over a tolerably level prairie. Our course was a little of south of west, and the Côteau du Missouri was on our left. We camped in the evening near a coulé with a dry pool; we, however, dug wells and got water for the stock and party.

#### THEY COME—THE ASSINIBOINES.

Towards sunset a large number of mounted Indians came in sight; halted in line at a distance of 200 or 300 yards; dismounted from their horses and waited to be invited into camp. I sent Antoine Frenier to learn who they were, and found on his return that it was the canoe band, with their chief, "Broken Arm," (Istowerahan,) the chief warrior, "Red Snow," (Waduta,) and "Drunken Bear," (Matoitko,) chief of the "Young Children" band of Assiniboines.

## THE COUNCIL.

I requested "Broken Arm" to pay me a visit, at the same time inquiring whether any of the bad Indians were with him who were saucy last year. "Broken Arm" sent most of his men back to their lodges, and entered our camp with "Red Snow," "Drunken Bear," and about fifteen followers. I received the chiefs in my tent, surrounded by my assistants; the leaders seated themselves, their attendants squatting down outside. "Broken Arm," "Red Snow," and "Drunken Bear" showed me certificates (wrapped up in almost innumerable handkerchiefs,) from Indian agents and others, stating that they and their bands were good Indians; had always been friends to white men, and deserved to be well treated by them. "Broken Arm" then stated that he wished to have a talk with me, and I assenting he proceeded, with much fluency and gesture, to speak substantially as follows, Antoine Frenier translating sentence by sentence:

"Chief soldier, when I meet a white man on the plains I call him 'father,' because we get so many things from him that we cannot make; we are as children to the white man. The white man gives us blankets and clothing, flour, coffee and sugar, guns, knives and axes. The 'Assiniboines' have never killed a white man, never robbed him of his horses or goods, and they claim that they ought to be treated better than those Indians who have been behaving so badly. Our country is a poor country; the land is not good; it is not fit for the white man. My people have nothing but the buffalo, which gives them food, clothing, shelter, and fuel.

"My grandfather was born on these plains, like the wolf; he owned this land, and he told me always to be a good friend to the white man. I have been so. I now claim this country. I and my band wish to live here, and not to be disturbed by the white man. If the white man comes here, he will drive away the buffalo, and my people will starve and perish.

"I want you, chief soldier, to tell the Great Father of all these things."

I replied that I had already told the Great Father at Washington that the Assiniboines were friends of the white man. They need not be alarmed; their land would not be taken from them; a road might be made through their country to Fort Benton, but if they behaved well, they would find a friend in every white man. If they met white men on the plains, they should always go up to them, take them by the hand and treat them well. Should they remain true to their treaties, and suffer by the white man's coming into their country, the Great Father would help them and give them his protection.

I then told the chiefs of the number of soldiers that the Great Father had, numerous as the buffalo on the plains, or the leaves of the forest.

"Broken Arm" said that that was true; he had heard from Mrs. Culbertson (at Fort Union) of the number of our soldiers. He liked me, for I said what was true. He had found that I spoke the truth to him last year.

He went on to say that he had heard that a great army was coming into their country, and would drive out all the Indians.

In reply, I assured him that the Great Father would destroy all bad Indians, but would be a good friend to those who treated the white man well, and observed their treaties.

"Broken Arm" produced a treaty made at Fort Laramie in 1851 with the Assiniboines, Rees, Crows, Blackfeet, and Gross Ventres, fixing their hunting-grounds and guaranteeing to them certain annuities if they kept its stipulations.

I reminded "Broken Arm" that some of his band had been very insulting last year; he must take care in future that they were not troublesome to white men. I had been told by the Great Father to be friendly to all friendly Indians, but a foe to all that were hostile. I had been pleased with all that I had heard from "Broken Arm," and should tell the Great Father how well his men had con-

ducted themselves on this occasion. At the same time I advised the chiefs to send one of their number to Washington; he would be well received, and it would be of service to the Assiniboines, now that the Sioux were such bad Indians.

In the conversation that followed the Indians stated that they remembered seeing me last year, and also our doctor, who, on that occasion, had given "Broken Arm" some snuff for a headache. They wanted some more of that medicine; it was very good. The doctor handed round his snuff-box, and there was a general sternutation, amidst much laughter. It was amusing to watch the efforts of the Indians to maintain their gravity and imperturbability. The tears ran down their faces, and finally they were obliged to sneeze repeatedly, looking at one another after the explosion with the most sheepish air imaginable. The doctor gave them medicine last year for their various disorders, and they call him "Pejutawishashita"—the "Medicine Man." "Broken Arm" signified to me that they wished to formally give me the name that I acquired among them last year, when they wanted to turn back the train, and I told them that "a soldier never turns back." They baptized me "Ah-kichita-honka-na-me-ne-she-ne"—"*The chief soldier that never turns back*"—each chief rising, taking my hand, and saying, "Ho! koda, Ah-kichita-honka-&c., welcome, friend chief soldier," etc. They have named Lieutenant Johnston, "Wa-to-pan"—"Cancee,"—admitting him into their band, and promising him a good wife if he came back to spend the winter with them. "Broken Arm" afterwards stated that he remembered Governor Stevens very well, and that the governor had said that no more white men would be likely to come into this country. He also spoke of the murder of a white trader (whom he called "Yellow Coat,") by another white man, near Fort Kip, soon after we passed last summer. We have since ascertained that this was McKenzie, shot by Clarke, of Sun river, in self-defence. "Broken Arm" told us that a large steamboat had gone up to Fort Benton. Some of this party recollected our Sioux interpreter, Antoine Freniere, although they had not seen him for nearly thirty years. I told the chiefs, in conclusion, that I would report to the Great Father at Washington all that they had said to me; that they should stay with us that night, and not go away empty-handed in the morning. This last sentence elicited a loud and general "Ho!"—their exclamation signifying approval, greeting, and assent. The pipe went round before retiring to rest, and "Broken Arm" in the course of conversation told me that the road we were taking to Fort Benton was not good; there was very little grass, no water, and no buffaloes. I should find the prairie burnt ahead of us. The road by the Missouri river was the best for the white man. I mentally resolved to keep my own course, as I have always found it best to do the exact reverse of what an Indian advised, under similar circumstances.

*August 9—Sunday.*—We remained in camp all day. Our guests breakfasted with us, and I afterwards showed them the effects of a shell from our howitzer. The gun was considerably elevated, and the shell struck a distant mountain, exploding and scattering fragments of rock around. The Indians were astonished; they endeavored to explain through Antoine their idea of a *shell*. They said that the big gun shot a little gun out of him, and that little gun went off of himself when he struck the mountain, doing much mischief. They did not like these big guns—"Shot too hard." Some of my boys showed them their breech-loading carbines, and Mr. Denslow (accompanying our party) exhibited a breech-loading rifle with seven charges in the stock. He fired these off, and asked them if he should shoot any more. They offered two ponies for this gun, seeming to think that it bred bullets, and that they could go on firing with it forever. Dr. Dibb then gave them medicine for their different complaints, with full directions as to its use. I ordered some flour, coffee, sugar, tobacco, &c., to be issued to them, which they distributed, and they shortly after took their leave, having been told that this was a day of rest with us. The Assiniboines are an offshoot



of the Sioux nation. They speak the same language. Frenier tells me that only a few words are different. They got their name from burning a number of Chippewa prisoners (in 1812) on a rock; Assini boine, in the Chippewa language, meaning "burnt rock." These chiefs who visited me were neatly dressed and well-behaved. Their followers wore buffalo robes, leggins and moccasins, and were mostly armed with old muskets or shot-guns. They all rode small ponies.

*August 10.*—We travelled over prairie country, past small, dry pools, and in the afternoon entered a chain of mountains, (afterwards ascertained to be the Wood mountains,) and camped at night near a spring in the middle of a nearly dry pond. Good grass and water, but no wood.

*August 11.*—Our road lay through the c teau, and the train moved with ease by following the valleys. We nooned on a small lake, with good water and feed. In the afternoon we passed several saline lakes, perfectly dry, and their beds covered with salt. The cattle were frequently deceived by the appearance of these lakes. Seen in the distance, glittering in the sun, it was almost impossible to believe there was no water in them. The prairie was very dry. In the evening we camped near a spring, with water and grass.

#### A MAN LOST AND FOUND.

Mr. Joseph Hamel, one of the guards, had not reached camp at supper time. He was on the right flank, some three miles distant from the train, and we supposed that he had got ahead of us and missed finding the trail. We fired the howitzer several times, hoisted a light on the highest mound near us, and sounded bugle-calls, all without success. We concluded that, finding night coming on, he had camped, and would retrace his course to-morrow until he came on our trail. He would doubtless suffer considerably in the mountains, as he had with him no overcoat or blanket.

*August 12.*—Mr. Hamel came into camp this morning before breakfast. He stated that he heard one of our guns last night, but as he was evidently several miles distant from us, and night had closed in, he thought he had better wait for daylight. At daybreak he went back until he found our trail, and then came direct to camp. Started at seven o'clock a. m., and a few miles out came upon a chain of saline lakes, in which the water was dried out, leaving the beds covered with a glistening surface of encrusted salts. The resemblance to ice and snow was perfect; near shore the substance being transparent like clear ice, and in the centre white, as if covered with snow. We actually felt cold in looking at these lakes. Halted at noon near a marsh, with good water and grass, and at evening camped on a good-sized lake, where the water was slightly saline and feed only fair.

#### A NEW LANDMARK.

About two miles to the north of this camping place there is a steep, high mountain, the sides precipitous, and the top a mere ridge. On the summit is the figure of an elk, eight to nine feet long, cut in the ground. The Assini-boines, we learned subsequently, call this mountain Haraka-o-weran, or "Where the elk feeds." We found some scori  at the base. Its form is volcanic. Standing at the top of this mountain, the salt-covered beds of the dry saline lakes below stretched to the north and west as far as the eye could reach, giving a wonderful wintry aspect to the scene. This eminence is a landmark for many miles. It is not more than fifteen miles, I believe, from the British line. Our party voted unanimously to name it "Mount Fisk."

*August 13.*—Having discovered a fine spring, with excellent grass around it, about half a mile up a ravine leading to the lake where we were camped, I

moved the train there this morning, and halted for the day to recruit stock and for repairs. While scouting, two or three miles to the north of Mount Fisk, Lieutenant Johnston discovered an Indian watching him from a height of land, and brought him in, when he proved to be an Assiniboine, of Whirlwind's band. He had with him three squaws—his two wives and his mother-in-law. He said that he had been hunting buffalo in the mountains to the north.

#### WOOD MOUNTAINS.

When asked how far this mountain range extended in that direction, he replied that there was "no end to it; he had been travelling it for two or three weeks." He was now going to join his band, which he believed was near Fort Union. He was carrying his dried buffalo meat in "travairets" drawn by large wolf-dogs. His household goods were on a lean and sore-backed pony. He was a poor-looking Indian, and could give little intelligence as to the country west of us.

*August 14.*—We travelled to-day through the valleys. Towards noon the mountain scenery around us was truly grand. To the south, the mountains rose like a wall to a great height, and were of a dull-grey color. To the north, they were shaped into most fantastic forms; there were old castles with lofty walls and mouldering turrets, and circular pavilions with domes and spires—nature looking like scenes of art in ruins. The north view, as a whole, had all the appearance of a great Moslem city, with countless minarets, domes, and spires. These rocks were mostly a soft sandstone, and had probably been worn into such quaint shapes by the action of wind and water.

We wound our way through the valleys without incident, and camped in the evening in a large valley, on a stream that we supposed to be the head of the Big Muddy. The grass was good, and there were excellent springs. We found wood in the coulés near by.

#### ANTELOPE CREEK.

*August 15.*—Took a west course through the mountains. The heights were lofty, but we found a fair road through the valleys, and in the afternoon camped in a ravine, on a small stream running south, which we named "Antelope creek," from the herds of that animal seen near it. The bed was almost dry, but we found sufficient water, though slightly saline, remaining in pools. Large flocks of wild geese rose from these pools on our approach. The grazing down the valley was pretty good; no wood.

I should mention that we discovered in the channel of this stream pieces of lignite, that seemed to have drifted down; it burned well.

*August 16—Sunday.*—Remained in camp all day.

*August 17.*—Our road through the valleys to-day was good. The mountains were high, but not so precipitous as in the last two days of travel. Our course is a little south of west. We halted at noon near a small pool, with an excellent spring close by. Camped in the evening on Porcupine river, which was here from fifteen to twenty feet in width, with a depth of water varying from three to five feet.

The first sight of this little river, after our day's travel, was most refreshing. The full, clear stream was bordered by grass, green as an emerald, and thickly dotted with flowers—daisies, lilac and white, marigolds. Our approach startled a herd of graceful antelopes who were drinking at the river; they disappeared like a cloud shadow from the landscape. From the appearance of the country, there must have been recent heavy showers in these mountains.

*August 18.*—Started at seven a. m. Forded Porcupine river with great ease; the bottom being gravelly, and the water about three feet deep. We travelled over the hills this morning without difficulty, course west-southwest, and halted

at noon on a small river. A short distance from our camping place this stream divided into three forks, running from northwest, west, and west-southwest. Grass and water excellent. The prairie was burnt between Porcupine river and where we nooned, but the fire had not extended beyond the above small stream.

#### COAL.

In the afternoon we followed the same course, and about seven miles from our nooning place, on the banks of a small river, discovered *coal*; it was bituminous and burned well. The seam varied from ten to fifteen feet in thickness, cropped out on the face of the bluff, and could be most readily worked. We camped in the evening in a valley on the banks of a small stream of pure running water. Good grass; no wood. This is a noble valley, varying from one to two miles in width, with lofty mountains on either side. A clear stream runs through the centre, with excellent grazing on its banks.

*August 19.*—Took a west course along the same valley, and halted at noon near a spring. In the afternoon we travelled about eight miles through the same valley, and then crossed or passed through the mountains, a little to the south of west, to a valley running almost parallel with the above, camping in the evening on a small river, about fifteen to twenty feet wide, and two to three feet deep, with good grass. We saw a few buffaloes to-day, and plenty of wild geese. In the latter part of the day we crossed a large Indian trail going north.

*August 20.*—Our road this morning was along the valley in which we camped last night. Our course was nearly west. We halted at noon near the headwaters of Porcupine river, with excellent water and grass and timber in the adjacent coulés. Not far from here we observed traces of a large Indian camp—about four hundred lodges—evidently left this spring. In the latter part of the day we descended from the elevated plateau on which we had been travelling for some time, and our road was over a rather rough country until the evening. We camped on a small stream almost dry. I killed a large buck antelope, at about two hundred and fifty yards, which furnished our party with a good supper.

*August 21.*—Train started at seven a. m., and moved through the mountains without difficulty. We struck the Little Porcupine river about three miles from our morning's camp, and camped on the same stream at night, with good feed and water.

*August 22.*—We travelled through the mountains all the morning, and towards night passed down a long and narrow coulé to the banks of a large stream, since ascertained to be Frenchman's fork of Milk river. The valley of this river is heavily timbered with cottonwood, and the bottom covered with sage brush and poor grass. We found, however, sufficient picking for our cattle and horses. The bed of the river was almost dry, but there was good water in the pools. The banks were high, and consisted of sand and whitish clay, easily washed down. The stream, in some parts, had worn large holes in the bluffs, and there are very deep quicksands in the channel. This river varies in width from fifty to one hundred feet, and has the same general appearance as Milk river. It must be a perfect torrent in spring, as the bed is filled with large trees, and the water-marks on the mountains are very high. The scenery is most picturesque where we struck the river; it is almost shut in by lofty bluffs, with immense boulders jutting out, and abounding in caverns; precipitous coulés descend to the valley, with small streams running down them in cascades to the river. There are fine masses of cotton trees in the hollow. These trees often seem to have been planted artificially in clumps, and the general appearance of the valley, as seen from the heights, is that of a park. We camped on the bank, and made a famous supper of a buffalo cow. The fat was three inches thick on the hump, and was as sweet as marrow. This afternoon, whilst

moving through a large herd of buffaloes, one of our dogs worried an old bull until he charged on the train, passing between two yoke of cattle, and snapping the chain in two. This caused somewhat of a "scare" among the teamsters, and some of our mule teams were inclined to run away. There is abundance of good dry wood near this evening's camp. I should note that the night was very cold, ice formed on some water in a pail to the thickness of one-half inch.

*August 23—Sunday.*—We remained in camp all day. Professor Hesse took an observation to-day, and found that we were in latitude  $48^{\circ} 46' 7''$ . I rode out with Dr. Dibb this morning to explore the country ahead of us, and to ascertain the best route for the train to Milk river, which I supposed to be about twenty miles distant. After riding nearly twenty miles in a southwest direction, we saw the Milk river winding through the valley below us, and the Little Rocky and Bear's Paw mountains in the distance. We discovered a practicable road for wagons, and returned to camp at sunset, having ridden between forty and fifty miles. There were some remarkable caves in and about this strange chasm.

*August 24.*—Crossed Frenchman's fork, and ascended the heights to the south, working our way through the coulés; the road was rough, but I took a few pioneers ahead, and with a little grading in parts, removing large stones, &c., the train passed through without accident. We nooned near the river; in the afternoon travelled over a rough, hilly country, and camped at night near the same stream, with tolerable grass, good spring, and plenty of cottonwood in a neighboring ravine.

#### OLD LANDMARKS IN SIGHT.

*August 25.*—The train crossed some rough hills this morning, but by a little grading we moved easily through the ravines. We came in sight of Milk river about eleven a. m., the Little Rocky and Bear's Paw mountains being just discernible, and resembling clouds on the edge of the horizon. My last year's party saw these mountains for the first time on the afternoon of the same day, (August 25.) We descended to Milk river, crossed a few miles to the west of Frenchman's fork, and camped at noon a short distance up the stream. The river bed is here about one hundred and fifty feet wide, and is nearly dry. There is, however, tolerable water remaining in the pools. The grass is very poor. Plenty of wood; fine groves of cotton trees running along the river banks.

#### THE OLD TRAIL—A MAN LOST, ETC.

The plain around our camp was covered with prickly pears; they were just ripe, and much resembled gooseberries; we ate heartily of them. We noticed towards sunset that Mr. Major (one of our party) had not come into camp. He had started in the morning to walk on, and we supposed that he might have crossed Milk river to the west of us, and struck the "old trail," as two of our scouts who have just come in report that they have discovered last year's tracks about three miles further on, and that a train has recently travelled over them. Hence Mr. Major may have thought that we were ahead of him, and have continued his journey. I had our howitzer fired several times at sunset, to recall Mr. Major, but without avail.

#### GROS VENTRES INDIANS IN CAMP.

This evening, after sundown, thirteen Indians, on horseback, dashed through the woods opposite to us, crossed the river, and rode into camp, their gaily embroidered robes, scarlet leggins and plumes, giving them a picturesque and martial appearance by the light of our camp fires. They turned out to be "Gros Ventres." We had no interpreter, but they made us understand by

signs that they had heard our guns, where they were camped a few miles off, on the other side of the river, and had come to stay with us until the morning. We gave them some supper, and they then sat in a circle, endeavoring to converse with us. Their *language* is the most extraordinary and uncouth that can be imagined. It is guttural, and seems to consist of a cough, a groan, a grunt, a whistle, and a "tst tst." They never speak a syllable distinctly, but appear to arrest the half-formed words in their throats. Mr. Meldrum (agent at Fort Union) has been many years among them, and cannot speak their language; he says he believes that it is almost impossible for a white man to learn it. The Sioux, on the contrary, pronounce every syllable slowly and distinctly; it is easy to catch the sound. Their language is musical and sonorous. Our "Gros Ventres" guests passed round their long pipe filled with Kinnikinnick. The mixture that the mountain Indians smoke is one-half tobacco and one-half "*uva ursina*," a small-leaved evergreen, of a pleasant smell and taste, and an astringent. It is found in the mountains. The chief of this band was, I believe, "Little Lame Buffalo," a large Indian, wearing a Scotch cap with a white skin by way of plume. These Indians were clean, tolerably well dressed, and rode pretty good ponies. They had two squaws with them. One of the "bucks" wore a buckskin hunting shirt, beautifully embroidered with bead work, and had his hair plaited in a long que that hung down his back, and was fastened with a large and bright metal circlet. Three out of the eleven males, including the chief, were lame, and Dr. Dibb says that the whole tribe are terribly diseased. Our guard at night kept the "redskins" in their circle, as we could see that they had a great love for horseflesh, and admired our American horses immensely. One of our "boys" offered them two plugs of tobacco for a saddle, which they refused. A little skinny Indian shortly afterwards went up to "Shorty's" mare, (a good one,) looked at her teeth, and smilingly offered her owner one plug of tobacco for her. "Shorty," I am afraid, used some rather strong language on the occasion.

August 26.—Left camp at 7 a. m. I abandoned a large government wagon here, as the load, consisting of commissary stores, could now be easily packed in the other wagons, and the mules were in rather poor condition. I explained to our "Gros Ventre" friends that they must not touch this wagon; that white men were coming for it. I do not believe they will disturb anything; they seemed to understand me.

Struck the old "trail" about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  or 3 miles from camp, amidst much rejoicing, and took the same road as last year. The only thing that marred our pleasure was the continued absence of Mr. Major; he was thinly clad, had no blanket, and very little ammunition; besides this, he is a man past the middle age, and the night was very cold. I this morning sent three scouts back to our yesterday's camping place, two scouts along the high bluffs on the opposite side of Milk river, two through the bottom on the other bank of the river, two following its course on this side, and two ahead of the "trail;" all had food and water for the missing man.

#### THE MISSING FOUND.

Halted at noon near a dry lake, 11 miles out, with no water or wood; grazing poor. In the afternoon we left the road, and travelled a little north of west, in search of grass and water. We found an excellent spring and good grass, six miles from where we moved, and camped for the night.

Mr. Major was brought into camp at half past 12 o'clock this night, by the two scouts that we sent ahead on the road, Messrs. Johnston and Miller. They report that they rode sixteen miles from where we moved to the second crossing of Milk river. Soon after leaving us they observed in the sand fresh tracks crossing the road, which they identified as Mr. Major's; these tracks were not

seen again, however, on the wagon road, and the grass was so dry that it was impossible to follow the trail.

On arriving at the "crossing" the scouts, supposing that Mr. M. must be somewhere back, near the trail, decided to return. After riding three or four miles, towards dusk, they suddenly came on a dark object lying on the ground near the road. It proved to be Mr. Major. His first cry was "water;" after giving him a canteen full of tea, they got him on one of their horses and took him back to near where we halted at noon, then they followed our new tracks and came towards camp. Meeting some of the other scouts, they sent two of them ahead, and I immediately despatched the flag-wagon with a supply of provisions and water. His constant cry was for water; he had not drunk since 10 a. m. of the previous day, nearly two days, and had travelled day and night, hoping to overtake us. He could hardly speak. His tongue and throat were parched and furred, and he stated that he had kept pebbles in his mouth to endeavor to cause a flow of saliva.

#### GRIZZLIES AND SNAKES.

Dr. Dibb and myself, shooting at the word, killed a famous grizzly bear near the river to-day; he weighed some nine hundred pounds, and was excellent. We killed two rattlesnakes during the day; one three feet long, with nine rattles; the other four feet, with eleven rattles.

There was a large camp of the Gros Ventres near our nooning place, and some of the Indians were rather pressing in their invitations to two of our scouts to visit their camp, taking hold of the bridles of the horses. They, however, shook them off. Doubtless the motive of the Indians was mainly curiosity.

*August 27.*—Travelled over a rolling prairie to the second crossing of Milk river; the ford was good, with a hard gravelly bottom; not much grass; water scarce; plenty of cottonwood and willows. We followed the road in the afternoon, and camped in the evening on Milk river, with very indifferent grazing, but abundance of wood. After crossing the river I fired at a young grizzly bear, who was digging roots, and wounded him, but he got away into a dense wood on the river's edge. About a dozen of the guard surrounded the thicket and sent in one of our dogs. Very soon we heard the barking of the dog, and a cry of "Here! here he is!" In a moment the bear bounded past through the timber, with mouth open, taking great leaps like a tiger, the dog pursuing him closely. The "boys" fired several shots at him without effect, the trees growing very close together, and he got away into the river, taking a flying leap over the willows, which were seven or eight feet high. The day has been very warm.

*August 28.*—Road was nearly all day in the bottom, and we again camped in the evening on Milk river. Grass poor; abundance of wood and water. The doctor killed a black-tailed deer; and our party brought in hares, sage hens, &c., &c.

*August 29.*—We travelled over a good level road, near the river, all day, crossing two or three small streams, mostly dry, and camped at night on Milk river. The hills on our right were rough and broken. The doctor brought in a wild goose, prairie chickens, and other game; and our boys shot three buffaloes and a fat doe. Again been very warm to-day.

*August 30.—Sunday.*—Remained in camp. Our supper to-day will furnish a good specimen of the privations of camp life—venison, buffalo steaks, wild goose, and prairie chickens, with "Worcester sauce," good hot bread, sirup, tea, coffee, &c.; pretty good living for the wilderness.

*August 31.*—The road was near Milk river, and was heavy and sandy in some parts. Most of the low land near this river is sandy, and covered with sage brush; the grass is scanty, although there is pretty good feed, in patches, among the cottonwood trees that line the stream.

In the afternoon the road was over a more rolling prairie, and the ground was firmer. We had a fine view of the Little Rocky mountains, to our left, crossed O-mut-pa-pa-sha river, named after Mr. Meldrum, last year, and camped on Two Lances river, so called in honor of Mr. M.'s Blackfoot wife.

#### MEET THE FIRST WHITE MEN.

Near our nooning place we met six teams, and seventy-five or eighty oxen, belonging to Colonel Hunkins, of Bannock City. They were going down to Fort St. Charles, on the Missouri river, for a steam engine and two quartz mills, which the colonel is about to erect at Bannock, for crushing the gold quartz found near there. The gentleman in charge of this train stated that when they left Bannock City, in June last, business was good, and the mines were yielding well, but the new gold discoveries at Stinking Water (about 65 miles north-east of Bannock) were drawing most of the population in that direction, as the placer diggings were far richer than at the Bannock mines. Already fifteen miles of claims were being worked at Stinking Water. This place got its name from the sulphur water of some springs near which it is located. Provisions at the mines were lower than they were in the spring. Governor Wallace was expected at Bannock City when they left.

*September 1.*—Travelled to-day ten miles, and halted at noon on Milk river, to rest the stock. There was a fine grove of cottonwood trees near, and good grass and water.

*September 2.*—The road to-day was over a rolling prairie; crossed Milk river (third crossing) at a good ford, and halted at noon on a bend of same river. In the afternoon we travelled over a high prairie, the road leaving the river in a southwesterly direction, the Little Rocky mountains being on our left. We found a fine spring at the foot of a lofty isolated peak. This mountain was covered with scoræ, and its formation was decidedly volcanic. Passed to-day numerous prairie dog villages. These are large tracts of land without a blade of grass, as the prairie dogs destroy the roots; the ground is full of their holes, in which they keep up an incessant barking, which is like the sound produced by children's toy dogs. These little animals somewhat resemble the ground squirrel, but have larger bodies and smaller tails. Camped in the evening on Beaver creek, with good water, grass, and wood.

*September 3.*—Travelled over a good road to Box Elder creek, a tributary of Milk river. Passed the Bear's Paw mountains to-day; they are a rugged chain of mountains stretching from Milk river to the Missouri. One of these mountains is cleft at the top, where there is a deep hollow; it is evidently an extinct crater; this is a great hiding place for war parties of Indians.

#### TRAIN FROM BANNOCK CITY.

The Three Buttes were in sight to-day. We met a very large ox train at Box Elder creek, belonging to the American Fur Company, and Mr. Vanderburg, of Virginia City, the new name for Stinking Water; sent Lieutenant Johnston and Antoine Freniere to Fort Benton this morning, to get shoes made for the horses, and to prepare sundry supplies for the party. I learned from the freighters to-day that wagons can pass through the Bear's Paw range to the Missouri, without much difficulty.

*September 4.*—Crossed Big Sandy river, five and a half miles, good water and grass, and travelled twenty miles over the long prairie to the springs, where we camped. The long prairie is high and level, and the road over it is excellent, but there is no water from Big Sandy to the springs. At our evening's camp we found water and pretty good grazing, but no wood. Met here Mr. Vanderberg, (whose train we passed yesterday,) and obtained some valuable information from him with regard to the Virginia City mines.

## MARIAS RIVER.

*September 5.*—Our road was over a high rolling prairie, to the Marias river. The descent to the valley is very steep; the view from the heights is splendid; the river flows through heavy masses of cottonwood, and the bottoms are covered with fresh luxuriant grass; the stream is rapid, clear, and cold, flowing over a pebbly bottom. Where we saw it it was about one hundred feet wide, and two to three feet deep. Bluffs rise on either side of the valley to the height of two or three hundred feet. This is a beautiful valley, and an admirable camping place.

I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Dawson, superintendent of Fort Benton, the American Fur Company's trading post. Mr. Dawson received us with the utmost courtesy and cordiality; he was following his train to the mouth of Milk river, and was accompanied by most of the employés of the company; he, however, furnished me with letters to Mr. Steele, in charge of the fort, ensuring us every facility and accommodation that we might require.

## TETON RIVER.

*September 6.*—We left camp at 8 a. m., and followed the valley of the Marias river to the Teton river, camping at 11 a. m., in the valley of that stream, about four miles from Fort Benton. This valley resembles that of Marias river, in all respects; we found abundance of grass, water, and wood.

## FORT BENTON.

Our camp on the Teton river was the nearest one to Fort Benton. My official relations with the emigrants ceased at that place, and, having brought my little party in safety so far, we fired a salute from the howitzer, and gave three hearty cheers in honor of the occasion. It will be noticed that we reached this point on the same day of month and year as on the first trip.

*September 7.*—Rode over to Fort Benton, where we were most politely received by Mr. Steele, who was in charge of the post; we obtained here some necessary supplies for our onward journey to the Rocky mountains, got shoes made for the horses and mules, &c.

Fort Benton is on the north bank of the Missouri, near the Great Falls; the river at this point is perfectly clear, and, when we saw it, was from 300 to 500 feet wide, and about three feet deep. The Marias empties into the Missouri river 12, and the Milk 200 miles below. The Missouri is muddy after receiving the Milk river, so named from the color of its waters, which are charged with the white clay and sand composing its banks. The fort is near the river, on a wide grassy plain, surrounded by high bluffs; the heights on the opposite side of the river are picturesque. The buildings are of adobe (sun-dried brick) and wood; the whole are surrounded by an adobe wall, 15 to 20 feet in height, and the entrance is by large and strong gates. This fort is a trading post of the American Fur Company. There are two other posts a short distance up the river, both of which are now owned by the company. The principal trade is with the Blackfeet and other Indians, but, from the large number of emigrants and others passing through here to and from the gold mines of the Rocky mountains, it is probable the chief trade, in future, will be with the miners.

As previously mentioned, most of the company's employés had gone down the river with Mr. Dawson, leaving here their Blackfeet wives and their children. Met here several freighters, &c., from Bannock and Virginia cities, who were coming down the Missouri for goods, as the steamer, not being able to reach Fort Benton this year, owing to the extraordinary drought, had landed her freight at Shreveport, and other points lower down. We got late intelligence from these gentlemen, showing the wonderful richness of the Virginia City



placer diggings. Finished shoeing horses and mules, and packed our supplies and baggage in light wagons. At 2 p. m. I sold at auction our heavy wagons, tents, stores, &c.

In the evening I assembled the emigrants and guard, to take my farewell. Thanking the emigrants for their hearty co-operation on the trip, and the cheerfulness with which they had complied with all the regulations of the camp and the march, I then expressed to the guard my sense of the zeal and faithfulness with which they had discharged their duties. Owing to their small number, the guard duty had been heavy whilst passing through the Sioux country.

Rev. John Torbet presented me with a letter signed by all the emigrants, expressing their approval of my conduct, good wishes, &c. I also received a letter of affection and good will from the guard, which I shall always highly prize.

In accordance with instructions, the escort was disbanded at this place, but about twenty will accompany me to the mountains as teamsters, herders, guard, &c., with the stock, which I shall dispose of at Bannock City or Walla-Walla.

After bidding farewell to the emigrants, we started, passing Fort Benton, and taking Captain Mullan's road leading to the high slopes southwest of the fort. From the lofty table-land over which the road passes, we had a fine view of the Belt mountains, on the opposite side of the Missouri; passed a large party of miners going north to the Saskatchewan river. The gold mines recently discovered there are said to be rich. Travelled over a high rolling prairie to "the springs" and camped.

#### SUN RIVER—GOVERNMENT FARM, ETC.

*September 10.*—This day we travelled to Sun river; halted at noon at "the pond;" road excellent.

Sun river has its source in the main range of the Rocky mountains, about latitude 48°, and flows into the Missouri, eight or nine miles above the falls. It is a pretty little stream of clear cold water, abounding with fish, and its banks are clothed with cottonwood and willows. The valley is covered with rich grass, and possesses a rich soil and a mild climate.

*September 11.*—Moved to the crossing of the river, and camped near the government farm, Blackfoot agency. The farm was in charge of Mr. Clark, Mr. Vail (who was placed here by Major Reid, Indian agent) having left for the Bannock City gold mines. The buildings here are in pretty good order, but there is hardly any stock left. Many large fields have been under cultivation, and wheat, oats, and all kinds of vegetables have been raised. There is a fine view of "Crown Butte" from this place. This mountain is on the other side of Sun river, and has somewhat the appearance of a crown, being oval in shape, almost perpendicular near the summit, and capped with irregular turrets. The Catholic mission (Jesuit) is about 15 miles from here. Mr. Clark states that the fathers have not been able to effect much with the Blackfeet as yet, but are working hard. The Flatheads, however, (according to Clark,) are all Christians; they have given up polygamy, and, as he said, are honest, good Indians. We met one of the fathers of the Blackfeet mission at Fort Benton. They seem to be universally respected there. The Jesuit Catholic fathers have three missions in the mountains—the above-mentioned near Sun river, one among the Pend d'Oreilles and Flatheads, and one among the Cœur d'Alenes.

*September 12.*—Crossed Sun river, passed "Crown Butte," and camped in the evening near Bird-tail rock. This mountain derives its name from its remarkable resemblance, at the summit, to the spread tail of a bird. Water and grass are good, and there is abundance of wood on to-day's travel.

*September 13.*—We travelled over a hilly country to the Dearborn river,

passing between mountains which were spurs of the main Rocky mountain range, and ran nearly northeast and southwest. There are some fine tracts of arable land south of Bird-tail rock.

#### DEARBORN RIVER.

The Dearborn rises in the main range of the mountains, and flows over a rocky bed. It is a fine mountain stream of clear water, and where we struck it, was from 50 to 100 feet in width, with a depth of about 2 feet. The river was, however, very low this summer; during the spring freshets it cannot be fordable. The banks are covered with cottonwood trees, and there is excellent grass in the bottoms. The view in the little valley where we camped was very beautiful. We pitched our tents under a grove of trees; the sparkling stream dashed over rocks before us, whilst a fresh green prairie stretched to the mountains, which rose in our rear like a wall. The sunset was magnificent. We caught some trout in the river, which, with game brought in by the rest of the party, furnished us with a good hunter's supper.

#### ROAD AGENTS.

While riding down to the Dearborn this morning, ahead of the trains, accompanied by Dr. Dibb, Lieutenant Johnston, and Antoine Frenier, all of us dressed in buckskin suits, fully armed, and probably looking somewhat "wild," we observed a man riding up a ravine leading to the river, and put spurs to our horses to intercept him, as we thought that he was coming from Bannock City, and we wished to get news from there. The stranger, catching sight of us, rode up very slowly, looking somewhat pale and scared. Suddenly recognizing Lieutenant Johnston, he greeted him with great cordiality, having, it appears, met him at Fort Benton. He then asked us to help him look for his purse, which he had thrown away in the grass, taking us for "road agents," *i. e.* highwaymen; after considerable search, we found his bag of gold dust, containing about \$3,000.

*September 14.*—Our road to-day was through the valley of the Little Prickly Pear, mostly following the course of the creek. The valley where we entered it was about half a mile wide, but it soon narrowed into a rocky cañon, with lofty heights on either hand, barely leaving room for the road, which crossed the stream twenty-one times. The scenery in this cañon is very picturesque; many of the rocks rise almost perpendicularly to the height of 500 or 700 feet, whilst the road winds along the river through noble groves of cottonwood and aspen. The mountains are well wooded with pine.

The Little Prickly Pear is a clear mountain stream rising in the main range of the Rocky mountains, and flowing into the Missouri above the Dearborn river.

We camped in the evening near Prickly Pear spur, about two miles from the "crossing," with good grass, water, and wood. Met several teams from Virginia City going down to the Missouri.

*September 15.*—Crossed Prickly Pear spur—road very hilly, but good—and ascended Medicine Rock mountain. This was the worst part of the road, and will require considerable working to make it good.

#### MORGAN'S RANCH—GOLD QUARTZ, ETC.

Reached Morgan's ranch, on Little Prickly Pear creek, without accident, and camped; grass, water, and wood excellent.

On Medicine Rock we saw quartz for the first time; it crops out near the summit of the mountain; there are indications of gold here.

The pines were much larger on this day's journey than any we had yet met with, and the *uva ursula* covered the mountain tops. This evergreen has a small oval leaf of a dark green, and bears a red berry. It grows close to the ground,

sending out shoots in all directions. This is the "Kinnikinnick" of the mountain Indians.

*September 16.*—Remained in camp all day to recruit our stock. This is an excellent camping place. The valley is most delightful; from two to three miles in length by about a mile in width, and shut in on all sides by mountains. The Little Prickly Pear runs through it, furnishing pure, ice-cold water; the grass is fresh and good, and there is plenty of timber on the mountain sides.

The mountain tops were covered with snow this morning, but it was mild and warm in the valley. There are a great many beaver dams down the creek, and Morgan (a first-rate hunter) traps from three to five beavers daily.

Mr. Morgan, the only settler, is building a large log-house here. It will consist of several good-sized rooms for himself and guests, stalls for horses, and "corral" for stock; the whole surrounded by a wooden stockade ten feet high, and covering a considerable area.

Mr. M. is raising vegetables and grain; "ranches" stock over the whole valley, and has ponies and cattle to trade with emigrants. From the increasing traffic over this road he will doubtless do a large business. Morgan supplied our party with vegetables, and gave us a fine beaver, which "Shorty" soon converted into an excellent bouillon.

Found a few Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles round the ranch.

#### DEATH OF LITTLE HOLYOKE.

*September 17.*—Broke camp at 8 o'clock a. m. Mr. William H. Holyoke, an invalid, who had accompanied the expedition for the benefit of his health, seemed weak and ailing this morning, but insisted on proceeding, and got into the flag-wagon, where we had prepared him a bed. After travelling about a mile he got much worse, and Dr. Dibb (who was in advance of the train) was sent for, but by the time that the doctor arrived poor Holyoke was no more. He died almost without a struggle. I ordered the wagons back to Morgan's ranch, deciding to wait for the emigrant train and bury our comrade when the rest of the party came up; we accordingly again camped near Morgan's.

Mr. Holyoke bore the hardships of the journey with a brave and uncomplaining spirit, although so great a sufferer. He retained his cheerfulness to the last, and was a universal favorite. With but a piece of one lung, he undertook a great journey.

*September 18.*—The emigrants having arrived last night, we buried the remains of our late companion this day. The Rev. Mr. Torbet conducted the burial service. The coffin was covered with the "old flag;" the corpse was followed by the whole party, and the guard fired three volleys over the grave. Mr. Holyoke is buried on the slope of the mountains near Morgan's ranch. I caused a headstone to be placed on the grave with the name of the deceased cut in rough letters, and arranged with Morgan to protect the grave with curbstones, plant trees round it, and guard it from desecration.

*September 19.*—We again left the emigrants, and retook the road over the mountains, crossing Silver creek, and camping on the Big Prickly Pear, with water, grass, and wood. The pines get larger as we advance. The water of the mountain streams is delicious—cold, clear, and entirely pure in flavor; both men and animals drink it very freely.

#### PEND D'OREILLE INDIANS.

Met to-day a band of about three hundred Pend d'Oreilles starting to hunt the buffalo south of Fort Benton. They had with them some remarkably fine horses, but the appearance of the Indians was mean.

The Pend d'Oreilles are generally civil and well-behaved; the Catholic mis-

sion in their midst (previously mentioned) seems to have much improved their character.

To-night we came up with Mr. Blodgett and two or three others who are hunting and trapping in the mountains around here. They have been very successful, and are making large wages.

#### PRICKLY PEAR GOLD DIGGINGS.

The Prickly Pear gold mines are to the southeast of our camp, in the valley of the creek. These "diggings" have not yielded much as yet; the miners have been at work all the summer constructing dams, a long ditch, &c., and seem sanguine as to the result of next year's working. The gold found here is fine "flake" gold, and is near the surface. The majority of my first party stopped here, but soon after moved over to what is now Bannock City.

#### CROSS THE GREAT RANGE.

*September 20.*—Crossed the summit of the Rocky mountains about three or four miles from our morning camp. We fired a salute in honor of the occasion, and descended Otter creek to the Little Blackfoot river, camping on that stream, with excellent grazing and wood. Otter creek abounds with beaver dams, one of which we had to cut, as it had flooded the road.

The Blackfoot is a rapid mountain stream, forty or fifty feet wide at the crossing, with a depth of two or three feet; the grass in the bottoms was waist-high when we passed, and there is fine pine timber on the mountains.

#### GOLD PROSPECT—TROUT, ETC.

Many of my party washed the loose soil of the river bank; the yield of gold varies from two to ten cents to the pan. This spot had been "prospected" and left for the richer "diggings" at Virginia City. This is a beautiful little valley, and contains some very desirable spots for settlements, though its altitude may prevent its being brought under cultivation.

There are plenty of the real speckled trout in this river, and in all its tributaries; the valley is full of game.

#### DEER LODGE VALLEY.

*September 21.*—Travelled through the valley of the Little Blackfoot, and over the mountains to Livingstone creek, descending into the Deer Lodge river near Johnny Grant's ranch. The present Johnny Grant is a son of old Johnny Grant, who settled here thirty years ago. Mr. Grant owns some 4,000 head of cattle, and 2,000 or 3,000 ponies. The miners of Bannock and Virginia cities get most of their beef from him, and he trades his ponies at Salt lake for flour, &c. He is reported to be worth \$300,000 or \$400,000. Cottonwood City is springing up near here on the Deer Lodge. It contains about 30 houses and 150 inhabitants. Messrs. Higgins and Worden have large stores, with supplies of all kinds for the miners. The Deer Lodge is a fine stream of pure water running to the north. After receiving the Little Blackfoot it takes the name of the Hell Gate river.

The Deer Lodge valley is an admirable tract for grazing and farming. Wheat and oats grow luxuriantly at Dempsey's farm, and vegetables of all kinds are raised. The grass is sweet and excellent, and there is fine timber on the mountain sides. The climate is warm and mild; snow seldom falls to more than the depth of two or three inches, and melts during the day.

Grant's cattle range the valley the whole winter; many of these animals are so fat that their appearance is similar to that of Berkshire shoats fed for the fair.

Some of my party of 1862 left work-cattle here in the fall that were thin and

worn out with the journey across the plains; in April they were very fat, and were sold for beef cattle.

Gold has been discovered not far from the American fork of Hell Gate river; the claims paid about \$10 per day to the man, but were deserted for the Stinking Water diggings.

*September 22.*—We crossed the Deer Lodge, moved three miles further up the river, and camped to rest and recruit our stock; grass, water, and wood abundant.

There are plenty of trout in this stream; two or three of our party caught sixty (weighing from a pound to a pound and a half each) in an hour or two.

#### THE WARM SPRINGS.

*September 23.*—We forded three creeks running into the Deer Lodge, and halted at noon on Warm Spring creek; near here are the warm springs. The principal one has formed, from the deposits of the water, a circular conical mount about fifty feet high; the rock resembles magnesian limestone. The water of this spring boils up to the surface, but does not run over; its temperature is about 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and it is almost tasteless; its diameter is between two and three feet, and we could not touch bottom with a long pole. Round the base of the hill are numerous springs, much warmer than this one, probably from 120 degrees to 150 degrees Fahrenheit.

I noticed pieces of wood around the springs that were completely petrified by the action of the water. In the afternoon we passed the second crossing of the Deer Lodge, and camped in the evening on the last crossing of the same stream. We lost a mule to-day by sickness. Messrs. King and Morrell, of Virginia City, came into our camp this evening. They report that the claims at that place are yielding very large quantities of gold.

*September 24.*—Passed the Divide through the Big Hole this morning. There is a good natural road, and the ascent was almost imperceptible; this is the best pass in the range. The mountains on either side were grand, their summits capped with snow.

We camped in the evening on the last crossing of Divide creek, with good grazing and wood (willow.) During the day it was very warm, but there is a slight frost every night.

*September 25.*—Crossed Moose creek, and at noon came in sight of Big Hole (or Wisdom) river, a tributary of the Jefferson fork of the Missouri. It was here a fine bold stream from 100 to 150 feet wide, and two to three feet in depth, with lofty cottonwood trees on its banks. We followed the stream down to the bridge, which we found to be so much out of repair as to be unsafe for wagons; we therefore forded the river, although with some difficulty, as the current was rapid, and the bottom full of large loose stones; the depth of water at the crossing was between two and three feet, but the river is extraordinarily low this summer from the great drought. After the spring freshets this stream must be a perfect torrent, and I believe that a bridge would be necessary in most seasons. The toll-house near the bridge was deserted; all had gone to Stinking Water mines.

Camped in the evening near the crossing of Big Hole river, with fine fresh grass and plenty of wood. We met several wagons near the river this afternoon coming from Virginia City mines. I asked one of the men where he came from. He answered, pretty gruffly, Hell Gate. Where had he been? Stinking Water. What was the name of this valley? Big Hole. The stranger went his way without another word. These wagons had been taking vegetables from Hell Gate to Virginia City mines. The farmers had got very high prices for their produce. Potatoes and onions were worth from 25 to 40 cents per pound.

*September 26.*—Crossed Rock creek, Willow creek, and halted at noon on Birch creek; camped here for the day to give our stock a rest; the grass was

high and good; wood plentiful. The Big Hole, in which we are travelling, is a large and beautiful prairie, about fifty miles long by fifteen wide; it is almost surrounded by mountains; the grazing is good; the Big Hole river and the creeks running into it are fringed with cottonwood, and the sides of the mountains are covered with pine.

*September 27.*—Travelled to Rattlesnake river and camped. We had to drive our stock two miles further down the stream to get feed, the grass having been eaten down by cattle and ponies on the ranch at the crossing of Rattlesnake river.

Mines yielding from \$5 to \$15 per day to the man have been prospected on both the Big Hole and Rattlesnake.

#### ARRIVAL AT BANNOCK CITY—RECEPTION BY THE PEOPLE, ETC., ETC., ETC.

*September 28.*—Our road to-day was pretty good, but very hilly within a few miles of Bannock City. Whilst on the heights above the city a snow-storm came on, and some of the mules in one of our teams becoming frightened at the snow driving in their faces, started at a gallop down the hill, running against the howitzer and upsetting both gun and wagon; fortunately there were no serious results from this accident. On nearing the city we fired a salute and rode in, camping on "Yankee flats," across Grasshopper creek.

Mr. N. P. Langford (one of my assistants on last year's expedition) met us, accompanied by many of the emigrants that I had taken out in 1862. We were soon surrounded by a crowd of miners, and received a most hearty welcome. The "old flag" was greeted with three cheers, and we were similarly complimented upon the termination of our journey. We seemed to have met a band of brothers, so kindly and hospitably were we received. "Yankee flats," where we were camped, obtained its name from most of the Minnesotians settling there last year. It is a small grassy plain across the Grasshopper, at the entrance to the city; there is one street of log cabins. Bannock City was not a year old when we visited it, and contained nearly a thousand inhabitants.

In June last there were 3,000 or 4,000 people here, but most of them left for the "Stinking Water mines," (afterwards called Virginia City,) on their discovery in that month, the gulch or placer "diggings" being infinitely richer on the "Stinking Water creek."

Bannock City nestles among lofty granite mountains; the Grasshopper creek, a tributary of the Jefferson fork of the Missouri, running through the valley, latitude 44.30, longitude 112½ west. The city consists of one long and some short, irregular streets, of log and frame shanties and stores, built along the creek; "bakeries" and restaurants abounding for the floating population.

#### THE BANNOCK MINES.

Following the road along the creek through the cañon, we came to the gulch diggings, and found the miners busily at work on both sides of the stream; their "claims" are fifty feet wide, stretching from base to base of the mountains, and extend about four miles. These are the "Poor Man's" mines, requiring little capital to work them; the yield I found to be from \$5 to \$15 per day to the man, although there are some rich claims producing large amounts. Water ditches are carried around the mountain sides at different heights, to supply sluice boxes, the water having been brought a distance of 10 or 15 miles, near the tops of the mountains. The miners have turned the creek in some places, and are sinking shafts in the old channel.

Further down the cañon there is a small water-power quartz mill, with four wooden stamps. This rude contrivance, conducted by one man, crushes \$1,500 worth of gold per week.

A large frame building is in course of erection near here, for Colonel Hunkins's

two stamp mills and steam engine, which are expected to arrive shortly from the Missouri river. McCleggan & Co. are also putting up a stamp mill and engine. Both of these mills will simply crush the quartz for the miners, at a per-centage.

Beyond this the cañon gets narrower, and the mountains are lofty and more precipitous.

#### THE QUARTZ LODES OF BANNOCK.

Here are the quartz lodes. The sides of the mountains are dotted with red spots, the ore thrown out from the shafts. I went up to examine the discoveries. The Dakota lode is the only one worked at yet, the ore being crushed by the little mill I have mentioned. The yield varies from \$300 to \$2,000 per cord, and they can only crush about two and a half ( $2\frac{1}{2}$ ) cords per week. This lode was the first discovered, is wonderfully productive, and they find that the ore gets richer as they get lower down. The quartz is burnt, of a red or chocolate color, very soft, and readily crushed. The lode is mainly worked at present with pick and shovel, without drilling or blasting, as the rocks through which the quartz has been forced up are calcined by the intense heat to which they have been subjected. The lode, as it descends, runs into pyrites of iron. The cap rock is not yet pierced.

In addition to the above lode, they have already discovered over fifty others—Waddam's, Cherokee, Phillips's, Minnesota, Ladies', Grasshopper, Mammoth, Cynthia, &c., &c.

Lodes have also been opened a mile or two from Bannock City, on the Virginia City road, and I think it probable that they will be found through the whole of this part of the mountain range.

With the exception of the Dakota, the miners are not working the quartz lodes to any great extent, as they need capital and mills. They have, however, sunk shafts and tested the ore. Some of the lodes promise to be as rich as the Dakota, and the yield varies, as previously stated, from \$300 to \$2,000 per cord.

In almost all the pieces of ore that I picked up near the mouths of the shafts the gold was distinctly visible. A fragment of about two inches in diameter, taken from the Ladies' lode, contained about \$5 worth of gold.

I am assured by Mr. Langford that miners taking a sack full of ore down to their cabins have pounded out in a mortar from 50 to 75 dollars' worth of gold, and \$1,100 have been panned out of a wagon load.

Gold quartz mining requires capital and machinery, and can only be profitably conducted by companies or associations. Doubtless many such will be in operation next year; and I am confident that when the quartz lodes of Bannock are properly worked, the yield of gold will be *permanently* greater than that of the Virginia City mines.

I should not be surprised, however, if similar lodes are discovered in other portions of this chain of mountains.

During my stay at Bannock City I learned that the valleys of the Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin forks of the Missouri were good agricultural districts. Grain and vegetables can be raised there. Grass and water are good, and there is abundance of pine timber on the mountains.

I intended to proceed from this place to Walla-Walla, there to dispose of my remaining stock, wagons, &c., as directed, but United States marshal Paine arriving from the latter place, brought intelligence that the road was impassable from snow, he having got through with the greatest difficulty.

#### VIRGINIA CITY AND THE NEW MINES.

I determined to sell everything either at Bannock or Virginia cities, and return from thence: accordingly, leaving matters in charge of Lieut. Johnston at Bannock, I started for Virginia City.

We travelled over a hilly but fair road to Virginia City, which is situated near the 45th parallel of latitude, longitude 111½ west. The city is divided into Virginia and Nevada cities, joining one another, and consisting of a long street of stores and cabins, with side streets branching off at right angles. The general appearance is the same as at Bannock City.

The population is about four thousand.

The mines are on Elder creek, a small stream flowing into the Stinking Water at a point about 20 miles from its confluence with the Jefferson fork of the Missouri.

The Stinking Water, or Virginia City, mines are about sixty-five miles from Bannock City, in an easterly direction, and are said to be as rich as any mines ever worked.

These mines were discovered by a party of miners returning from a prospecting tour to the Yellowstone river.

The Stinking Water takes its name from the sulphur springs that run into it.

The "diggings," or paying claims, extend nearly 15 miles, and while a few claims do not pay well, the majority are very rich.

#### YIELD OF THE MINES.

The average pay throughout the whole extent of this gulch is probably \$20 per day to the man; some claims yielding as high as \$50, \$75, and \$100 to the man daily.

In many places the bed rock is 25 feet below the surface, involving an expense of from \$200 to \$1,500 in opening a claim, but, when once opened, the claims have invariably paid well. The inhabitants of this gulch number some 7,000 or 8,000, and it is estimated that the average yield of gold per week has been \$500,000.

Bevans's gulch is about 15 miles north of Virginia City, in the same range of mountains, on a small stream which flows into the Stinking Water. The diggings in this gulch are about six miles in extent, and are very easily worked, having but about three feet of "stripping," and below this four feet of "pay dirt" above the bed rock, and are paying \$10 to \$15 per day to the man. There are nearly 1,000 miners in this place.

Two new "diggings" were discovered while I was in Virginia City: "Harris's gulch," between Bevans's and Virginia City, and "Brown's gulch," on a branch of Elder creek.

The claims in these gulches were all taken up, and miners were doing well; the yield was about the same as at Bevans's gulch, and over 1,000 men were at work in the two gulches.

I should have mentioned that the claims in Virginia City mines have 100 feet front, running on both sides of the creek from base to base of the mountains.

#### POPULATION.

The population of the Virginia and Bannock City mines was estimated by the United States marshal at 12,000, but it has been largely added to since then from Colorado and elsewhere.

I have seen for myself what the mines are yielding, and the figures I have given can be relied on as truthful and moderate. The data were kindly furnished to me by Hon. N. P. Langford, now member of the Idaho legislature for the mining districts.

This gentleman has carefully watched the progress of the mines, and his well-known character for accuracy and honor is a sufficient guarantee for the correctness of his statements.

I believe the total yields of the eastern slope mines to be from \$600,000 to \$700,000 per week, and that nearly \$15,000,000 of gold is now waiting safe transportation to the eastern States.



## THE YELLOWSTONE GOLD FIELDS.

A prospecting party that left Bannock last spring found gold at the mouth of the Big Horn river, and their explorations furnish the fullest proof that the mountains at the headwaters of the Yellowstone and mouth of the Big Horn abound with gold.

This party of fifteen men, all old miners, were unable to pursue their discoveries, owing to the hostilities of the Crows, who attacked them, headed by Red Bear, killing three men, wounding four more, and driving them out of the country. These men discovered the Virginia City mines whilst returning to Bannock. They report the country around the mouth of the Big Horn and in the valley of the Yellowstone to be the finest agricultural tract yet discovered, with a rich and fertile soil, luxuriant grass, well-wooded streams, and a mild, warm climate, with frequent showers. From old voyageurs and others I learn that the Yellowstone valley retains the same character, as far east as the Black Hills, and is the great hunting-ground of the Crows, Blackfeet, and other mountain Indians.

Other small parties of miners were robbed and murdered by the Crows last year. James Stewart, of Virginia City, who has lived for the past twelve years in the mountains of Idaho, will start early in the spring for the Yellowstone with a party of miners, mounted and heavily armed, and undertake to get a foothold in the country.

The miners are most anxious that a military post should be established at the mouth of the Big Horn to protect them from the attacks of the Crows, who have declared war against all white men prospecting in the Yellowstone country, stating their determination to kill every miner found in their hunting-grounds.

I feel confident that the government will see the necessity of protecting the miners in their efforts to explore and open up this magnificent country.

The great richness of the Bannock and Virginia City mines, and others in their vicinity, together with the above important discovery on the Yellowstone, demonstrate to a certainty that the eastern slope of the great Rocky mountain divide is full of mineral wealth, and that the country between Bannock City and the headwaters of the Yellowstone, ranging from latitude  $43^{\circ}$  to  $47^{\circ}$  will, wherever security is given from hostile Indians, be developed as the richest mining region on the continent.

It is a source of the highest gratification to me, that such should have been the amazing results of the discoveries made in the fall of 1862 by the party of emigrants in my charge, and under the protection of the government expedition.

## HOMEWARD BOUND—EXPRESS LINE, MORRISITES, MORMONS, ETC.

I sold my remaining stock, wagons, horses, &c., at Virginia and Bannock Cities, starting from the latter place on my return journey by the Bannock City express for Great Salt Lake.

The "express" is, of course, rather a primitive affair as yet. A covered wagon leaves Bannock once a week for Salt Lake. There are very few stations on the road, and the Indian ponies that compose the teams get a precarious living from the "picking" by the way.

In crossing the Rocky mountains to the south we encountered a snow-storm, and the cold was severe, the thermometers registering  $20^{\circ}$  below zero on the night that we camped on the "Divide." The snow was five or six inches deep.

We found a ferry over Snake river with a guard of General Conner's men. One hundred and fifty wagons from Denver, bound for the eastern slope mines, were waiting to be ferried over. We subsequently met about four hundred teams from Colorado, and learned from the emigrants that that Territory would be almost depopulated by the immense emigration to Idaho in the spring.

We travelled from this point over a military road that General Conner has run from Salt Lake. It is rough at present, but will be a fair route for emigrants when worked.

On entering the mountains to the north of the Mormon settlements, we passed "Soda Springs," a small town of "Morrisites," seceders from Mormonism. There are numerous hot springs near this place. Captain Black is camped here with two companies of cavalry. His men have discovered gold mines within twenty-five miles. General Conner's cavalry is mostly composed of old Californians, and the general encourages them in prospecting whenever practicable, wishing to develop the mineral resources of the Mormon settlements.

Near Bear river we visited the scene of General Conner's fight with the Snake and Bannock Indians last spring. Many of the skeletons of the Indians yet remained on the ground, their bones scattered by the wolves. Since their punishment the Snakes and Bannocks have made a treaty with the general, and not one emigrant has been molested.

The Mormon settlements contain some beautiful valleys; grain and vegetables of all kinds are cultivated, and fine cattle and horses are raised. There are also mills and various sorts of manufactories. The towns contain many handsome public edifices and dwellings; the people are hard working and industrious, and are well supplied with most of the comforts of life. The inhabitants of the rural districts seemed to me to be an unsophisticated race, with a profound belief in their church, to which they pay one-tenth of all their produce. They are mostly from the laboring classes of different European countries. Gold has been found by the soldiers in various parts of the settlements; its existence has been known for some time to the leaders of the Mormon church, but they have invariably discouraged mining.

#### SALT LAKE CITY.

Passing the great Salt Lake, we arrived at Salt Lake City. This place is like a big country village on Sunday, and should have been long ago levelled with its salt beds for its lechery and its open insolence towards the general government.

I went to the tabernacle and heard Bishop Woolley incite his flock to sneer at the "blue skins," (meaning our soldiers stationed there,) and he bluntly asserted, while admonishing Mormons not to sell any article of produce to the Gentiles, that, "in less than a year, a bushel of wheat would be worth more than a bushel of 'greenbacks,'" &c.

#### HOW TO GET RID OF THEM.

I could think of but one plan to go at this nest and break it up, and that was, to get up an oath which every head of a family should be obliged to take, and in which should be embodied an entire and immediate renouncement of polygamy. This would be in keeping with our laws, and would give General Conner some more good work to do.

#### GENERAL CONNER, BRIGHAM, ETC.

I had here the pleasure of meeting General Conner and visiting his camp near the city. The general has about 1,200 cavalry, with artillery, and informed me that he expected shortly to have 2,500 men under his command. I saw some specimens of silver at headquarters. The lodes have been discovered in the mountains near Salt Lake City, and have been traced for several hundred miles. The ore is said to be extremely rich. General Conner's policy seems to be to explore the mineral wealth of this country and to attract miners thither. The general has since issued an order stating that prospectors and

miners in Utah will be protected when necessary by the military, and directing that soldiers at the several posts shall, whenever convenient, be permitted to prospect for minerals.

Brigham Young has hitherto succeeded in keeping his own and other people from the riches buried in the mountains of this Territory; but now there will probably be an influx of fortune-seekers that will materially disturb the quiet of his little kingdom, and perhaps be the means of overthrowing this damnable institution. General Conner is a *soldier*, loved and admired by his men, hated and feared by Indians and Mormons. Most undoubtedly "he is the right man in the right place" here.

#### "THE OVERLAND STAGE LINE."

I left Salt Lake by the "overland stage," travelling over the saline plains of Laramie and Colorado Territory and the sand deserts of Nebraska and Kansas. The country was strewn with the skeletons and carcasses of cattle, and the graves of the early Mormon and California pilgrims lined the roadside. This is the worst emigrant route that I have ever travelled; much of the road is through deep sand; feed is very scanty; a great deal of the water is alkaline, and the snows in winter render it impassable for trains. The stage line is wretchedly managed. The company undertake to furnish travellers with meals, (at a dollar a meal,) but very frequently on arriving at a station there was nothing to eat, the supplies had not been sent on. On one occasion we fasted for thirty-six hours.

The stages were sometimes in a miserable condition. We were put into a coach one night with only two boards left in the bottom. On remonstrating with the driver, we were told to hold on by the sides. During the night we lost two mail-bags and the baggage of one of the passengers, owing to the condition of the stage. Very little care was taken of baggage placed in charge of the company.

#### LOST VALISE.

On arriving at Latham, my valise, containing government vouchers, &c., was missing. I got conveyance back 30 miles to Camp Collins, in the Cache-la-poudre valley, where I was furnished with a sergeant and ten mounted men of the 1st Colorado cavalry, and proceeded up the road through the worst snow-storm I ever experienced. Some 90 miles further, recovered my valise, and returned, making the journey in five days. The valise broke through the rotten boot of the coach, but had been picked up by an honest teamster, and was not disturbed.

While at Fort Bridger previously an emigrant brought along two heavy sacks of mail matter which he had found on the road and had been hauling for several days. Judge Carter, the postmaster, received these stray bags, and compensated the finder.

While at Virginia Dale a brass lock and the chain of another lost sack was brought in, but there were no traces of the whereabouts of the bag and its contents.

Deep snow prevailed over the whole route to Atchison; many cattle were frozen to death, and several men perished from the extreme cold.

The stages were, of course, much detained from the same cause. Such storms and depth of snow rarely, if ever, occur on any part of the northern route.

#### A NEW ROUTE PROPOSED.

From experience gained in my two trips over the northern route, and from information obtained in the gold country of the eastern slope and elsewhere, I am convinced that a more direct and much shorter overland road than any yet

travelled can be had. And if I have any desire for further travel, it is to complete the work of exploration of the country lying west of Minnesota, to the east side gold fields of Idaho, and to permanently establish a direct road which shall connect the head of navigation on the Mississippi with the trails leading to the Columbia, through the Big Hole passes of the Rocky mountains. This road to the gold mines would be shorter by 800 miles than any other route, excepting the one that I travelled last year.

The distance from Atchison by the overland route to the Big Hole country is 1,670 miles; by my northern route it is 1,340 miles; by the proposed route it would not exceed 850 miles, or 550 miles to the mouth of the Big Horn, in the Yellowstone valley.

The new route would be *direct*, almost an air line, following as nearly as possible the 45° parallel of latitude.

The country passed through would be better for emigrants and for military operations than any other line travelled.

From St. Paul to the Missouri it is known to be practicable and good. In the summer of 1857 I was as far west as the Missouri on this parallel.

Beyond the Missouri we cross the plateau from which flow the streams that make north to the Missouri and Yellowstone, and strike the Yellowstone valley, the garden of the unexplored northwest—a country rich in mineral deposits, abounding with streams, covered with luxuriant grass, and possessing a mild, warm climate, free from snow in winter, and a rich fertile soil.

This is the great winter resort of the buffalo, and the favorite hunting-ground of most of the tribes of northwestern Indians.

In 1858 I met Sir George Gore, who had just returned from a hunting excursion from the Black Hills to the Jefferson fork of the Missouri. He fully confirmed all that I had gathered from trappers and hunters with regard to the country between the Black Hills and the Yellowstone valley.

From the eastern slope mines to the Yellowstone valley the country has been travelled; from St. Paul to the Black Hills I know the route; and thence to the mouth of the Big Horn, a distance not exceeding two hundred miles, I am conversant, from reports of reliable men, with the character of the country.

Light-draught steamboats, with heavy freight, can ascend the Yellowstone from Fort Union to the mouth of the Big Horn. In fact, arrangements are already made to navigate these waters this spring.

If such a route as I have indicated were opened, and kept open by military posts, it would become the great highway for miners returning from Washington, Oregon, Utah, Nevada, and Idaho Territories; and the large amount of treasure that I have spoken of would find its way to the east.

I can but urge upon the government the expediency and necessity of opening a direct wagon-road to the gold mines of the Eastern Slope and the Big Hole passes of the Rocky mountains, connecting the headwaters of the Mississippi and Columbia.

My matured plan for a route to the mountains, and also as a military measure for next summer, securing us against further serious trouble with hostile tribes of Indians by a conquest of their only winter resort and hunting-grounds, and thrusting them inevitably north to the Saskatchewan country, would be to marshal the host of emigrants bound to go, at a rendezvous upon our border, say at Big Stone lake, a point intermediate between Forts Abercrombie and Ridgely, on the western line.

The column should be supplied with a military force or escort of, say, one thousand mounted men, with a flying light battery. The emigrants in their settlement, and the military as they may be stationed, one or more companies in a place, will form jointly and surely the conquering and possessing force on the whole line of march, which would be, head of Côteau des Prairies, Wide Water or Big Timber on James river, mouth of Grand river or Old Ree village

on Missouri, crossing of Little Missouri, mouth of Big Horn river on Yellowstone, three forks of Missouri and new mines of Idaho, to Big Hole passes of Rocky mountains.

These are the best passes of the Rocky mountains, and I now look forward to a time when a line of railroad, known as the *Northern Pacific*, will necessarily and easily find its way over the route proposed through these passes, and leading west, probably along the Nez Percé trail, striking Lewis's fork of Columbia (Snake river) at or near Lewiston.

#### A MINERAL BUREAU.

It has heretofore frequently occurred to me that our government was deficient in one important branch, actually demanding a head at Washington; and that is a *mineral bureau*, with a commissioner general or registrar general, who should have an accurate registry of all mineral discoveries, and for each community to have power to appoint, under sanction of the President, a local registrar. In visiting the various mining camps in the mountain country and beyond, this question suggested itself every day, or every hour in the day, and many men have asked me if there could not be some means provided by which a more reliable and indisputable record could be made of their claims.

Every miner in our land would cheerfully pay his ten or twenty dollars for the satisfaction of having his claim registered under a United States officer, which would insure him against abuse and litigation.

The revenue, (in gold,) and the vast benefits resulting in many ways from such a measure, it seems to me, must be plain to any one who will give the subject a moment's attention. Through these agencies a very much greater amount of gold might be secured to our own mints and national treasury.

Finally, in closing this report I deem it my duty to state, that whatever may have been accomplished by these two expeditions, placed under my charge, much of their success is attributable to the actual physical efforts of the men connected with them, for the amount appropriated in both instances was very much less than any one was ever before asked to undertake similar tasks with. I may safely say that the fruits of the \$15,000 expended during the two journeys just closed will figure up now to the amount of \$20,000,000 of gold in circulation and waiting shipment, with a prospect of ten times that amount forthcoming, during the next three years, from the east side gold fields of Idaho. My first party pioneered and held out against the Snakes and Bannocks, until Colonel Conner brought those savages to terms of (I believe) lasting peace, by the terrible punishment which he inflicted upon them at Bear river.

I have not a bit of faith in the policy which our government has thus far pursued towards the natives or aborigines of America. The Indian cannot appreciate kindness; he invariably receives it as evidence of cowardice or timidity, and treacherously abuses all our generous deeds. The hunter, the trapper, the voyageur, the explorer, the traveller, the frontiersman, and every man of nature, whose life has been devoted to the subduing of the wilds of our continent, has spoken out against self-sought mediation with the Indian. My own conviction is, that as fast as we require we should possess the territory of the United States with impunity, and bring all hostile or opposing forces to terms of peace, at their own solicitation.

No one thing, in my mind, has ever proved so fatal and disastrous to our march of western settlement as the sending of commissioners and blankets, in advance of emigration, for the purchase of territory.

The health of our party was so general and uninterrupted that I have deemed it unnecessary to require of the physician and surgeon a formal report, as before. Dr. William D. Dibb, who accompanied me on the first trip, was again with us

this last season, and was much esteemed by all. He is a gentleman, and as a surgeon and physician has high attainments.

George W. Dart, first assistant, and Antoine Frenier, chief of scouts, remained in the mountains. These aids were always faithful in the discharge of duty, and much respected by all the party.

Lieutenant Samuel H. Johnston accompanied me as second assistant and journalist, and returns with me to headquarters. I like this gentleman for his bravery, his high order of talents, and his genial nature; and take this occasion to acknowledge the great value of his services to me throughout the trip.

Future expeditions westward should be enabled to start as soon as the 25th of May.

I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient servant,

JAMES L. FISK,

*Captain, Assistant Quartermaster, Commanding Expedition.*

General L. THOMAS,

*Adjutant General United States Army, Washington, D. C.*

Official copy :

W. A. NICHOLS,

*Assistant Adjutant General.*

*Itinerary of route from Fort Benton to Bannock City.*

<i>Places.</i>	<i>Distance—Miles</i>
Big Coulé .....	15
Lake or pond .....	23
Sun river .....	17
Sun River crossing .....	7
Bird Tail rock .....	17
Dearborn river .....	17
Little Prickly Pear .....	12
Little Prickly Pear crossing .....	8
Medicine rock .....	7
Little Prickly Pear, (Morgan's) .....	3
Silver creek .....	16
Prickly Pear .....	6
Summit of Rocky mountains .....	4
Ninth crossing Blackfoot river .....	13
Livingstone creek .....	8
Deer Lodge river—Cottonwood City .....	9
Race Track creek .....	8
Warm Spring creek .....	8½
Second crossing Deer Lodge river .....	4
Last crossing Deer Lodge river .....	9
"Divide" creek .....	12
Last crossing "Divide" creek .....	9
Big Hole River crossing .....	18
Birch creek .....	9
Rattlesnake river .....	13
Bannock City .....	16

Official copy.

W. A. NICHOLS,

*Assistant Adjutant General.*

*Itinerary of route from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton, as travelled by Captain James L. Fisk's overland expedition, 1863.*

Date.	No. of camp.	Remarks.	Distance odometer measurement.	Total distance.
			Miles.	Miles.
July 13	1	Wild Rice river; bed dry at crossing; poor grass; plenty of wood; water in pools lower down.....	4	4
15	2	Bend of Wild Rice river; pools of brackish water in bed of river; grass scanty; wood.....	3½	
15	3	Small lake, (Mud lake); very little water; grass; no wood.....	10	
15	4	Sheyenne river; 2 to 3 feet deep; about 20 feet wide; river easily forded; camp on other side about half a mile; plenty of wood; grass pretty good.....	2½	16
16	5	Maple river; 1 to 2 feet deep; 10 to 15 feet wide; good ford; plenty of grass and wood; no wood or water between Sheyenne and Maple rivers; level prairie from Fort Abercrombie.....		17½
17	6	Small stream, branch of Maple river; grass; no wood.....	9	
17	7	Maple river, second crossing; pools of water in river bed; tolerable grass; no wood.....	10	19
18	8	Small lake, about 8 miles from second crossing of Sheyenne river; water and grass; no wood; low country, with marshy pools, (all dry this year); grass, but no water or wood since leaving Maple river.....		18
19	9	Sheyenne river, second crossing; 20 to 25 feet wide; very little water; easily forded; pretty good water and grass; plenty of wood; passed some small lakes with good water; prairie rolling.....	8	8
20	10	Small lake; grass and water; no wood; numerous small lakes and marshes, with good feed since leaving Sheyenne river; rolling prairie.....	15½	
20	11	Small pond; poor water; grass; no wood; prairie undulating.....	5	20½
21	12	Lakes Lydia and Jessie; water slightly saline; spring quarter of a mile south-west of camp in ravine on shore of Lake Lydia; good grass, and abundance of wood; rolling prairie.....		11
23	13	"Stevens's Great Slough;" 300 to 400 feet wide; easily crossed this year; in a wet season must be difficult to pass with wagons; "Bartlett's" spring on south side of slough about 40 rods west of crossing.....	4½	
23	14	Lake "Dibb;" small lake, almost circular; water slightly saline; good grass; no wood.....	1	
23	15	Small lake; good water and grass; no wood; rolling prairie, with many ponds and marshes between this and Lake Dibb.....	11½	17
24	16	Lake Townsend; water a little saline; good grass; rolling prairie.....	5½	
24	17	Small stream, branch of Riviere a Jacques; dry this year.....	4	
24	18	Small lake; water pretty good; grass; no wood.....	2½	
24	19	Riviere a Jacques, or James river; water and grass; no wood; from last camp to Riviere a Jacques are several marshes with water and grass, and plenty of buffalo chips, (dried manure); prairie undulating. The route does not cross the river, but follows its course round the bend on the north side.....	13½	25½
25	20	Small pool; good water; grass excellent; no wood; road over fine level prairie.....	12	
25	21	"Trinity" lake—three small lakes united; good water and grass; no wood; prairie undulating.....	9	21
26	22	Sheyenne river, third crossing; bed of river almost dry; easily crossed; good grass; no wood.....	7½	
26	23	Small lake near Butte de Morale; water slightly saline; grass; no wood; road passes to north of Butte de Morale.....	17	24½
27	24	Basswood "Island," so called; high bluffs surrounded by low land; excellent grass; fine water in spring at foot of hill; wood in coulés near; chain of lakes extending to north almost to Mouse river, known as "Whitewood lakes,"	10	10
28	25	Small lake; water pretty good; grass; no wood; plenty of buffalo chips; road over rolling prairie, passing "Whitewood lakes,"		20½
29	26	Wintering river; 200 to 300 feet wide; bed almost dry; forded without difficulty this year, but crossing must be bad in wet seasons from miry bottom; no wood; buffalo chips.....	4	
29	27	Small pond; grass and water; no wood; hilly country, with small ponds, mostly dry.....	12	16
30	28	Small stream, tributary of Mouse river; water; plenty of grass and buffalo chips; no wood; good grass from Wintering river; prairie level with ponds and marshes. The route is now along a level plateau overlooking the valley of Mouse river, keeping from 2 to 5 miles from that stream to avoid coulés running down from Côteau du Missouri.....	5	
30	29	Coulé good spring; excellent grass; plenty of timber; fine camp; passed several coulés running down to Mouse river; most of them have timber, grass, and water.....	13	18
Aug. 1	30	Coulé, with spring, good grass, and a little wood.....	10	
1	31	Coulé; very deep; spring dry, but got water by digging a well; good grass; no wood; passed several coulés with grass, water, and some timber; road over a high level prairie.....	13	23

*Itinerary of route from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton—Continued.*

Date.	No. of camp.	Remarks.	Distance odometer measurement.		Total distance.
			Miles.	Miles.	
Aug. 2	32	Small lake; water saline; grass; no wood; high level prairie			9 $\frac{1}{2}$
3	33	Small pond; good grass; no wood			9
3	34	Small lake; good water and grass; no wood; buffalo chips plentiful. Two other lakes adjoining, (saline;) high, level prairie			18
4	35	Small lake; water and grass; no wood; passed several lakes, (dry;) route near hills of Côteau du Missouri			15
4	36	Three small lakes; grass and water; no wood; Riviere des Lacs, 4 or 5 miles to the north; bed of river dry this season; prairie rolling			21
5	37	Mount "Freniere," (part of the Côteau du Missouri;) lofty hill; good landmark; several lakes around the mountain, with good water and grass; no wood; country rolling, but road fair			10
5	38	Small pond; water poor; grass good; no wood; route through côteau, hilly but good			16
6	39	Spring in coulé, foot of Côteau du Missouri, latitude 48° 44'; good water and grass; timber in coulés rear; country rolling, but road tolerable			12 $\frac{1}{2}$
7	40	Spring; tolerable grass; no wood; route a little north of "côteau;" lake 2 or 3 miles to north of road			12 $\frac{1}{2}$
7	41	Coulé; poor grass; no water; no wood; prairie tolerably level			23
8	42	Small stream, tributary of "White Earth river," almost dry; little water in pool; grass; no wood; road over rolling country north of "côteau,"			6
8	43	Coulé, with dry pool; dug wells; water good; grass pretty good; no wood; prairie more level			16 $\frac{1}{2}$
10	44	Spring, in dry pool; good water and grass; no wood; passed several ponds, all dry; route enters a chain of mountains running north, supposed to be a spur of Côteau du Missouri			19 $\frac{1}{2}$
11	45	Small lake; good water and grass; no wood; road through mountains; traveling good in the valleys			13
11	46	Spring; water and grass; no wood; passed several saline lakes, all dry			16
12	47	Marsh; good water in springs; grass; no wood; chain of saline lakes (dry) between last camp and this place; road hilly			12 $\frac{1}{2}$
12	48	Lake; water slightly saline; grass tolerable; no wood; lofty and steep mountain 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to north of lake; landmark for many miles, named it, "Mount Fisk;" figure of an elk cut on the summit; Sioux name, "Harakso Weran."			22
13	49	Spring; about half a mile south of lake, (last camp;) good water; excellent grass; no wood in coulés near			†
14	50	Head of Big Muddy river; excellent springs; grass good; timber in coulés; mountains very lofty; road through valleys good			17
15	51	"Antelope creek;" water a little saline; grass; no wood; found bituminous coal in channel of this stream; course west; fair road through valleys			16 $\frac{1}{2}$
17	52	Small pool; fair water; good spring near; grass; no wood; good road through valleys; mountains not so precipitous as in last two days' travel; course a little south of west			9 $\frac{1}{2}$
17	53	Porcupine river; 15 to 20 feet wide, 3 to 5 feet deep; ford good, gravelly bottom; water excellent; grass very good and fresh; no wood. The bed of this river was nearly full of water, showing recent heavy rains			15
18	54	Small river, (branch of "Porcupine;") easily forded. This stream a short distance above divides into three forks, running from NW., W. and W.S.W.; good water and grass; no wood; road over hills good; course W.S.W. Prairie burnt between Porcupine river and here			13
18	55	Small stream; good water and grass; no wood; about 7 miles from last camp on this river, found bituminous coal; seam cropped out on bluff 10 to 15 feet in thickness; coal burnt well			9 $\frac{1}{2}$
19	56	Spring; grass; no wood; course west, along wide valley, with running stream and good grass			22 $\frac{1}{2}$
19	57	Small river; 15 to 20 feet wide, and 2 to 3 feet deep; grass; no wood; course a little south of west; route through valley			8 $\frac{1}{2}$
20	58	Headwaters of Porcupine river; excellent water and grass; timber in coulés; road along valley; west course			13
20	59	Small stream, nearly dry; good water and grass; no wood. Left elevated plateau on which we had been travelling; road over rather rough, hilly country			12 $\frac{1}{2}$
21	60	Little Porcupine river; 15 feet wide, 2 to 3 feet deep; good grass and water; no wood			7 $\frac{1}{2}$
21	61	Little Porcupine river; grass and water; no wood			3
21	62	Little Porcupine river; excellent grass and water; no wood			5 $\frac{1}{2}$
22	63	Small stream; good grass and water; no wood; route through mountain			6 $\frac{1}{2}$
22	64	Frenchman's fork of Milk river; 50 to 100 feet wide; bed of river almost dry; water in pools; high banks of sand and whitish clay; plenty of cotton trees in hollow; poor grass; mountains near, lofty and precipitous; road through ravine over rough and very broken country			11
24	65	Frenchman's fork; tolerable grass and water; no wood; road through coulés rough; some grading required; course southwest			8
24	66	Frenchman's fork; good spring in ravine about 2 miles west; grass; plenty of wood; route over rough, hilly country			19
					7 $\frac{1}{2}$
					13



*Itinerary of route from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton—Continued.*

Date.	No. of camp.	Remarks.	Distance odometer measurement.	Total distance.
			<i>Miles.</i>	<i>Miles.</i>
Aug. 25	67	Milk river; about 150 feet wide; bed nearly dry; easily forded; tolerable water in pools; grass poor; plenty of cottonwood; crossed the river a little west of its junction with Frenchman's fork; road over rough hills; "Little Rocky" and "Bear's Paw" mountains discernible to southwest		8½
26	68	Small lake, (dry;) no water or wood; grass pretty good; road excellent. Struck last year's trail 2½ to 3 miles from camp.	11	
26	69	Spring, about 3 miles north of road; excellent water; good grass; no wood; left road in search of water.	6	17
27	70	Second crossing of Milk river; ford good with hard gravelly bottom; poor grass; wood abundant; fine road over rolling prairie.	10½	
27	71	Milk river; poor water and grass; wood	2½	19½
28	72	Milk river; dry pond near; pretty good grass and water; wood	6½	
28	73	Milk river; poor grass; wood and water abundant; road in the bottom.	8½	15
29	74	Spring; good water; excellent grass; wood near on Milk river; good level road in the bottom near river; crossed two small streams, (dry)	12½	
29	75	Milk river; pretty good grass, water, and wood; crossed small stream (almost dry) near last camp; grass and timber; rough and broken hills to north.	10½	22½
31	76	Small dry stream; poor grass; wood	8	
31	77	Milk river; poor grass and water; wood	3½	
31	78	"Two Lances" river; little water in pools; poor grass; plenty of wood; crossed "Omuk-pa-pasha," or "Meldrum" river, nearly dry; prairie more rolling, ground firmer; Little Rocky mountains to south	11	22½
Sept. 1	79	Milk river; good water, grass, and wood; crossed small stream (dry) about 2 miles from last camp; excellent grass and fine timber near; road leaves the bottom here		10
2	80	Milk river, third crossing; good ford; road over rolling prairie.	7	
2	81	Milk river; good water, grass and wood; road leaves the river in a southwest direction	4	
2	82	Beaver creek; good water, grass, and wood	9	20
3	83	Box Alder creek; water, grass, and wood. No water or grass between Beaver and Box Alder creeks; good road	12	
3	84	Box Alder creek; camp near creek; water, grass, and wood; passed Bear's Paw mountains	4½	16½
4	85	Big Sandy river; water and grass; no wood	5½	
4	86	Spring; poor water; pretty good grass; no wood; excellent road over high prairie, but no water between "Big Sandy" and this camp	20	25½
5	87	Maria's river; no water, grass, and wood; road over high rolling prairie to the bluff; descent to the valley very steep; fine valley, good camp		13
6	88	Teton river; water, grass, and wood; route follows valley of Maria's river about one mile to the Teton; and then passes through the valley of that stream to last camp; distance to Fort Benton, 4 miles		7½
Distance from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Benton, 825 miles.				

Official copy:

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