

make a circuit around the camp, so that the calf got a little the start, and strained every nerve to reach a large herd at the foot of the hills about two miles distant; but first one and then another and another wolf joined in the chase, until his pursuers amounted to twenty or thirty, and they ran him down before he could reach his friends. There were a few bulls near the place, and one of them attacked the wolves and tried to rescue him, but was driven off immediately, and the little animal fell an easy prey, half devoured before he was dead. We watched the chase with the interest always felt for the weak, and had there been a saddled horse at hand, he would have fared better."

Arrived near the source of the south fork of the Platte, about 5,400 feet above the level of the sea, our author had a view of the great mountain chain of North America. Long's Peak was about seventeen miles distant. The mountains did not appear in general to enter far into the regions of perpetual snow, which was chiefly confined to the northern sides of the peaks. The piney region of the mountains to the south was enveloped in smoke, and was said to have been on fire for several months. Hereabouts our travellers fell in with a camp of three or four white men, New Englanders, who, with Indian squaws, had become enamoured of the wild life, and followed the vocation of independent trappers; "I was really surprised," says Mr. Fremont, "at the number of little fat buffalo-fed boys who were tumbling about the camp." The route across from the south to the north fork of the Platte, led our author into a country rendered quite barren by the extreme dryness of the climate. "I had never seen," he observes, "anything which impressed so strongly on my mind a feeling of desolation." To the general sterility and arid aspect of the plains the rocks added, wherever they jutted forward, the semblance of ruined habitations:—

"The rock is marl and earthy limestone, white, without the least appearance of vegetation, and much resembles masonry at a little distance; and here it sweeps round a level area, two or three hundred yards in diameter, and in the form of a half moon, terminating at either extremity in enormous bastions. Along the whole line of the parapets appear domes and slender minarets forty or fifty feet high, giving it every appearance of an old fortified town. On the waters of the White River, where this formation exists in great extent, it presents appearances which excite the admiration of the solitary voyageur, and form a frequent theme of their conversation when speaking of the wonders of the country. Sometimes it offers the perfectly illusive appearance of a large city, with numerous streets and magnificent buildings, among which the Canadians never fail to see their cabaret; and sometimes it takes the form of a solitary house with many large chambers, into which they drive their horses at night, and sleep in these natural defences perfectly secure from any attack of prowling savages."

At Fort Laramie on the Platte, (a station of the American Fur Company,) the disagreeable intelligence was received that the Indian tribes, the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Crows, were all up in arms, that their hostility to the whites was continually on the increase, and that the surveying party could not proceed any farther in safety. The exasperation of the Indians may be naturally attributed to the brandy, or fire water, as they call it, which is carried among them by American traders, and which they have not resolution to refuse when offered to them, though they are afterwards fully aware of its ruinous effects. Our author indeed acquits the American Fur Company, of the guilt of this demoralizing traffic, which he lays wholly on the heads of the *coureurs des bois*, or itinerant traders. "The regular trader," he observes, "looks ahead, and has an interest in the preservation of the Indians, and in the regular pursuit of their business, and the preservation of their arms, horses, and everything necessary to their future and permanent success in hunting; the *coureur des bois* has no permanent interest, and gets what he can, and for what he can, from every Indian he meets, even at the risk of disabling him from doing anything more at hunting." If this be true (and we have no doubt that it is so), we should like to know how the American Fur Company intend to preserve the trade of Oregon, (when they shall have got it,) from the encroachments of their unscrupulous fellow countrymen. It is a great weakness on their part, to envy the Hud-

son Bay Company, whose prosperity is due, not so much to their possession of territory, as to their firmness and perseverance in establishing, with respect to the natives, a salutary and humane moral system.

The Indians near Fort Laramie, though they discouraged the design of proceeding to the Rocky Mountains, were yet not wanting in civility to the white strangers. In the following paragraph, we find an unexpected addition made to the luxuries of the prairie:—

"Occasionally a savage would stalk in, with an invitation to a feast of honour, a dog feast, and deliberately sit down and wait quietly until I was ready to accompany him. I went to one; the women and children were sitting outside the lodge, and we took our seats on buffalo robes spread around. The dog was in a large pot over the fire, in the middle of the lodge, and immediately on our arrival was dished up in large wooden bowls, one of which was handed to each. The flesh appeared very glutinous, with something of the flavour and appearance of mutton. Feeling something move behind me, I looked round and found that I had taken my seat among a litter of fat young puppies. Had I been nice in such matters the prejudices of civilization might have interfered with my tranquillity; but fortunately, I am not of delicate nerves, and continued quietly to empty my platter."

About ten miles beyond Fort Laramie, at the Warm Spring, is a large rock of fossiliferous limestone, which our author supposes to belong to the carboniferous limestone of the Missouri, and to mark its western limit. Beyond this point he met with no fossils of any description. With respect to this locality, Lieut. Fremont observes that—

"If it is in contemplation to keep open the communication with the Oregon territory, a show of military force in this country is absolutely necessary, and a combination of advantages renders the neighbourhood of Fort Laramie the most suitable place, on the line of the Platte, for the establishment of a military post. * * It lies at the foot of a broken and mountainous region, along which, by the establishment of small posts, on the South Fork of the Platte and on the Arkansas, a line of communication would be formed, by good waggon roads, with our south military posts, which would entirely command the mountain passes, hold some of the most troublesome tribes in check, and protect and facilitate our intercourse with the neighbouring Spanish settlements. The valleys of the rivers on which they would be situate, are fertile; the country which supports immense herds of buffalo is admirably adapted to grazing, and herds of cattle might be maintained by the posts, or obtained from the Spanish country, which already supplies a portion of their provisions to the trading posts mentioned above."

Notwithstanding the difficulties which Lieut. Fremont had to encounter in the reluctance of the guides, the ill-humour of the Indians, and the unusual drought of the season, he persevered in his design of advancing to the Rocky Mountains, and his followers, emboldened by his determination, though previously disheartened, all protested their readiness to go with him. The country in advance proved to be still a plain, with a slightly undulating surface. It was dry and sterile; every blade of grass had been eaten up by the grasshoppers, which were so numerous that a cloud seemed always to float before the traveller's footsteps. As the mountains were approached, vegetation seemed to revive, cherries were seen nearly ripe, as well as numerous traces of the grizzly bear, which is very fond of this fruit. Several flocks of the wild mountain sheep were discovered among the rocks, and the rattling of the stones were heard, which accompanied their rapid descent down the steep hills.

"I have often seen (says our author) the horns of this animal three feet long, and seventeen inches in circumference at the base, weighing eleven pounds. The use of these horns seems to be to protect the animal's head in pitching down precipices, to avoid pursuing wolves, their only safety being in places where they cannot be followed. The bones are very strong and solid, the marrow occupying a very small portion of the bone in the leg, about the thickness of a rye straw. The hair is short, resembling the winter colour of our common deer, which it nearly approaches in size and appearance."

Passing over the numerous little adventures of the road, we hasten to conduct our readers to the Great South pass of the Rocky Mountains. The ascent was so gradual, that it required some attentive observation to discover the highest point of the pass. Approaching it from the mouth of the Sweet-water, a sandy plain one