



**ACROSS
THE
PLAINS
IN 1853**

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By D. B. WARD,
Seattle, : : : Wash.

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*To the Prairie Schooners
of 1853 and their
sturdy pilots.*





D. B. WARD

PREFACE.

Whittier, the good old Quaker poet, has written:

“I hear the tread of the pioneer,
Of nations yet to be;
The first low wash of waves,
Where soon shall roll a human sea.”

It is one thing to read the thrilling story of that human sea as it splashed its way from the Mississippi Valley, across the “Great American Desert,” over the mountain masses, and on to the valleys and harbors of the Pacific slope. It is quite another thing to have been a part of that low wash of waves and then, in the twilight of life, reach back into memory and record for children and grandchildren the story of that danger-girt journey. This has been done in these pages.

Not alone will the author’s family and friends get pleasure from these annals of the past, for it is from this and similar stories that the history of the West will draw the substance that will make it live; it is from such writings that the poet will derive the inspiration for the awaited American epic.

I am glad, for my children’s sake, that this story is written, and I greet it also as a welcome addition to the rich lore of the buffalo, the ox-team, the canvas-covered wagon a creak on the long trail, and the brave men, women and children who matched their courage, their skill and their trust in God against danger of every kind. They triumphed or they died. The hearths they kindled are still ablaze. By the torches they lit, Americans may forever learn of loyalty to God and home and native land.

EDMOND S. MEANY.

University of Washington.

Seattle, September, 1911.

Across The Plains In 1853

(D. B. Ward.)

Members of my own family and others have suggested—sometimes urged—that I put in writing some of the earlier experiences of my life, especially incidents connected with that long and somewhat, at that time, perilous trip “Across the Plains” in A. D. 1853.

I am sure that if the history of such a trip should be written by one qualified (and I am equally sure I am not qualified for such an undertaking), it would make a wonderfully interesting story.

One need not draw upon his imagination for material for such a story—the mere statement of the facts connected with the incidents of almost daily occurrence would be sufficient.

However, I will tell as best I may, after a lapse of well nigh sixty years, without notes of any kind to aid my memory, of such incidents as come to my mind.

To aid in getting a correct idea of what the prospective emigrant had before him, in his contemplated

journey, it may be well to say: A look at the map of the United States, as it appeared fifty or sixty years ago, will reveal to the student of today many wonderful changes.

At that time the advancing line of American civilization had progressed in its Westward march till those hardy frontiersmen who had reached the Western limits of the States of Arkansas and Missouri, stood facing a vast region extending west to the Pacific Ocean, which, by the meandering and tortuous route of the adventurous traveler was more than 2,500 miles distant. With the exception of the few hardy settlers who had located along the Pacific Coast from California to the British possessions on the north, the country was substantially unoccupied, save by the many numerous and powerful tribes of Indians.

So little did the geography makers of that day know of this immense stretch of country that, where are now found populous and wealthy communities, they placed the legend "Great American Desert," and thought, no doubt, they were giving reliable information to the rising generation.

A trip across this "Great American Desert" to the faraway Northwest—the Willamette Valley in Oregon—in 1853 was, to those who made it, full of interesting, sometimes exciting, incidents.

It was the good fortune of the writer of this article, then a boy of fifteen years of age, in company with the other members of his father's family, to make such a trip.

Before proceeding further, however, let me add just a word personal to myself and family. I was born, so I understand the record to have been, three miles

from the town of Hartford, the county seat of Ohio county, in the state of Kentucky, on the 30th of June, A. D. 1838.

My mother (my father's second wife), whose maiden name was Elizabeth Railey, died when I was but thirty days old, and I was brought up and cared for until I was twelve years old by an only sister (half-sister), who, though quite young, took entire charge of my father's house until his marriage with his third wife, which occurred near the town of Batesville, in the county of Independence, Arkansas, when I was twelve years old, or in the latter part of 1850. This event occurred about five years after my father had removed from Kentucky to Arkansas.

Here I must digress long enough to say that I am not in sympathy with the thought so often expressed that step-mothers are proverbially unkind to the children of the husband by a former wife. No kinder, no better, mother ever lived than my step-mother. When my father married her, she had five children by her first husband, but no one coming into the house could have known by any word or act of hers which one of the six was the step-child.

My father and mother (step-mother) were Christians and lived happily together till his death, which occurred in Oregon, near Salem, in 1872.

My step-mother was a Mrs. Baltimore, whose husband died at Little Rock, the capital of the state, while representing his county, Independence, in the state legislature, of which, I have heard it said, he was a leading and prominent member.

My father, Jesse Ward, was born in Maryland in 1796, but with his parents moved to Kentucky when

he was little more than a year old. At about the age of seventeen, father enlisted in a Kentucky regiment of volunteers, then being raised in his county, and was sent with the other members of the regiment to New Orleans to assist General Jackson in the defense of that city. He was present at the great battle which occurred there on the 8th day of January, 1815, and witnessed the defeat of the British forces upon that occasion. I have heard him relate many incidents connected with that campaign, some of a serious nature, others ludicrous.

Returning at the close of the war to his Kentucky home, father followed the business for eighteen years, before there were any steamboats on the Mississippi river, of a "Mississippi river flatboat man." He conducted the business on something like the following plan: He would take his crew for the following trip, usually five men besides himself, into the woods, get out material, construct and launch his boat, and, having loaded it with a cargo of pork and tobacco, float down the river to New Orleans; dispose of his cargo and boat—the latter for what it would bring, usually but a trifle—and then with his crew start on foot on the long trip home. I have heard him say his usual profits on such a trip would be about one thousand dollars. From the time he went into the woods till his return from New Orleans was about six months.

After the death of my mother, father moved from Ohio county, where he had always lived, to that part of Kentucky then known as "The Purchase," where he lived for two years, and then with his family of three children, viz: Hester L. and Bazzel S., children by his first wife, who was a Miss Ford, and myself, moved to Arkansas.

This move of my father, insofar as his personal interests were concerned, I would call a jump "out of the frying pan into the fire." But as related to my own future interests, a most fortunate circumstance; for if we had remained in Kentucky, we probably would not have gone to the Pacific Coast, and if we had not gone to the Pacific Coast, two very important things might not have occurred. First, we would have, in common with the people of that section of the country, experienced the horrors of the war of the rebellion, and who can say on which side of it we might have been found? Second, if we had not come out to the Pacific Coast, I might not have come to Washington Territory, and might, therefore, have been tied up for life with some ordinary mortal rather than with the prettiest, brightest and best girl of all the earth, Miss Sarah Isabella Byles, daughter of Rev. Charles Byles, a minister of the Cumberland Presbyterian church, who with his family, crossed the plains from Kentucky in 1853, and who was of that first party of immigrants to cross the Cascade Mountains through the Natches Pass. Rev. Byles ("Uncle Charley Byles," as he was familiarly called by his many friends), located, in the fall of 1853, on a homestead on Grand Mound Prairie, some sixteen miles south of Olympia, where he continued to live up to the time of his death, which occurred in February, 1870. Unlike many others who came to the coast in the early fifties, he did not leave his religion behind him, but brought it with him and continued to preach the same old Gospel truth he had preached before leaving his Kentuck home, working on his farm from Monday morning till Saturday evening for the suport of himself and family, and then on Sunday, with hymn book and Bible, off to some dis-

tant appointment to preach to the settlers scattered throughout the counties of Thurston and Chehalis, without compensation other than the knowledge of a duty well performed, till called to the higher and better life of the Great Beyond.

On his arrival in Arkansas, my father first settled in Jackson county, which was peopled by a class of rough, semi-civilized (not all of them, of course) people, who had little regard for human life and whose chief diet was corn bread and bear meat, sandwiched in with bad whiskey and tobacco juice.

Father was very much dissatisfied with the conditions as he found them there, and after raising and disposing of one crop of corn, moved to a farm located about three miles from Batesville, which, at the time, contained a population of about 2,500, fully one-half of whom were colored people—slaves.

Father was at this time a very industrious and energetic man, and in a comparatively short time, not exceeding five years, had accumulated quite an amount of this world's goods; that is to say, he owned 240 acres of land, of which about forty acres were in cultivation. The farm was well stocked and had good country buildings. He also owned and operated (for that time and country) extensive lime kilns, which were a source of cash income that went far toward helping on in that measure of financial success for which he toiled.

Nevertheless, father was not pleased with his surroundings. In the first place, he was a staunch member of what was there called "The Church North." It must be remembered that about the year 1844, the Methodist Episcopal church had forbidden the owner-

ship of slaves by its bishops. About this time one of its prominent bishops had married a widow who was the owner of a large number of slaves. This started a controversy in the great church, which ended in a split in that body—the one branch being known as the M. E. Church South, while for convenience, the mother church was called the M. E. Church North. This largely helped to bring about the agitation of the slave question, which culminated in the secession of the Southern states and the Civil War. Father was anti-slavery—a Henry Clay Whig. The country where he lived was largely pro-slavery. All this, together with the fact that the climate was not healthy, there being scarcely a month in the year that some member of the family was not ill, led to dissatisfaction and a determination to get out of the state. But where to go was the puzzling question. It was while in this state of mind that the *Western Christian Advocate*, of which paper father had been a regular reader, came to hand, containing a letter written by the Rev. Isaac Dillon, a minister of the M. E. church, then preaching to the few hardy pioneers in the Willamette Valley, Oregon. Rev. Mr. Dillon later had his home on Blakeley Island, San Juan county, in this state. He has since died. In this letter Rev. Mr. Dillon told the story so well of the many attractions of the Pacific Coast in general and of the Willamette Valley (in the then Territory of Oregon) in particular, that after a brief family council, in which father, mother and the older children all were heard, it was resolved to go to Oregon.

The family at this time—summer of 1852—consisted of father, mother, three stepbrothers—Francis

M., Noel B. and John M.—and two step-sisters—Mary E. and Ada A. Baltimore—a half-brother, Kirkwood Clay Ward, about one year old, and myself, fifteen years old the following June—a total of nine persons. Besides these, there was a grown-up half-brother, Bazzle S. Ward, and also a half-sister, Hester L. Ward, grown to young womanhood, who joined the family in the journey, making a total membership in the family of eleven persons. Of the eleven, all but two—Ada A., now Mrs. Ellis of Spokane, and the writer—have gone on that longer journey, to that land from which none ever return to tell of its beauties, its grandeur and its rest for the footsore travelers of earth.

It was in the month of June, 1852, that my people decided to locate in the Willamette Valley in Oregon Territory. Having arrived at this decision, the next thing was to make the necessary arrangements. And from that date, June, 1852, till the start was made, March 29th, 1853, thought, time and energy were all given to getting things in shape for the long journey.

Among the younger members of the family (probably the same was true also of the older ones), little was thought of or talked about except Oregon and how we were going to get there. In the innocence of our childhood, we looked upon the whole affair as a great picnic excursion. The seriousness of the matter did not occur to our youthful minds.

And, in all probability, had the older members of the family realized the magnitude of the undertaking, the difficulties to be overcome, the trials and privations to be endured along the way, some other place nearer home would have been selected.

First, by way of getting in readiness for the trip, the farm must be sold, the crops(we were farmers) disposed of and, later on, the household goods converted into cash. Then wagons must be bought. These must be selected with great care; they must not be too light nor too heavy, and must be of the best possible material; tents, camp outfit, supplies, including a well-selected chest of medicines for emergency use, for six months, as it would take that length of time to make the trip, and there would be no opportunity for renewing the supply in case we should run short; and last, but by no means least in importance, the selection of ox-teams, on which so much would depend.

To all things earthly there is said to be an end, and so it came about that at the close of about eight months our preparations for the trip had all been completed and there now remained but one thing more to be done before entering upon the long and trying march, namely, the final good-byes, the separation from and leaving behind relatives and friends whom it was not probable we should ever again meet in this life. Should it be thought strange that upon such an occasion there were sad hearts! that eyes unaccustomed thereto were dimmed by tears, and that the voice failed and only the silent pressure of the hand gave evidence of the deep feeling of the heart? For, be it remembered that, to the friends left behind, it seemed as if we were tempting the fates and that, if not overcome by the elements, by floods and impassable mountain barriers, surely the scalping knife of the treacherous Indian would be our portion. However, the separations ended and the children in their childish way had viewed for the last time the swing in the old peach orchard, had picked gum from

the old sweet-gum tree down by the spring and, for the last time, drank of that spring's cool waters. I had been an invalid all my life, my weight at fourteen being but seventy-four pounds, and had been repeatedly told that I could not stand the trip, and that I would probably leave my bones somewhere by the way, but the traveling and camping life seemed to be just the thing for me, as I continued to improve from the first day of the journey to its close.

Our outfit consisted of four wagons, which contained bedding, wearing apparel, provisions, consisting chiefly of corn meal, flour, rice, beans, bacon, sugar and coffee; also one three-gallon cask of the best proof brandy for medicinal purposes. Attached to each wagon was a team of from four to six oxen. We also had with us quite a band of cattle.

My step-mother's brother, Hilary Cason, and family, and William Bently and his family; the former's family consisting of his wife, a son and two daughters, the son being about six years of age, the daughters younger. Cason had two wagons with the usual outfit and teams. On arriving in Oregon, Cason located on a claim three miles east of Portland, near Mount Tabor. Some of his children and grandchildren are still living in Portland and vicinity. I think his widow is still living, but I do not know where. Bently's family consisted of himself, wife, grown-up son—deaf and dumb but very bright—and two younger daughters, both accomplished and quite handsome. His outfit, like that of Cason, consisted of two wagons, with teams and the usual supplies. Bently went on up the valley of the Willamette and located on the prairie east of Albany.

Our entire party, on leaving Batesville, was made up of the three families named, which, together with the hired men, teamsters, in all twenty-six persons, eight wagons and teams and the loose cattle, the latter being owned by my father.

The first day out we broke a wagon wheel. That made it necessary for us to lay over one day while repairs were being made.

Prior to starting, there was given into the writer's care and keeping a mare, chestnut sorrel, Kit by name, with an outfit consisting of a saddle, bridle, thirty feet of rope three-quarters of an inch in size, with a ten-inch iron spike; the rope and spike to be used in "staking out" at night, or at feeding time. I was informed that if Kit became disabled or was lost on the way, I would have to "hoof it" for the rest of the distance. It is needless to say, Kit and I soon became fast friends, and I am pleased to be able to state both made the trip in safety, getting into our camp in the Waldo Hills, a few miles east of Salem, Oregon, in good shape, my weight, however, not having materially increased, but I was much improved in general health.

A CAPTAIN SELECTED.

Our route of travel led us through the northwestern part of the state and through what was then known as the Cherokee or Indian Territory, on the western border of which we made a stop of a day or two, and, having been joined by other emigrants, it was thought best to organize by forming a semi-military company. This we did, choosing for captain a man by the euphonious name of Smith; we called him "Bob" Smith.

Smith proved himself an admirable man for the place. Our train consisted of eighteen wagons, having twenty-two men capable of bearing arms, besides about thirty-five women and children. We were now well on our way, having left behind us all traces of civilization other than that of our own party.

Parts of the Indian Territory through which we had passed, seemed, at this season of the year, a veritable paradise. Indeed, I think I have never seen a country more attractive to the eye than was this, interspersed as was that part through which we passed, with timber and prairie in about equal parts; the prairies all carpeted with young grass and flowers of many varieties, while many of the little streams and brooks were alive with silver perch and other fish. Many of the Cherokee Indians were owners of good farms, well stocked, and owned slaves, many of them no darker than their copper-colored masters.

With the exception of one man—Harrington by name—whom father had picked up without recommendation or previous acquaintance, to take the place of a Mr. Hensley, who was taken sick and had to give up the trip, not a person of the company had ever been beyond the white settlements or had the slightest knowledge or experience of such a trip. This man, Harrington, claimed to have crossed the plains from St. Joe, Missouri, in 1849, but of this we were doubtful.

Somewhere, I know not where, we had secured what we called a "guide book," which gave us the course of the streams, direction of the hills and mountain ranges, and the general features of the country. Through its aid, and by the exercise of the frontiers-

man's "instinct," we were enabled to reach the main line of travel, at a point not far from the crossing of the Green River, now Northwestern Utah. Prior to this, except about 125 miles on the old Santa Fe trail, we had been following, as best we could, a trail at times wholly obliterated.

AN EARLY CALLER.

I shall never forget how, as we were camped just in the edge of a narrow belt of timber which skirted a small stream on the western bord of the Indian Territory, the entire camp was alarmed at the unexpected appearance in our midst of a real, live Indian. Stretching off to the west, as far as the eye could reach, was a vast level plain, without so much as a shrub or bush to obstruct the vision.

Someone of our party, looking out over this plain, discovered, very early in the morning, a lone horseman coming on the jump directly towards our camp. As this was an unlooked for event, all eyes were soon turned in the direction of the rider, who continued to approach; nor did he stop till the middle of the camp was reached, when, with an "ugh!" he dismounted, threw his hair rope—lariat—to the ground and proceeded to make himself at home.

He was dressed in Nature's rude habiliments, save the aboriginal breech-cloth and a blanket thrown over the left shoulder, drawn around the body and fastened on the right side, leaving the right shoulder and arm exposed, giving free use to that member.

His head was shaved, except a tuft of long hair on the top and back of the head, into which were woven the usual eagle's feathers.

His face was smeared or streaked with some sort of yellow and red paint.

He was a good specimen of the wild Indian of the plains, and belonged, as we afterward learned, to the Osage tribe. He could not speak a word of English, and as we could not speak in his tongue, the little communication which took place between him and members of our party, who were not too badly frightened to talk to him, was by sign language.

After he had spent a half hour inspecting our camp, he quietly mounted his pony and left us. That night our guard was doubled, as it was thought Mr. Indian was surely a spy and that he would return within the next twenty-four hours, accompanied by many braves, and attempt to capture or kill our entire party. However, we soon became used to seeing Indians; the nervous ones got over being nervous, and all settled down to business just as if the plains and camp life with hostile Indians and immense herds of buffalo, had always been our next door neighbors.

A PATHETIC SCENE.

Pathetic indeed was the first grave we saw on the plains. It was that of a young woman belonging to an emigrant train next ahead of ours. The brief funeral services had just been concluded and the sorrowing ones had again taken up the line of march as we approached the grave, which was upon the gently sloping side of a hill looking towards the west. I do not remember the name, or where the party was from, nor did we ever again see any of its members. But, far away from home, surrounded by scenes both new and strange, the young life but recently so full of

hope, went out despite the soothing touch of a mother's loving hand or a father's earnest prayer. They buried here there beside the trail, amidst the solitude of the desert; and oh, how it did seem as if the hearts of those sorrowing ones would break as they looked for the last time upon that lonely spot, so far from home, so far from everywhere.

MOUNTAIN STREAMS TO CROSS.

Our course led us across many of the streams which at that season of the year were running bank full and were not, therefore, fordable.

The first one of these to be crossed was the Cache la Poudre, and this is the way we did it. Arriving upon its banks about eleven o'clock a. m., we went into camp, and while noon lunch was being prepared the men were devising some plan for getting across the stream. There was very little timber on this stream, but two dry bits of logs were found, which being lashed together made a raft of sufficient size to carry a man. On this one of our men, William Ruble, who is perhaps still living in Oregon, seated himself, paddle in hand. Around his waist was fastened the end of a strong twine cord, the ball of this being held in the hands of another man who remained on the bank. While the man on the little raft pushed out into the stream and succeeded in making a landing on the opposite bank, some half mile below the starting point, the man with the ball running along down the stream in order to keep as near as possible to the one on the raft. In this way we had spanned the stream—with a twine string. Then securely fastening a stout rope to one end of the twine, the man on the other

side of the stream was enabled to draw the rope across. By putting out a headline we had our rope ready for work. Our ferry boat was made by lashing together two wagon boxes, which had been caulked. Into this craft we placed our goods and chattels, then the women and children, and in less than twenty-four hours the entire outfit had been safely transferred to the opposite bank of the stream.

Our cattle and horses had to swim the stream, at this point about one hundred feet wide, with a strong current.

IN THE BUFFALO COUNTRY.

A very pleasant part of our route was that along the Arkansas River, which we followed for a distance of perhaps one hundred and twenty-five miles, possibly more. It was while following the course of this stream, and along the old Santa Fe trail, we ran into an immense herd of buffalo. You would like to know how many there were in that herd? I do not know. There may have been one hundred thousand, there may have been five hundred thousand.

It was probably two o'clock in the afternoon while we were traveling along the level valley with the river from one to two miles to our left, the hills perhaps two to five miles to our right, and sloping back for many miles, that we entered the herd, for they simply opened up a sort of lane way through which we passed. We did not get through till six-thirty that evening—four and one-half hours.

Of course our train of ox-teams moved slowly, but we must have traveled at least five miles before we passed through the herd, which stretched off to the

right and left as far as the eye could reach; so far away that a buffalo seemed no larger than a man's hat,—mere specks on the sides of the distant hills.

It would seem as if the protecting hand of Providence was over us, for if anything had occurred to set that vast herd of buffalo in motion, probably not one of our company would have lived to tell how it all happened.

We traveled till quite late that evening in order to put as many miles as possible between us and this immense herd of buffalo.

The next day we remained in camp, and while there were no buffalo in sight when we rose the next morning, it did not take long to find them by the thousands. We feasted on buffalo meat that day and the next, but were soon out of the range. I think the most vicious appearing animal I ever saw was an enraged buffalo bull, brought to bay by a pack of dogs. And about the most docile and foolish thing I ever saw was a young buffalo calf. The calves, of which there were many, seemed to be guided solely by instinct, and that of a very poor quality. A person on horseback might ride out through the herd, which was three to five miles from camp, and be followed in by two or three buffalo calves.

Buffalo veal and the flesh of the heifers, which at this time of the year were fat, made fine eating. Upon them we feasted to our hearts' content while in the buffalo country.

AN ENRAGED BUFFALO BULL.

I well remember the last buffalo I saw. It was in the afternoon, and as our train was wending its weary

way along, looking off to the right of the trail we discovered, perhaps a half or three-quarters of a mile away, three old fellows quietly feeding. Immediately, two of our men, with three dogs, started out to have a "little sport." The dogs singled out one of the three, an immense old bull, as poor as that "Job's turkey" of which we have all heard, and soon "brought him to bay." As soon as the men got within shooting distance they fired at the old brute, wounding him only slightly. Immediately he started for the river. To reach it he would have to pass through our train, which was stretched out for quite a distance in the direct line of his march. In order that his onward march might not be impeded by our wagons and teams, the drivers had all turned their teams on the trail with their heads towards the river, thus throwing the back ends of the wagons in the direction from which he was coming, and at the same time opening up gaps through which it was hoped he would be delighted to pass without stopping on his way to the river. There was one team, however, a pair of mules, attached to a light spring wagon—a family rig which upon this occasion was being driven by a young woman, a Miss Brewer (many of her relatives are now living in the counties of Thurston and Chehalis, in this state) who failed, for some reason, to so place her team. On came the enraged buffalo, smarting from the wounds he had received and harrassed by the dogs which were yelping at his heels. The men, meanwhile, who had gone out to have a "little sport," had not dared to fire at him for fear a stray bullet might strike the wrong object. In his maddened condition, it so happened that he struck the train at that point where

Miss Brewer's team was standing, striking first one of the hind wheels of the wagon, he tossed it with his horns as though it had been a bag of straw; the next instant he made for the near mule, which he severely gored in the flank then in the breast just forward of the left shoulder. All this occurred within the space of a minute of time. Meanwhile several shots had been taken at the thoroughly maddened beast, the fatal shot, however, and the one which immediately ended the trouble, was fired by a young man whose name was Ivan Bentley, the deaf mute before referred to.

We left the worthless carcass of the buffalo and the wounded mule where the incident occurred, and passed on, soon forgetting in the presence of other incidents of peril, that of the enraged buffalo.

INDIANS IN LARGE NUMBERS APPEAR.

We had not for a long while met with any Indians, but toward the latter part of the afternoon we had noticed them in large numbers. We had traveled in order to reach a certain camping place, much later than usual on this day. Just as we were going into camp we were quite surprised, and pleased also, to see a lieutenant and half a dozen men, all wearing the uniform of men belonging to the American army, approaching us, for we had not liked the appearance of the Indians we had been seeing during the afternoon.

However, we were not, at first, pleased with the message delivered us by the lieutenant. It was in substance that we must not go into camp where we were; that the country round about us was infested by Indians who were not friendly; that only a short dis-

tance away was a post or fort, garrisoned by United States troops; that it was quite possible, on account of the nearness of this post, that the Indians would not disturb us. The commandant of the post had learned of our train and had thought it best for us to come on to the fort that night and had sent these men out as an escort. We therefore moved on, and in a short time reached the fort and went into camp under the protection of the Stars and Stripes. We were beneath the shadow of the flag where none dare molest or make us afraid.

Under orders from the fort, we were not permitted to turn our stock upon the range as usual, but kept them within our corral, made by forming our wagons in a circle and keeping the stock tied inside of this circle and also to the wagons on the outside of the circle or corral. The stock was fed from wild hay furnished by the troops.

The next morning the reason for all this was made clear, when we discovered that several thousand Indians were camped as near the fort as safety would permit and that the post guard had been doubled that night.

Several tribes were represented at this gathering. Fortunately for us they all left that forenoon and we were permitted to move on. The Indians had been here for about two weeks, holding some kind of a council. The Pawnees, Aaraphoes, and some other tribes. The Arapahoes were thoughtful enough to tell us they would see us again, *and they did*.

We had now passed Ash Creek, Pawnee Rock and Pawnee Fork, three points on the Santa Fe trail, that in later years became historic because of the persistency

with which the Indians attacked all who were called to pass through that part of the country. Many a poor fellow lost his scalp and his life in that troublous, turbulent country.

Providence was very kind to us on this long and weary journey, for through sickness, difficulties and dangers with which our way was beset almost from start to finish, we were permitted to pass on to the end of our journey without the loss of any member of our family, or in deed, so far as I know, any member of our entire party.

FORCED TO GO WITHOUT SUPPER.

I call to mind just now, how one afternoon some days prior to our reaching the fort, as we were traveling along the Santa Fe trail, we found ourselves quite a distance from the Arkansas River, by reason of that stream flowing off to the south, forming a sort of horse-shoe at this particular point. Our route lay across, so to speak, the open end or heel of the shoe. Meanwhile our captain, having ridden on ahead of the train for the purpose of finding a camping place, returned about sundown and said we would have to travel on till midnight in order to reach a suitable camping place—that is, a place where water and grass could be had for our teams. This we undertook to do. The afternoon had been cloudy and warm. As soon as it began to get dark, the lightning commenced to flash, accompanied by distant peals of thunder. In less than one hour after dark the lightning became almost continuous, flash succeeding flash in rapid succession (may I say, with lightninglike rapidity?) and the thunder no longer distant, seemed to shake the very earth be-

neath our feet. In the midst of all this, the rain began to come down, at first in occasional drops, but soon in torrents, until our teams became unmanageable and we were forced to stop, loosen them from the wagons and go into camp, soaking wet, and without anything to eat. After an hour of this sort of thing, the storm passed, enabling the men to get the stock together, which was held under guard till early next morning, when the march was resumed and continued until about nine o'clock, when coming to a delightful spot where there was wood, water and grass in abundance, a combination not often met with, we made camp and proceeded to prepare breakfast, which we ate with a relish, not having had a square meal for more than twenty-four hours.

A DESERTER.

It was while camped here that we were surprised by a white man, on foot, making his appearance in our camp and asking for something to eat. He was dressed in ordinary citizen's clothes and carried a United States musket and Colt's revolver. He told us a horrible story of how he had been traveling with a small emigrant train, how they had been set upon by the bloodthirsty Pawnee Indians and all except himself either killed or carried off into captivity. He further stated that he was trying to make his way back to the States. After eating a hearty meal, he started on his way, loaded with all he cared to carry of the best we had in the way of eatables. He left us about frightened "out of our boots," as we fully believed all he told us. That night our guard was doubled, and I well remember how my father sat the night through

in the door of our tent with his trusty rifle across his knees, prepared in case on an attack by the Indians to defend with his life, if need be, his family.

The long night ended and the sun came out bright and clear next morning, and again we were spared. Great was the indignation of our party when, a day or so later, it was learned that our man who claimed to have just escaped the murderous savages, and whom we had treated so royally, was a deserter from the United States troops stationed at the post to which I have already referred. We afterwards heard, I do not know through what channel, that Mr. Deserter was, soon after leaving us, killed and scalped by the Indians.

BENT'S FORT.

A few days after leaving the fort we passed the old adobe trading post of the Bent brothers, which at this time was deserted, and soon after we left the old Santa Fe trail entirely. After leaving this trail, which turned to the south and across the Arkansas River, our course lay on up the river in a northwesterly direction.

ANTELOPE.

Nothing worthy of note occurred in this part of the country except the immense herds of antelope. Of these we killed enough to keep us well supplied with the choicest of fresh meat.

For many weeks after leaving the Santa Fe trail, we followed what I think must have been Fremon's trail, as he made his way across the country in 1843.

We left the Arkansas River at old Pueblo, a settlement of people,—half-breed Mexicans and Indians,—who had located on that river near where Boiling or

Turkey Creek empties into it. It was a delightful spot. Here on this creek I saw the last sign of wild turkeys. It might not be amiss to say that for some ten or more days before reaching Boiling Creek, we had been traveling along in sight of the Spanish Peaks, which were off to our left—that is, southwest of us.

SPANISH PEAKS.

I call to mind my first sight of a snow-capped mountain. It looked something like a white cloud in the distance and nothing was thought of it for several days; but when day after day it appeared in about the same place, with little or no change, we all began to wonder, and as day followed day for more than a week, "still the wonder grew," until our man Harrington, who claimed to have seen such things before, informed us it was not a cloud but a snow-capped mountain.

DECEPTIVE DISTANCES IN COLORADO.

This reminds me of how, as we were traveling along on a hot forenoon, we saw off to our left, well up in the head of a ravine, a pile of snow which seemed to be not more than a half mile from where we were. It occurred to two of our young men that it would be a nice thing to have some of that snow. Taking a bucket apiece, they started at about ten o'clock a. m., each to bring in a bucket of it. We traveled on till noon, had our lunch and resumed our march. In the evening at about the usual time, we went into camp, but our boys with their buckets were still absent. We were becoming quite uneasy about them and a half dozen of our men were arming themselves and getting their horses saddled preparatory to going in search of

them, thinking some ill must have befallen them, when, to the great joy of all, they made their appearance. Their story was, that they had traveled till about the middle of the afternoon without seemingly having gotten any nearer the desired object than when they left us in the forenoon. In no country in the world is the atmosphere clearer, distances more deceiving than in Colorado, and we were at this time in what is now a part of that state.

The experience of these young men reminds me of the oft told story of a traveler out in Colorado, who, coming to an irrigation ditch only a few feet across and not more than "knee deep," espied a man sitting upon the edge of the ditch disrobing himself. Being a little curious to know why he was doing so, asked him what he was going to do. The answer was, "I'm going to swim this river." "But," said the stranger, "this is no river; it's only a small irrigation ditch." "Oh, you can't fool me, mister, I know it don't seem so mighty wide nor so awful deep, but you can't tell anything about it out here in Colorado. I'm going to swim this here river."

WHERE DENVER NOW STANDS.

After leaving the Arkansas River at Pueblo, our course for some distance was almost due north, leading us up a stream which we called Turkey Creek to the divide between the waters flowing into the Arkansas River and those flowing into the south fork of the Platte River. After reaching the summit of this divide, we followed down Cherry Creek to where it emptied into South Platte and camped where the city of Denver now stands. It was a delightful place, with

plenty of wood and water and the best of feed for our stock. We remained here from about noon until the morning of the next day, when we resumed our journey, crossing Cherry Creek, and a short distance above its mouth we crossed the South Platte. This last stream we forded, but in order to do so had to put blocks under our wagon-beds, or boxes, thus raising them to the tops of the standards, as the fording was deep. The current of the river was very strong and the quicksands in the bed of the stream did not make the crossing less dangerous. Near the headwaters of Cherry Creek, we met a party of five prospectors with their pack animals, who had been out prospecting for gold, but not having been successful, were returning to the "States" disappointed, declaring there was nothing worth looking for in all that country, which later on proved so rich in the precious metal.

INTO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

Soon after leaving the South Platte our route of travel took us into the Rocky Mountains, which was by far the roughest and most difficult part of our trip. Sometimes we had great bogs or marshes to cross; sometimes for miles our trail led us through almost impassable forests, and at other times we were climbing steep mountains or crossing deep ravines. On the fourth day of July, just as we were emerging from a rugged bit of mountain, covered with a growth of scrub timber, we crossed the head of a deep ravine on a bridge of snow or ice, from beneath which, a short distance away, flowed a beautiful stream of clear and perhaps I need not add, *cold* water.

Soon after crossing the ravine, we came out on to the top of a long, high ridge where there was no timber. The day was cloudy and so cold that we had to put on our overcoats, while the women and children kept themselves in the wagons under a double portion of cover. Just how long we were in getting through the mountains I am not sure, but not less than two weeks, possibly three.

A DRY CAMP.

It was while we were "floundering" (I think of no better word for it) along through these mountains, it happened that on a certain day, just after noon, we struck into a forest of large timber,—pine I think it was,—in which we were forced to camp that night, and as there was neither food or water for our stock, we were of necessity forced to make a "dry camp" of it. This was another unpleasant night for us.

UNWELCOME VISITORS.

The next morning we were up early, and having eaten something left over from the day before, were just in the act of "hitching up" when there commenced to pour into our camp from the west, along the trail we were to pass over, a band of Aarapahoe warriors. They continued to come on horseback, till there were perhaps two hundred of them. They had been out on the warpath against some tribe—perhaps the Blackfeet Indians—and were loaded with the trophies of war, not the least conspicuous of which were divers and sundry scalps which were dangling from their spear heads and Indian bridles. They were becoming quite annoying, and things began to look anything but pleasing for us, when our captain ordered

our bugler,—and he was a good one, too,—to give the signal, three loud blasts of the bugle, for the company to form and move on. This he did. The effect on the Indians was magical; at the first blast those of the Indians who had dismounted immediately mounted their ponies; the second blast set them talking in a most excited manner, and before the sound of the third blast had died away, they were moving off in a great hurry. Never before or since had the sound of that old bugle had so much music in it as upon that morning, in the midst of that Rocky Mountain forest, surrounded as we were by hundreds of Arapahoe warriors.

OTHER UNWELCOME VISITORS.

About eleven o'clock that day we left the forest behind us and came out upon a most beautiful little prairie, where there was plenty of feed for our hungry cattle and horses. Here we stopped, and finding water handy, had our breakfast, while our stock was also cared for. This prairie was a sort of butte, at the foot of which there was a narrow belt of timber in the direction we were going. Looking on over and beyond this belt of timber into a valley which was some five miles away, we saw what appeared to be a very large camp of emigrants. We were quite sure there were only four parties of emigrants attempting this year to follow the route we had taken, and we knew one of these was following us. We did not know where the others were, but were satisfied they were some days in advance of us, as in many places their trail had been altogether obliterated by the occasional heavy rainstorms, by the buffalo and by bands of Indians with their horses, so we were quite surprised to this supposed camp of them only a few miles in advance of us.

However, all doubt as to the character of the camp was removed when the head chief of the Arapahoes, accompanied by his interpreter, a renegade white man, and about one hundred warriors, appeared upon the scene, having discovered us from their camp in the valley. The old chief, somewhat advanced in years, was dressed in the full uniform of an officer of the regular army. Of this uniform he appeared to be very proud, as also of a sword which he carried. Both uniform and sword had been given him by the government. The chief was mounted upon as white a mule as it has ever been my lot to see; sitting behind the chief upon this same mule, was the interpreter.

Immediately upon his arrival in camp, the interpreter, acting under direction of his superior, the chief, dismounted and was handed by that individual a document which he proceeded to read. The substance of it was, that a treaty had been made between the United States government and this particular tribe of Indians, by the terms of which they were ever after to remain at peace with the government and its citizens, and that all citizens of the United States were to be permitted to pass unmolested through the country of the Arapahoes. The old chief, at the conclusion of the reading of this important and exceedingly nerve quieting document, proceeded to deliver an address, which was given us in good English by the interpreter, in which he emphasized the thought that we were in the "house of our friends," so to speak. On this point we were a little skeptical.

Having finished our meal and having given our stock ample time to feed, we were again soon on the move. Our road led us down the side of the butte and

through the valley, where we had seen what proved to be the Indians' camp.

A NARROW ESCAPE FROM SERIOUS TROUBLE.

We had with us at this time a buffalo calf which one of our cows had kindly consented to adopt. This calf seemed an object of great interest to the Indians. However, all went well until about two-thirds of the way down the hill, when all of a sudden the Indians, who were following along from our resting place on the butte, seemed to have become uncontrollably hilarious. They laughed, they shouted, they yelled, and swung their blankets, and ran to and fro, the purpose being to have us think they were overjoyed at something or other, while their real purpose was to not only create a stampede of our stock, but of our teams as well; in which, if they had been successful—and it came too close to it for comfort—would have been the wreck and ruin of the whole train. Once more providence was with us. About that time we had reached the foot of the butte and were approaching the Indian camp, our highly-prized buffalo calf, in which every member of the train had learned to take a lively interest, met its doom. A party of braves had managed to separate it from the stock we were driving, and taking it only a short distance from the road, in less time than it takes me to write, they had killed it and divided its flesh among its savage captors. We had now arrived within about one hundred yards of the Indian camp, to which the old chief had preceded us, when, without a moment's warning, from a command given by the old traitor, three hundred Indian warriors

were drawn up directly across our line of march. Of course there was nothing left for us to do but *stop*, which we did. There were about four hundred, all told, of these warriors. They were, for the most part, armed with bows and arrows, spears, knives and tomahawks; a few of them having guns, while our men were well armed with rifles and revolvers—Colt's six-shooters. We were taken at a disadvantage, in that the Indians were all around and about us and outnumbered us nearly twenty to one. From the time we left our noon camp on the hill to the present moment, they had been growing more impudent, not to say insolent, and it now really seemed as if we would have serious trouble before we got out of this scrape. Of course we had been thrown off our guard by the great pretensions of the old chief, that his people were friendly; that by the treaty we were at liberty to pass through his country without being interfered with in any way whatever. The halt having been made, a parley was at once entered into, the outcome of which was that they had been on the warpath against another tribe (I think the Blackfeet Indians) for some time and had been successful—and the number of scalps in sight bore evidence that in this, at least, they were telling the truth—and were very hungry, and that while they were willing we should pass through their country, we should, inasmuch as we had plenty, pay them for the privilege; that a contribution of flour, sugar and hardtack would be acceptable. This suggestion, backed up as it was by about four hundred braves who seemed to have the "drop on us," it was thought best to accept, in view of the fact, furthermore, that if we had to fight our way out, some of us would undoubtedly be killed, and that perhaps

some of our women and children would fall into the hands of the Indians. A collision between our company and the Indians was narrowly averted more than once during our detention of about three hours; for there were two young women in our company, one having a head of beautiful red hair, the other driving the team attached to the light spring wagon before referred to, in which the Indians seemed to take great interest and argued that these two young women must be left with them. However, a vigorous punch in the ribs with the muzzle of a rifle in the hands of one of our men satisfied them that we were not of their way of thinking on the subject. After we had made our contribution, we were permitted to move on, which we were not slow in doing. I was not one of the adult members of the company; I was not supposed to be large enough or of sufficient importance to be armed. It was my business, with others, to look after "the loose" stock—that is, the horses and cattle not attached to the wagons, while on the march. This kept me quite busy during our detention by the Indians, and while so engaged I wondered what I would do in case of actual hostilities. Boy like, though I was not armed, I thought I could be of help in some way but was not sure in just what way I could be most useful, but finally decided that if the battle went against us, Kit and I would make our escape as best we could. Kit was not over fleet of foot but I had great confidence in her, and did not seem very much troubled as to what the outcome would be. I also remember thinking, if I should fall into the hands of the Indians, I would soon be able to convince them I was a pretty good sort of a boy, anyway, and I would be able to get along

with them without any very serious trouble until an opportunity of escape offered.

This trouble with the Indians occurred in one of the most delightful little valleys imaginable, with high mountains on both sides of it. It was our purpose to put as great a distance between ourselves and the Indians before camping as possible. We traveled, therefore, till after sundown that afternoon, and coming to a desirable camping place, decided to stop for the night. We had formed the usual corral with our wagons and were just getting our teams ready to turn out to feed, when quite unexpectedly to us, two white men on horseback rode up and warned us not to attempt to stop there over night: that if we did we would surely have trouble with the Indians before morning; that we were within about two miles of the North Platte, where the two companies of emigrants whom we knew to be somewhere in advance of us, were camped; that there were with them about two hundred fighting men: that if we would "hitch up" and move on, they would pilot us to their camp. These men had been out as a sort of advance picket line, and had fortunately discovered us, hence the warning.

Of course we moved on, and under the guidance of our newly found friends, reached their camp without further incident. The women folks, on whom the incidents and excitement of the last twenty-four hours had been specially trying, although perhaps no more so than on the men, were tired, worn out and nervous. On getting up the next morning, we found ourselves camped on the bank of the North Platte, which was up to the high water mark, made so by the melting of the snow on the mountains. These people had been here for quite a while, having had much difficulty in

getting across the river on account of the high water, the current being very strong at this point, as we were well up in the mountains. Had they gotten across and away before we arrived, I hardly know how we would have succeeded in getting over, as this river was much larger and the current much swifter than any stream we had yet crossed.

CROSSING THE NORTH PLATTE.

By noon of the next day after our arrival, they were all safely across the river, but as our rope was not long enough to reach across they not only allowed us to use theirs but also assisted us in getting over, so that by evening all our belongings with the exception of three wagons, were on their side of the river. We were using two of our wagon boxes for a ferry boat. Unfortunately, as our ferry was returning empty for another load, something went wrong which caused our headline to break and away went our ferry boat—wagon boxes. However, we were fortunate in being able to pick them up about two miles below, where they had gotten into an eddy and floating near the shore, were caught. This left myself and eight men, my father being one of them, for that night on the side of the river from which we were crossing. To add to the unpleasantness of the situation, we were without food or bedding, and having worked hard all day with only a lunch for dinner, we were a pretty hungry set next morning when at about nine o'clock, having succeeded in getting our boat up the stream and in working order, we crossed over and had breakfast.

That night, not knowing but that the Indians might attack us early the next morning (we were never afraid of an attack at night, as this was contrary to all cus-

toms among them), we had drawn three wagons onto the bank of the river in the form of a half circle and had arranged that two men should keep watch alternately for two hours, while the others slept. I, being only a boy, was excused from doing guard duty. About two o'clock next morning we were awakened by the guards, who said we were about to be attacked by the Indians; that they were approaching us on their horses, and we must sell our lives as dearly as possible. To add to the seriousness of our predicament at this time, it must be remembered we were wholly unarmed, all of our firearms having been sent over the river during the afternoon with our other effects. The camp on the opposite side of the river was powerless to help us, but their guards had discovered that something was wrong on our side of the river, and when they were made to understand the nature of the trouble, we could occasionally catch their words of encouragement above the gurgling noise of the on-flowing river. When the tramping of the hoofs of the Indians horses could be plainly heard across the river, our friends fired a few volleys, which, together with our own yelling (it seemed to me we were making noise enough for ten times our number of men) served to cause a hasty retreat of the Indians. Looking at the matter from this distance of time, I am sure the Indians had no thought of attacking us, for they were, of course, wholly ignorant of our helpless condition, but that a number of them had ridden over to the river expecting that possibly they might find some of our stock which they might run off. Fortunately, our stock was all on the opposite side of the river.

This crossing of the North Platte proved to be the last stream we were compelled to cross in our own extemporized ferry boat. The next stream to be ferried was the Green River, which we crossed about one hundred miles east of Salt Lake City, on a ferry run by a white man; and we were not slow in availing ourselves of the privilege of crossing on it, though we had to pay roundly for it.

MOUNTAIN FEVER.

Just after getting through the Rock Mountains, I had an attack of "mountain fever," which took me out of the saddle and compelled me to ride in a wagon for about ten days. On regaining health and strength, I again took to the saddle, which I continued to occupy with the exception of one week—when Kit, along with the rest of our cattle and horses, stampeded—until the end of our journey. There were a few days during my illness that I was unconscious, so that a short break was made in my personal knowledge of the trip. When I had sufficiently recovered to begin to take an interest in what was going on about us, I missed the presence of my father, and upon inquiry learned that he, too, was very ill with an attack of mountain fever. For a month he seemed to hover between life and death, but finally recovered, but was never the rugged, healthy man he had previously been.

With these two exceptions, there was no sickness in our family while we were on this long journey.

STRIKING THE OLD TRAIL.

It was a short time before we reached Green River that we struck the main traveled road from St. Joe

to the Pacific Coast; and what a change! Before this, we had been following a trail so dim—except a while on the Santa Fe—that at times we would have to stop, being in doubt as to what course or direction to take. We now found ourselves on a broad highway from twenty feet to five hundred feet in width. On the route we had been traveling, we had, with one or two exceptions, the best of feed in greatest abundance, while after striking this great highway feed was scarce everywhere. Neither had we been seriously bothered by the dust or troubled by the alkali; but from this on, the dust was almost intolerable and the alkali in many places very troublesome. Before this, game was quite plentiful at many points along the way, while after reaching the main thoroughfare, we saw absolutely no game. When reaching this point, our stock having had plenty of feed, were in fine condition, but we were not slow to note the different appearance of the stock of those who had traveled on the main line.

While, as before stated, there were but four companies of emigrants on our route that year until after we had crossed the Rocky Mountains, and weeks and weeks at a time when we saw no civilized persons not members of our party, there was no time after we reached this point until after reaching the point where the Oregon road branched off from the road leading to California, that we were not “in sight” of some party, other than our own, of emigrants. While the emigration of 1853 was not so heavy as that of 1852, still there were thousands of people that year (1853) bound for the Pacific Coast.

Prior to our reaching the main traveled route across the plains, we had not lost a single head of our cattle or horses, and did not see any dead stock along the road; but after this, the sight was a familiar one. The stench from these carcasses was at times, because of their great number, something awful. Neither had we lost any of our wagons, but it was now a matter of almost daily occurrence to pass one or more wagons, loaded or partly loaded, standing beside the road or at the last camping place of some party.

And the graves, of which we had up to this time seen but one, now lined the road, most of them, however, of persons who had died the year before. Of these, we counted at one place twenty-one, said to have died of cholera.

“A TRADING POST.”

It was just before reaching Bear River that we saw our first “trader.” He was a Mormon and located near the road-side, and had for sale flour, bacon, sugar, tobacco and a few other articles. My folks thought we would probably run short of flour before reaching our journey’s end, and so bought one barrel, for which they paid him forty dollars. This we thought an exorbitant price, as we had paid but two dollars and seventy-five cents per barrel at home for the best, and this we had purchased was not the best. As I now think of it, the wonder is we did not have to pay more than we did.

Our route led us east and north of Great Salt Lake some distance, possibly at no point were we nearer than seventy-five to one hundred miles of it. However, we were near enough to meet, from time to time,

a number of Mormons, of whom we were in constant fear. More to be dreaded were they than the Indians. While passing through this part of the country, it was no unusual sight to see great piles of wagon tires and in fact all parts of iron pertaining to a well finished wagon, lying alongside the road. This was to us at first unaccountable, but we later learned that the Mormons had, after taking to their settlements such as they needed for their own use, gathered up the wagons, great number of which, as before stated, had been abandoned by the emigrants, and burned them and then collected the iron, which they also later on took to their settlements and used as best served their purpose.

A MORMON TRICK.

Arriving at the crossing of Thomas Fork of Bear River, we found a Mormon had built a bridge across it at the only available fording place in that immediate vicinity, and was doing a thriving business, charging seventy-five cents for every wagon and team that crossed over on his bridge. To have treated him as he deserved would have been to throw both man and bridge into the river, but this would have been to invite serious trouble with the entire Mormon community, backed by the numerous Indians of the territory. This we could not afford to do, but a ford was found three miles above, which meant an extra six miles travel, as it was simply going up the river on one side and down on the other to the intersection of the road at the opposite end of the bridge, which we did rather than submit to what we considered an

unjust demand. However, most of the emigrants paid the seventy-five cents, so that Mr. Mormon was, after all, reaping a golden harvest.

The actions of this man were completely eclipsed by the fellow (Mormon No. 2) who, at the next stream we had to cross, had constructed a bridge about two-thirds of the distance across the stream, stopping about ten feet from the shore, where the water ran perhaps a foot deep. He had been kind enough to give his bridge a sort of slant from the starting point to where it ended, so that at the lower end, or "jumping-off place," it was about on a level with the water, and as the bottom of the stream was a solid gravel bed we had no great difficulty in getting off the bridge and onto the bank. So far as we knew, this was the only fording place on the stream and as the charge for crossing was only twenty-five cents, we thought we had best pay it and get out of the territory as soon as possible.

SULPHUR SPRINGS.

Not many days after this I saw the first sulphur springs, of which there were several located within the space of a few acres. These were very strongly impregnated with sulphur. I drank of the water, but it was not, to my uncultivated palate, a much desired drink. Soon after passing these springs, we came to the "parting of the ways," that is, where the road to Oregon left the California road—the Oregon road leading off in a northwesterly direction, while that to California seemed to lead in an almost due westerly course. As a matter of fact, we were now in Oregon, as the territory at that time extended east to the summit of the Rocky Mountains; but as our destination

was the Willamette Valley, which was many hundreds of miles away, we did not consider ourselves in Oregon until that valley had been reached.

PARTING OF THE WAYS.

As a portion of our company was bound for California, it was at this "parting of the ways" we separated. There were no elaborate ceremonies or long drawn out good-byes indulged in to commemorate the event. It was simply, "There is your California road," or, "There is your road to Oregon. Good-bye," and each party was off to its chosen land of promise.

HOT SPRINGS.

Soon after leaving the California road, as we were slowly wending our way along the dusty road with the heat almost unendurable, we were delighted to find a spring of clear water bubbling forth from beneath a stony hillside just off the road a short distance. In order that all who wished might have an opportunity to quench their thirst at this beautiful fountain, the train was brought to a standstill and a general rush made for the spring, some with cups and some with buckets. It was my luck to be the first to reach it, and not waiting for a cup, stretched myself out, boy-like, on my stomach, for the purpose of getting a good drink of cold water. What was my surprise—for I had never seen or heard of such a thing before—to find the water boiling hot. I was disappointed, but had my wits about me sufficiently to keep my mouth shut until several others who had rushed up about the same time with their cups, had made a like discovery. It is needless to say we did not refresh ourselves with any cooling draughts from that spring. None of my

people had ever before seen a hot spring. From this point our route led us over onto the tributaries of Snake River, which we reached some distance above American Falls. These were, by the way, the most picturesque and interesting falls we had seen, chiefly by reason of the large volume of water carried.

A VALUABLE HORSE STOLEN.

If I am not mistaken, it was just after passing these falls that we camped on a small stream called Goose Creek. Another party, perhaps not more than fifteen or twenty persons, were camping on this creek about two hundred yards from us. There was with this party a man who had a stallion, worth in Oregon at this time, from \$1,000 to \$1,500, which he was bringing across the plains, and which he had guarded most carefully, not allowing anyone else to care for him for fear something might happen to him or that he might in some way lose him. On this particular occasion, as upon many others, he had, after supper was over and it was just getting dark, taken his horse out that it might feed for an hour or so. He had a rope about thirty-five feet long, one end of which was fastened to the halter which the horse wore, while he held the other end in his hand. Being tired he laid down upon the dry ground, face up, and was possibly counting the stars, when his attention was attracted to his horse just in time to see him mounted and ridden hastily away by an Indian (Snake). He was on his feet instantly and fired two or three shots at him from his revolver, but his horse was gone for good. In telling of it afterward, he said he remembered hearing his horse "kind of snort like," but thought nothing of it at the moment. The rope which he had been holding

in his hand was cut about six feet from the halter worn by the horse. The stealing of this horse and many others, some of them well-bred animals, will account for the great number of fine horses which a few years later were to be found among the Indians of the Snake River and adjoining territory.

CROSSING THE SNAKE RIVER.

After traveling down the Snake River for some days, we came to a place where some enterprising body had put a ferry across the stream, and, by vigorously asserting that the country on the opposite side of the river contained plenty of grass and was well watered, succeeded in inducing a large number of emigrants to cross over, and, as the charge was two dollars and a half for each wagon, he was doing a good business. We took his advice and crossed over into the land of promise, and the promise was about all there was to it, except that when we arrived at old Fort Boise, where we had to recross the river, we had to pay *eight dollars* per wagon for the privilege of getting back onto the south side of the river.

A NATURAL BRIDGE.

Just after we had gotten over to the north side of the river we crossed a small creek which had, a little way below the crossing, worn its way through the rock so that the bed of the stream was from fifteen to thirty feet below the surface, and here, below the ford and over this chasm was a natural bridge, which at this particular place was probably thirty feet above the bed of the creek. Quite a number of us crossed over on this natural bridge. Our man Harrington, in an at-

tempt to get a better view of the stream below the bridge, was unfortunate enough to lose his balance and topple over into the creek. We all gave him up for dead, but soon heard him calling lustily for help. He had drifted down the stream a short distance and had managed to crawl out onto a projecting rock, from which, by means of a rope, one end of which was lowered to him and which he securely fastened around himself below the arms, we managed to haul him to the surface, dripping wet and considerably bruised, but with no broken bones. Soon after this Harrington left us. I have never seen or heard from him since.

DEATH OF REV. HINES.

Nothing remarkable occurred while traveling down the north side of the Snake River, and in due course of time we reached old Fort Boise, where there was a trader who owned and operated a ferry, charging the moderate sum of eight dollars for each wagon and team and its contents. Horses and cattle were forced to swim the river. It was at this place that Rev. Hines, a brother of Rev.s Gustavus and H. K. Hines, prominent pioneer ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was drowned while trying to swim the river with his horse. His body, I think, was not recovered. Our company now consisted of my father's family, four wagons, and my step-mother's brother, Hilary Cason, with his family and two wagons. A part of our company, as before stated, had taken the California road; a part had kept to the south side of the Snake River, and some of the others we had left behind—out-traveled.

A STAMPEDE.

Just after we had crossed the Snake River the second time, it being late in the afternoon, we went into camp at a point about two or three miles up the river, at or near the mouth of a stream which emptied into the river. This proved to be an ideal camping place; it also proved for us the most disastrous of any on the entire trip. We had eaten our supper, having first herded our horses and cattle near our camp, and were busying ourselves with the ordinary camp duties, our cattle lying quietly resting themselves—a typical camp scene: quiet, serene, restful—when, without a note of warning, every animal was on its feet and thundering away over the plain in a wild, mad rush which seemed to cause the very earth to tremble beneath their fast hurrying feet, and in less time than it takes to write of it, they were away and out of sight. It was a veritable stampede. And as it was now getting dark, nothing could be done further than to wait the dawning of another day. And such a dawning! Everyone in camp was awake and up early. Breakfast was prepared and eaten in silence. Not a horse, not a cow or an ox, was to be seen anywhere. There we were, several hundred miles from the nearest Oregon settlement, men, women and little children: provisions growing scarce: tired, worn out, foot-sore; at the time thinking our cattle and horses had been run off by the Indians, for we were in the midst of semi-hostility. It was a time to try men's souls. It was while surrounded by these discouraging conditions that upon some member of our party looking out upon the plain, one of our saddle horses was discovered coming leisurely toward our camp. This was taken as

an omen of good and hope, which had well nigh taken its flight, was restored. The horse was soon under saddle and my brother, B. S. Ward, armed with a Colt's revolver and his trusty rifle, with a lunch for the day, set off on the trail in search of our stock. Well do I remember the saddened faces of members of the family that early morning as he started out over the plain and across the hills into the heart of an Indian country. But he *must* go; others followed on foot, but he being on horseback, as was expected, traveled much faster than those on foot and was consequently far in advance of the others. However, all returned that evening in safety, having found another horse and five or six head of our cattle, and some knowledge of the country had been gained; also the important fact that the Indians had had nothing to do with the stampede and that probably there were no Indians in that immediate vicinity at that time.

The search was continued for several days, and finally, by making up odd teams, using cows where oxen could not be found, we were enabled to move on farther with three of our wagons, leaving the fourth where it stood, with most of its load undisturbed. Our next camp after leaving the Snake River was fifteen miles away.

A HOT DAY—NO WATER.

Between these two points we suffered more for want of water than at any other time on the road, because, being short of teams, we did not fill—as was our custom—our water casks, and the day being exceedingly warm and the road dry and dutsy, our suffering for water was intense. When we finally reach-

ed water, I did not wait for a cup to dip it up with, but spread myself out on my stomach and drank my fill. Our teams when nearing water became almost unmanageable and seemed to know we were approaching water long before it could be seen. We remained at this camp several days, hunting for more of our cattle, but finally gave it up as a bad job and moved on. The hardest part of our journey was from the time we left the Snake River at old Fort Boise till our arrival at The Dalles on the Columbia River. There was with our party a man by the name of Ruble, with his wife and little babe and a brother. They were splendid people, well liked by every one in the train. Ruble had, when we started out, a wagon with the usual outfit and a one-horse buggy: this last for the wife and baby. Ruble stopped somewhere on the road to give his team needed rest. While we were camped near Boise, trying to get teams enough together to move on, the Rubles passed us. My present recollection of it is that the buggy and wagon were gone—had been left behind—that Mrs. Ruble with her babe in her arms was riding astride the horse, and that her husband and his brother were walking, and that in place of the wagon and team they once had, they now had a cart made of the forward wheels of their wagon, to which was attached a single ox. They managed to get through, settling in the Willamette Valley, where they still live, respected and beloved by all who know them.

THE GRAND RONDE VALLEY.

When my people arrived at the Grand Ronde Valley, it was in the undisputed possession of the In-

dians, of whom there were many. We camped there one night only. Some of these Indians took quite a fancy to me; perhaps because of my complexion, which was naturally dark and which, of course, had not been made lighter by reason of exposure on the way out, and wanted me to stop with them. This offer I declined, with thanks.

It was at about this point we struck into the Blue Mountains. It was also here (the Grand Ronde Valley) that we saw the first potatoes we had seen since starting. These potatoes were offered us by the Indians, who appeared anxious to trade for clothing and other belongings which seemed to strike their fancy.

AT THE DALLES AND ON THE RIVER.

We finally reached The Dalles, which, to one long accustomed to camp life, seemed a wonderful place indeed. Here we shipped our wagons, goods and chattels, and the women and children, on a barge in tow of a steamer, down the Columbia River to the portage or Cascades. Myself and three others took charge of our horses and cattle and drove them over the trail, crossing the river on a ferry about where the White Salmon empties into the Columbia. On this part of the trip it was my business to lead the way. This was no easy task, for the trail was in many places difficult to find and was so rough in most places that I could not ride, but had to walk and lead Kit. The better to enable me to perform my allotted task, Kit wore a bell; the cattle quickly learned to follow this, so that it was a matter of no small importance that I kept in the right trail rather than to follow some false one, of which at times there were many. This trip from The Dalles to the Cascades required twice the

length of time we had been informed would be necessary, so we ran out of "grub," and for the last thirty-six hours went hungry.

After crossing to the north side of the Columbia, we expected to get into the Cascades early in the afternoon, but instead, after traveling in the dark for two or three hours, left our stock on the trail and pushed on, reaching our people, who were anxiously expecting us, a little before midnight. As we had been without food for so long, we had a rousing supper of bread, bacon and coffee and then slept before the camp fire till long after the sun was up the next morning.

At the lower end of the Cascades, or Falls of the Columbia, we shipped our wagons, goods and chattels, and the women and children, on a steamer bound for the mouth of the Sandy, where all emigrants traveling by this route disembarked. It was my good fortune to be counted with the women and children this time, and thus to escape the drive.

As soon as the men with the horses and cattle arrived, we again took up the line of march, much encouraged with the idea that we were so near the end of our long journey.

NEARING THE END OF THE LONG JOURNEY.

We arrived at the mouth of the Sandy on the 20th day of September, 1853, and on the 1st of October made camp for the last time, on a beautiful little brook in the Waldo Hills, some ten or perhaps twelve miles southeast of Salem, and about a quarter of a mile from the home of an old couple by the name of Griffith.

I shall always remember them for their many acts of kindness while we remained in their neighborhood. They had a fine garden. I had never before seen such

large heads of cabbage or eaten such fine potatoes. And of these they said, "Help yourselves, without money and without price." And to us, who were travel stained and dust begrimed; to us who for six long months had lived on bacon, beans, hardtack, rice, a little dried fruit and coffee, these garden vegetables were indeed a most welcome and pleasing change.

This section of the country was about all occupied; that is, there was one family on every mile square of land. All of these old settlers were not as liberal or kindly disposed as old Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths, as, for instance, there was a Mr. Colby, who sold us wheat at four dollars per bushel; and old man King, for whom we boys worked, digging potatoes and taking for pay every tenth bushel. The old skin-flint!

Father bought land and made his home near the Pringle school house, in the Oak Hills, about three miles south of Salem. To one who has never had such an experience (and such is not now possible, for the then unknown country lying between the Western frontier, as it existed at that time, and the Pacific Coast, exists no longer) it is not an easy thing to so describe the trip as to fully impress upon the mind the worry and the wear upon brain and muscle of such an undertaking. It was to me the most interesting six months' period of my life. It was a long, long journey; full of grave responsibility to the older members of the family, especially so to Father and Mother. But for me, a lad of fifteen, it was for the most part full of interest, each succeeding day bringing with it some new experience or object of interest.

Having reached the end of our long and trying journey, we were footsore and weary, every thread and shred of our clothing begrimed and filled with the alkali dust of the plains, and the exposed portions of our anatomy tanned and browned by exposure till they were but little lighter in color than that of the natives of the plains we had just left behind us.

Oh, it was such a relief on retiring that first evening to realize that we should not be called upon the next morning to take up the line of march for another twelve or fifteen miles, and then on and on. Our camp was made in the "Waldo Hills," some ten or twelve miles east of Salem, the then capital of the territory, where we remained till about the middle of the winter, when we moved to the north of Salem about four miles, where we lived for a year, finally locating three miles south of Salem in the Oak Hills, near what is known as the Pringle School House. Surely no more beautiful country, especially in the springtime and early summer, could be found anywhere. Groves of oak timber, through which one might ride or drive for miles; grass from a foot to two feet high, the whole country carpeted with flowers most beautiful and fragrant, an abundant supply of pure water from a thousand streams, with game and fish in abundance, a soil most fertile—surely no country was more beautiful, more healthy or richer in promise of future possibilities than this same valley of the Willamette River.

As a rule, the early settlers of Oregon Territory were men and women of an energetic and progressive class; people of education and refinement. Such were Reverends Small and Johnson, of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, men of marked ability.

Rev. Thomas Small went out to southern Oregon to the gold mines which had been discovered there, but, be it said to his credit, never forgot his sacred calling. It is said of him that on a Sunday morning at about the hour of eleven o'clock, he would begin to sing—he had a fine voice and was a splendid singer—and soon the entire camp would be in attendance. He would then invite the men to remain and hear him preach, and few went away till the services were closed. He was an interesting speaker, and how much of good he may have accomplished the next world alone shall reveal.

And then there were Lee and Roberts and Waller and Leslie and Dillon, missionaries sent out by the Methodist Episcopal Church, and later, in 1852, Rev. Daniel Bagley, by the Board of Home Missions of the Methodist Protestant Church. These men, far-sighted and true to the cause they were sent out to represent, have left the impress of their labor upon the institutions of the country, which time may not efface. In the early political life of the Territory there were Abernathy (the Territory's first Provisional Governor) and Nesmith (who later represented the State in the United States Senate) and Lane ("Fighting Joe Lane," Oregon's delegate to Congress), and General Gains, and Jacobs and Williams (later United States Senator from Oregon and Attorney-General under Grant), and Bush, of the "Statesman," Salem, and Dyer, of the "Oregonian," published in Portland, and others who had much to do with the successful conduct of the political affairs of this far-away Territory. Of the

home builders of the old Oregon Territory, their early struggles, their sometimes failures, repelling attacks from hostile Indians, their final triumph over every obstacle, until they had added another star to the constellation of States, a book of many pages might be written, but as this is to be only a brief account of a trip across the plains in 1853, I will not attempt the role of historian of the great State of Oregon.



