

Journal of a Voyage Up the Missouri River

Henry Marie Brackenridge

Chapter 1

Mr. Manuel Lisa, of whom I have spoken in the "Views," was chosen by the company, to take the management of its affairs on the Missouri, and endeavor to retrieve them if possible. The profits expected, owing to a variety of unforeseen misfortunes, had not been realized; indeed, it appeared to be a prevailing opinion, that the situation of the company was desperate. Besides the loss by fire, at the Sioux establishment, and the hostility of the Blackfoot Indians, the remnant of the company's men, under Mr. Henry, had crossed the Rocky mountains, and it was not known what had become of them. To ascertain this, was therefore another object of the expedition, and if possible, to carry them assistance. Mr. Lisa, also, privately entertained the hope of being able to make peace with the Blackfoot Indians, and to be permitted to remain quietly in the country, which offered the greatest advantages to the company.

A person better qualified for this arduous undertaking, could not have been chosen. Mr. Lisa is not surpassed by any one, in the requisite experience in Indian trade and manners, and has few equals in perseverance and indefatigable industry. Ardent, bold and enterprising, when any undertaking is begun, no dangers, or sufferings are sufficient to overcome his mind. I believe there are few men so completely master of that secret of doing much in a short space of time, which arises, from turning every moment to advantage, as will appear in the course of the Journal. This panegyric is due to Mr. Lisa, and it would be unjust in me to withhold it, after the many marks of attention I received from him. Unfortunately, however, from what cause, I know not, the majority of the members of the company have not the confidence in Mr. Lisa, which he so highly merits; but on this occasion; he was entrusted with the sole direction of their affairs, in some degree, from necessity, as the most proper person to conduct an expedition, which appeared little short of desperate. The funds of the company were at so low an ebb, that it was with some difficulty a barge of twenty tons could be fitted out, with merchandise to the amount of a few thousand dollars, and to procure twenty hands and a patron. The members were unwilling to stake their private credit, where prospects were so little flattering. This was also the last year appointed for the continuance of the association, and there was no certainty of its being renewed.

With respect to myself, I must own to the reader, that I had no other motive for undertaking a tour of several thousand miles, through regions but seldom marked, even by the wandering footsteps of the savage, than the mere gratification of what he will term an idle curiosity: and I must confess that I might have employed my time more beneficially to myself, and more usefully to the community. Would that I were able to make some amends, by describing the many interesting objects which I witnessed, in such a manner as to enable the reader to participate in the agreeable parts of my peregrinations.

We set off from the village of St. Charles, on Tuesday the 2nd of April, 1811, with delightful weather. The flood of March, which immediately succeeds the breaking up of the ice, had begun to subside, yet the water was still high. Our barge was the best to ever ascended this river, and manned with twenty stout oars-men. As Mr. Lisa had been a sea captain, he took much pains in rigging his boat with a good mast, and main and top sail; these being great helps in the navigation of this river. Our equipage, chiefly composed of young men, though several have already made a voyage to the upper Missouri, of which they are exceedingly proud, and on that account claim a kind of precedence over the rest of the crew. We are in all, twenty-five men, well-armed, and completely prepared for defense. There is, besides, a swivel on the bow of the boat, which, in case of attack, would make a formidable appearance; we have also two brass blunderbusses in the cabin, one over my birth, and the other over that of Mr. Lisa. These precautions were absolutely necessary from the hostility of Sioux bands, who, of late had committed several murders and robberies on the whites, and manifested such a disposition that it was believed impossible for us to pass through their country. The greater part of the merchandise, which consisted of shrouding, blankets, lead, tobacco, knives, guns, beads, etc. was concealed in a false cabin, ingeniously contrived for the purpose; in this way presenting as little as possible to tempt the savages. But we hoped, that as this was not the season for the coming on the river of the wandering tribes, the fall being the usual time, we might pass unnoticed. Mr. Wilson P. Hunt had set off with a large party, about twenty-three days before us, on his way to the Columbia; we anxiously hoped to overtake him before he entered the territory of the Sioux Nation; for this purpose it was resolved to strain every nerve, as upon it, in a great measure depended the safety of our voyage.

Having proceeded a few miles above St. Charles, we put to shore, some of our men still remaining at the village. It is exceedingly difficult to make a start on these voyages, from the reluctance of the men to terminate the frolic with their friends, which usually precedes their departure. They set in to drinking and carousing, and it is impossible to collect them on board. Sometimes they make their carousels at the expense of the Bourgeois; they are credited by the tavern keeper, who knows that their employer will be compelled to pay, to prevent the delay of the voyage. Many vexations are practiced in these cases. It was found impossible to proceed any further this evening; the men in high glee from the liquor they had drank before starting; they were therefore permitted to take their swig.

We had on board a Frenchman named Charbonet, with his wife, an Indian woman of the Snake Nation, both of whom had accompanied Lewis and Clark to the Pacific, and were of great service. The woman, a good creature, of a mild and gentle disposition greatly attached to the whites, whose manners and dress she tries to imitate, but she had become sickly, and longed to revisit her native country; her husband, also who had spent many years amongst the Indians, was become weary of a civilized life. So true, it is, that the attachment to the savage state of nature, with which appellation is has commonly been dignified, is much stronger than to that of civilization, with all its comforts, its refinements and its security.

Wednesday, April 3rd 1811 About two o'clock in the afternoon, having at length succeeded in getting all hands on board, we proceeded on our voyage. Found an excessive current, augmented by the state of the waters. Having come about six miles, encamped. In the course of this evening, had as much reason to admire the dexterity of our Canadians and Creoles, as I had before to condemn their frivolity. I believe an American could not be brought to support with patience the fatiguing labors, and submission, which these men endure. At this season, when the water is exceedingly cold, they leap in without a moment's hesitation. Their food consists of lied corn hominy for breakfast, a slice of fat pork and a biscuit for dinner, and a pot of mush for supper, with a pound of tallow in it. Yet this is better than the common fair; but we were about to make an extraordinary voyage, the additional expense was not regarded.

Thursday, April 4th 1811 Last night we were completely drenched by rain; the whole party, the bank itself, in a bad condition this morning. Weather somewhat cloudy - clearing up. - A short distance from our encampment, the hills approach the river N.E. side; they are not high, but rocky, and so not continue more than a mile, when the alluvium again commences. - About 8 a fine breeze S.E. - sailed until 12 - passed several plantations S.W. side. The bottoms very extensive on the lower part of this river, the banks high, far above the reach of inundation. Timber, principally cotton wood; a few of the trees intermixed with it, are beginning to vegetate. The red-bud, the tree which blooms earliest in our woods, and so much admired by those who descend the Ohio early in the spring, appears in a few places. Passed an island where the river widens considerably; the current rapid, obliged to abandon oars and poles, and take the towing line. Above the island the high land again approaches the river; there is a brownish colored rock, with a few dwarf cedars growing on the top of the clefts. In going too near shore, we had the misfortune to have our top mast broken by the projecting limb of a tree. Encamped some distance. This evening serene and beautiful; the sand-bars begin to appear; several deer seen. I observed on the sand-bars, a kind of scaffolds, ten or fifteen feet in height, which I was informed were erected by the neighboring settlers for the purpose of shooting the deer by moon light, which usually come of the thickets at this time, to avoid the misquotes and to sport on the smooth beach; the hunter ascends the scaffold, and remains until the deer approaches. Came this day about twenty miles; navigation comparatively easy.

Friday, April 5th 1811 Wind S.E. this morning, enabling us to set off under sail - continued until ten, when it forsook us. Passed several plantations, and two islands. The bluffs disappear on the N.E. side, and are seen on the S.W. for the first time since our leaving St. Charles. They rise about two hundred feet, and are faced with rock, in masses separated by soil and vegetation. These are called the Tavern Rocks, from the circumstance of a cave in one of them affording a stopping place for voyagers ascending, or returning to their homes after a long absence. The Indians seem to have had some veneration for the spot, as it is tolerably well scratched over with their rude attempts at representing birds and beasts. From this place, through a long reach, or straight part of the river, we have a distant view of the terminating bluffs N.E. side. A violent storm of rain, wind and thunder, compelled us to put to shore, having passed a very dangerous and difficult place. The number of trees which had lately fallen into the river, and the danger to be apprehended from others, which seemed to have but a slender

hold, rendered our situation disagreeable. Towards evening, a canoe with six or seven men passed on the other side, but we were unable to distinguish them. At this place I measured a cotton-wood tree, which was thirty-six feet in circumference; they grow larger on the lower parts of this river, than perhaps anywhere else in America. The bluffs, in the course of this day appeared higher, but not so abrupt or rocky.

Saturday, April 6th 1811 Having passed a small willow island, we got beyond the hills on the S.W. side. At 11 o'clock, the wind became so high, that we were compelled to stop, as it blew directly down the river. This is near Boon's settlement - About sixty miles from St. Charles. A number of plantations at the edge of the bottom. The wind having abated in the evening, we proceeded a few miles further, and encamped.

Sunday, April 7th 1811 Water rising. Crossed to the S.W. side, and encountered a very swift current at the head of the willow island. The difficulty of this navigation is not easily described. Made Point Labadie, so called from a French trader, who formerly wintered there. Forty years ago this was thought a distant point on the Missouri, at present there are tolerable plantations everywhere through the bottom. The carcasses of several drowned buffalos passed by us; it is said that an unusual number of them has been drowned this year. - Some have been seen floating on the river at St. Louis. A gentleman lately described, declares that he counted forty on the head of an island. Immediately below Point Labadie, the river contracts its breadth, and is confined to a channel of three or four hundred yards wide. Passed between an island and the main shore; a very narrow channel, but the current and distance less. A channel of this sort is often taken in preference, and it is one of the means of facilitating the ascending of this uncommonly rapid river; but there is sometimes danger of the upper end being closed with logs and billets of wood matted together, as it turned out in the present instance; fortunately after the labor of an hour we were able to remove the obstacles, else we should have been compelled to return. Opposite the head of the island there is a tolerable log house, and some land cleared; the tenant, a new comer, with a wife and six children, had nothing to give or sell. Here the banks fall in very much; the river more than a mile wide. A great impediment in opening lands on this river, is the dilapidation of the banks, which immediately ensue when the trees are cut away, from the rapid current upon the light soil of a texture extremely loose. It will be found absolutely necessary to leave the trees to stand on the borders of the river. The river exceedingly crooked in the course of this day. A number of plantations on both sides. Having made about fourteen miles, we put to shore, after passing a very difficult embarras. This word needs some explanation. Independent of the current of that vast volume of water rolling with great impetuosity, the navigation is obstructed by various other impediments. At the distance of every mile or two, and frequently at less distant intervals, there are embarras, or rafts, formed by the collection of trees closely matted. and extending from twenty to thirty yards. The current vexed by these interruptions, rushes round them with great violence and force. We may now judge what a boat encounters in grappling round these rafts. When the oars and grappling books were found insufficient, the towing line was usually resorted to with success. There is not only difficulty here, but considerable danger, in case the boat should swing round. In bends where the banks fall in, as in the Mississippi, trees lie for some distance out in the river. In

doubling points, in passing sawyers, difficulties are encountered. The water is generally too deep to admit of poling; it would be absolutely impossible to stem the current further out than a few yards; the boat usually passes about this distance from the bank. Where the bank has not been washed steep, which is most usually the case, and the ground newly formed, the young trees, of the willow, cotton-wood etc. which overhang the stream, afford much assistance in pulling the boat along with the hands.

Monday, April 8th 1811 The water fell last night as much as it had risen. About ten came in sight of a little village N.E. side called Charette. There are about thirty families here, who hunt, and raise a little corn. A very long island lies in the bend in which this village is situated. Above this island, passed under a gentle breeze, some very handsome bluffs, S.W. side to the Isle Aux Boeufs; they are about one hundred feet high, and excepting in a few places where rocks appear, covered with oak and other timber. At this place, the river makes a considerable bend. Instead of taking the main channel, we entered a smaller one between the island and the shore, which will shorten the distance; the current not so strong. The channel is about fifty yards wide, and very handsome, having clean even banks, and resembling a small river. - It is about four miles in length.

Through all these islands, and on the Missouri bottoms, there are great quantities of rushes, commonly called scrub grass. (This is the case for several hundred miles up the Missouri) They grow from four to five feet high, and so close, as to render it very disagreeable, as well as difficult, to pass through the woods. The cattle feed upon the winter, answering the same purpose as cane on the Mississippi.

At the upper end of the Isle Aux Boeufs, we were compelled, about five o'clock in the evening, to put to shore, on account of a violent storm, which continued until after dark. In the badly constructed cabin of our boat, we were wet to the skin; the men were better off in their tents, made by a blanket stretched over twigs.

We have been accompanied for these two days past by a man and two lads, ascending in a canoe. This evening they encamped close by us, placing the canoe under shelter of our boat. Unsheltered, except by the trees on the bank, and a ragged quilt drawn over a couple of forks, they abode "the pelting of the pitiless storm," with apparent indifference. These people are well dressed in handsome homemade of cotton cloth. The man seemed to possess no small share of pride and self-importance, which, as I afterwards discovered, arose from his being a captain of militia. He borrowed a kettle from us, and gave it to one of his boys. When we were about to sit down to supper, he retired, but returned when it was over; when asked, why he had not staid to do us the honor of supping with us; "I thank you gentlemen," said he, licking his lips with satisfaction, "I have just been eating an excellent supper." - He had scarcely spoken, when the patron (The Patron is the fresh-water sailing-master) came to inform Mr. Lisa, the boys were begging him for a biscuit, as they had eating nothing for two days! our visitant was somewhat disconcerted, but passed it off with, "Poh! I'm sure they can't be suffering!"

He resides on the Gasconade; was the second family which settled in that quarter, about three years ago. He has present about 250 men on his muster-roll. We were entertained by him with a long story of his having pursued some Pottawatomies, who had committed robberies on the settlements sometime last summer; he made a narrow escape, the Indians having attacked his party in the night time, and killed four of his men after desperate resistance. The captain had on board a barrel of whiskey to set up tavern with, a bag of cotton for his wife to spin, and a couple of kittens, for the purpose of augmenting his family; these kept up such doleful serenades, during the night, that I was scarcely able to close my eyes.

Chapter II

Tuesday, April 9th 1811 Set off this morning with a light breeze, which continued to augment until ten, when from a change in the course of the river, it was unfavorable for two or three miles. Passed a number of plantations on both sides, and Isle a la Loure, which is about twelve miles long, and two wide, near the N.E. side; it has a compact settlement. In the course of the day we lost sight of our captain of the Gasconade, who was not able to keep up with us in his canoe.

Passed at four o'clock, the Gasconade, a considerable river, S.W. side, which rises with the Maramek, and has been ascended upwards of one hundred miles, in canoes; but its channel is rocky and rough. It is ninety miles from the mouth of the Missouri. The lands on its borders are broken and hilly, and badly wooded. Before reaching the Gasconade, we passed a long range of bluffs, or rather hills, well covered with wood, but terminating at the entrance of the river in rocky precipices; this range appears again on the other side of the Gasconade. - There is a very long reach here, of fifteen or twenty miles; the Gasconade hills, on the S.W. side, are washed by the Missouri the whole of this distance. This day was sufficient to prove the efficacy of our sails, in navigating this river; we passed with ease, places much worse than any we had encountered since leaving St. Charles. Encamped six miles above the Gasconade; heavy rains last night.

Wednesday, April 10th 1811 Cloudy - crossed to the bluffs, N.E. side, which are high and rocky. Passed Montburn's tavern and river; another stopping place for voyagers. Passed an embarras, N.E. side, the most difficult since we started. There are wide bottoms above these bluffs, on both sides of the river. The wind against us throughout the whole of this day. The verdure is observed to be rapidly increasing; the smaller trees and shrubs are already in gay green. From the color of the water on the S.W. side, it appears that the Osage river is paying the annual tribute.

Thursday, April 11th 1811 A fine morning. Current so strong S.W. side, from the waters of the Osage, that we were compelled to cross to an island. Hills on the N.E. side, not high of rocky; continued on this side to ascend throughout the day, though with difficulty, on account of numerous embarras, and falling in of the banks. This is a fine country; the lands extremely rich, and covered with a great variety of trees. Stopping a few moments at the cabin of a

Frenchman, who is beginning to open a plantation. In company with the interpreter, I proceeded by land, across a point, about two miles to the village of Cote Sans Dessein, where we arrived nearly three hours before the barge. We inquired with eagerness after the party of Mr. Hunt, we were informed that he had passed this place twenty-one days ago. Thus far, it appears that we have gained but two days upon him.

Friday, April 12th 1811 Weather fine. - a gentle breeze on the river from the S.E. Remained here until eleven, engaged in repairing our cabin. Mr. Lisa here employed a famous hunter, named Castor, a Kansas Indian, who had been brought up from infancy amongst the whites.

Cote Sans Dessein, is a beautiful place, situated on the N.E. side of the river, and in sight of the Osage. It will in time become a considerable village. The beauty and fertility of the surrounding country cannot be surpassed. It is here that we met with the first appearance of prairie, on the Missouri, but it is handsomely mixed with woodland. The wooded country on the N.E. extends at least thirty miles, as far up as this place, and not less than fifteen on the other side. The name is given to this place, from the circumstance of a single detached hill filed with limestone, standing on the bank of the river, about six hundred yards long, and very narrow. - The village has been established about three years; there are thirteen French families, and two or three of Indians. They have handsome fields in the prairie, but their time is spent in hunting. From their eager inquiries after merchandise, I perceived we were already remote from the settlements.

We continued under way, with a light breeze, but scarcely sufficient to waft the barge of itself, without the aid of oars.- Handsome wooded upland, S.W. side, gently sloping to the river, and not recall. For many reasons, I would prefer these situations to the bottom, where the soil is richer. Passed the Great Osage river, one hundred and thirty-three miles from the mouth of the Missouri, and navigable about six hundred miles. There is much fine land immediately on its borders, but the prairies stretch out on either side, and to the westward are almost boundless. The Osage villages are situated about two hundred miles up.

Passed a long island, called L'Isle A'Cedar, Cedar Island. A number of islands on the Missouri bear this name, from the growth of cedar upon them, in this particular, differing from the islands of the Mississippi. In this island the best part of the wood had been cut down, and rafted to St. Louis, to supply the settlement with this wood, of which there is a great consumption.

Throughout the course of this day, we found the navigation less arduous and painful; owing principally to the falling of the waters, and to our having passed one of those rivers which add to the current of the Missouri. The sand bars, begin to present a pleasing appearance; several miles in length, clean and smooth. Instead of ascending along either side, we pursued the middle of the river, along the sand bars. Encamped N.E. side, just above the Cedar Island. The bars and the sides of the river are everywhere marked with deer tracks.

Saturday, April 13th 1811 A fine morning - somewhat cool - set off with a favorable breeze. Passed hills on the S.W. side - saw five or six deer sporting on a sand bar. Passed the Manitou rocks, S.W. side, A la Bonne Femme Creek. The country hereabout, is delightful; the upland sloping gently to the river, timbered with oak, hickory, ash, etc. The lands on this stream are said not to be surpassed by any in the territory.

After having had a favorable wind the greater part of the day, encamped at the Roche Percee, perforated rock; a high craggy cliff on the N.E. side. This is the narrowest part of the river I have yet seen; it is scarcely two hundred yards wide. - Made in the course of this day about twenty-eight miles, for which we were indebted to the favorable wind. Some of us considered this good fortune, a reward for the charity which was manifested by us yesterday, in spending an hour to relieve a poor ox, which was swamped near the bank. The poor creature had remained here ten or twelve days, and the sand into which he had sunk, was become hard and solid. The wolves had paid him friendly visits from time to time, to inquire after his health, while buzzards, crows, and eagles, tendered their salutations from the boughs of the neighboring trees.

Sunday, April 14th 1811 Violent wind all night - hoisted sail before daylight, in order to take advantage of the wind. Passed the Manitou on the N.E. side, and high rocks. A delightful country. Wind slackened about ten. At twelve, came in sight of the hills of the Mine river, resembling those of the Gasconade. At three, the wind again rose - passed the Mine river, S.W. side. This river is not navigable more than ten or twelve miles. Valuable salt works are established here. The whole of this day we found rich and extensive bottoms, N.E. side, and beautiful sloping upland, S.W. on this side of the river some beautiful situations for farms and plantations. The hills rise with a most delightful ascent from the water's edge, to the height of forty or fifty feet; the woods open and handsome. The lands on the Mine river, reputed excellent. The bottoms on the N.E. side the Missouri, uncommonly fine. There is a flourishing settlement here. As this is Sunday, the good people were dressed out in their best clothes, and came in groups to the bank to gaze upon us, as we passed under sail. We put to shore, at the farm of Braxton Cooper, a worthy man, who has the management of the salt works. The settlement is but one year old, but is already considerable, and increasing rapidly; it consists of seventy-five families, the greater part living on the bank of the river, in the space of four or five miles. There are, generally, persons in good circumstances, most of them have slaves. Mr. Cooper informed me that the upland, back, is the most beautiful ever beheld. He thinks that from the mouth of the Missouri to this place, the country for at least forty miles from the river, may bear the character of rich woodland; the prairies forming but trifling proportions. This place is two hundred miles up. We inquired for the party of which we were in chase - they had passed by nineteen days before us.

Monday, April 15th 1811 Rain last night, but without lightning - from this it is prognosticated that the wind will continue favorable to day. Set off with a fair wind, but the course of the river became unfavorable. At half past seven, again fair - continued under sail until twelve. Passed handsome upland S.W. side, and the two Chareton rivers N.E. Had to oppose in the course of

the day some very difficult places - the river extremely crooked. While the men were towing, they chased a she bear into a hollow tree; we set about chopping the tree, while several stood with guns presented to the hole at which she had entered, about twenty feet up. In a short time she put out her head and shoulders, but on receiving a volley, instantly withdrew. The chopping was renewed; madam Cuff again appeared, and was saluted as before, but without producing the same effect, as she leisurely crawled down the tree, and attempted to make off, amidst the shouts of fifteen or twenty barbarians, who were bent on the destruction of a mother and her little family. She was killed with a stroke of an axe, having been previously severely wounded. In the hollow sycamore, there were found three cubs. At five, hoisted sail, and continued until seven, having this day made twenty-eight miles. Towards evening, passed beautiful undulating hills, gently sloping to the river. What charming situations for seats and farms.

Tuesday, April 16th 1811 Set off without wind - the river rising. At eleven, the wind so much against us that we were obliged to lie by. At three we continued our voyage, and as it was resolved to tow, I set out with my rifle, expecting to meet the boat at the head of a long bend. This is the first expedition I have made into the country. I passed through the bottom with great difficulty, on account of the rushes, which grow as high as a mans head, and are matted with vines and briars. The beauty of the upland in some degree recompensed. Clean and open woods, growth, oak, hickory, etc.; the grass beginning to appear green. Saw several deer, and abundance of turkeys. We are now in a country which abounds with game. I came late in the evening to the boat, I having been supposed lost in the woods. Our hunter had been more successful than I, having killed a she bear with four cubs. The river very crooked in the course of this day. - Passed some places of thin woods - not quite prairie, on the bank of the river.

Wednesday, April 17th 1811 Breakfast under sail. Passed the Grand river, N.E. side. It is two hundred yards wide at its mouth; a very long river, navigable six or eight hundred miles, and takes its waters with the river Des Moines. The traders who were in the habit of visiting the Mahas, six hundred miles above this on the Missouri, were formerly compelled to ascend this river in order to avoid the Kansas Indians, who were then the robbers of the Missouri. There is a portage of not more than a couple of days, from the Grand river to the Mahas.

At the confluence on the lower side, there is a beautiful situation. The bottom is a handsome prairie, which is seen extending for the first time on the Missouri, to the water's edge, and about a mile in width; the upland then rises with a gentle ascent, with here and there a few clumps of trees. Immediately at the point of junction, there are about fifty area of well-timbered land. Here is a delightful situation for a village; the distance about two hundred and forty miles from the mouth of the Missouri. There is some beautiful country lying on the Grand river, but deficient in wood. In fact, this river may almost be considered the boundary of the wooded upland on that side of the river.

Here the wind failed us. The Missouri very wide; a large bar in the middle. The beautiful green hills on the Little Osage in sight. But for the single defect of the dilapidating banks of the

Missouri, the country boarding on it, thus far, would not be surpassed by any in the world. Spring has already cast her green mantle over the land; and the scenery everywhere assumes a more enlivened appearance. After an arduous navigation, came this day about twenty miles.

Thursday, April 18th 1811 Heavy rain last night, accompanied by unusual thunder and lightning. Set off at six, weather apparently clearing up. About ten, compelled by heavy rain to put to shore until three, when we again shoved off, came a few miles and encamped, N.E. side.

Friday, April 19th 1811 Continued our voyage at daylight, and came through a long channel, between an island and the shore. The wind S.E. but the course of the river such as to disable us from profiting by it. A drizzling rain, and the weather disagreeable. Wind favorable for an hour. Passed handsome upland and prairie S.W. side. There was formerly a village of the Little Osages here, but from the frequent attacks of the Ayuwas, they were compelled to go higher up the river. The situation is fine. At a distance, the deep green herbage on this open ground had much the appearance of a wheat field.

Encamped late, after having got through a channel with considerable difficulty. The slowness with which we have advanced for several days past, forms a contrast with those which preceded. Water rising.

Saturday, April 20th 1811 A cold disagreeable morning. The men drenched by the heavy rain of last night. Hoisted sail about six, but the wind served us but a short distance. - Weather clearing up - put to shore for an hour to dry our effects. Handsome hills on the S.W. side. Got underway at three, along the N.E. side. One of the finest tracts of land I have ever seen - a great proportion of the timber is walnut, poplar, and cotton wood of enormous size. Entered a channel, at the upper end of which, fired upon a flock of several pelicans, standing on a shoal. These birds abound very much on the Missouri, but are shy. - We daily kill wild fowl, ducks, geese, brandt, etc. - which ascend the river at this season of the year, to breed. Their eggs are found at every moment, on the sand bars.

Sunday, April 21st 1811 A delightful morning, though somewhat cool. Got under way early - passed through the channel, and crossed over to the S.W. side. Had some difficult embarras, but no great current. After breakfast, took my gun, and struck into the woods. On ascending the hills about two hundred feet in height, I had a fine view up and down the river. On the other side (N.E.) there is an extensive prairie bottom, apparently four or five miles wide; and a level plain of vast extent stretching out on either hand, of rich alluvium soil, from appearance of the luxuriant herbage. There is a singular contrast of the sward which has remained un-burnt, and the extensive tracts of deep green of the grass of this spring. Beyond the plain, the prairie rises into upland, of abrupt elevation, and in a thousand fantastic forms, but without a shrub, and apparently covered with but a thin coat of vegetation.

On this side (S.W.) I found the soil of the upland of an excellent quality - and notwithstanding the ravages committed by fire, the woods, principally, hickory, oak, walnut, ash, etc. - were tolerably close.

Returned to the boat about four in the evening. We spent an hour and a half this evening, in grappling around some rocks of free stone, the distance of a few hundred yards. The swiftness of the current on the other side rendered it impossible to attempt it there, encamped some distance above and encampment of Mr. Hunt, which appeared not more than ten or twelve days old.

Monday, April 22nd 1811 Continued until eleven, with cordelle, or towing line - the banks being favorable. The hills, or bluffs, are here, about one hundred feet high, and rise abruptly from the river. Wind from the S.S.W. becoming too strong, were compelled to lie by until three. Crossed to the N.E. side, and endeavored to ascend between the shore and an island, but found a sand bar running across, at the upper end, so that we were obliged to back, and camp nearly opposite the place of starting.

Tuesday, April 23rd 1811 Very high wind this morning. Doubled the island which had been the scene of so much vexation. Endeavored to proceed on the outside, but met with so many difficulties, that we were compelled to cross to the S.W. side. Towed to Ibar's channel and Island - then re-crossed to the N.E. side, and found ourselves about two miles above our last night's encampment. Remained here until three, when the wind somewhat abated its violence. Having arrived opposite the Wizard's Island, (L'isle du Sorcier) crossed over and encamped. The superstitious boatmen believe that a wizard inhabits this island; they declare that a man has been frequently seen on the sand beach, at the point, but that he suddenly disappears, on the approach of anyone. These few days have been in a manner lost, from contrary winds, and bad weather. Heavy rain this evening - Mosquitoes begin to be troublesome, for the first time during our voyage.

Wednesday, April 24th 1811 Attempted a ripple this morning, and were driven back five times - we had once got within half the boat's length of being through; the oars and poles were insufficient; ten of our men leaped into the water with the cordelle, while the rest of us exerted ourselves with the pole; and thus by perseverance became conquerors. This ripple, like all others of the Missouri, is formed by high sand bars, over which the water is precipitated, with considerable noise. This bar has been formed within two or three years. The bend formerly almost impassable from the swiftness of the current, is now tolerable. There is seldom any great current on both sides; the falling in of the banks indicates the current to be there. Wherever the river has a wider channel than ordinary, there is usually a sand bar in the middle. This extraordinary river sometimes pursues a straight course for ten or fifteen miles, then suddenly turns to every point of the compass. In other places, the whole volume of its waters is compressed into a channel of three hundred yards; again suddenly opening to the width of one, or even two miles, with islands and sand bars scattered though the space.

Passed a canoe with four men, who had wintered up the Kansas (river), about five hundred miles; they had beaver, and other furs. They could give no information respecting Hunt's party; - we conclude he must have passed that river before they came out of it.

From the violence of the wind, made but a few miles. While Castor was out, he saw a white turkey, but was not so fortunate as to kill it. I am told that they have sometimes been seen of this color; but I suspect it is: *Rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno.*

Thursday, April 25th 1811 Contrary winds, but not such as to prevent us from continuing our voyage tolerably well. About eleven, came in sight of Fort Osage, situate on a bluff, three miles off, on a commanding eminence. We stopped at the clearing of Mr. Audrain, who is about opening a farm below the fort. A number of Indians of the Osage Nation of all ages, and sexes, were scattered along the bank, attracted by curiosity - some with old buffalo robes thrown over their shoulders, others dressed out in the gayest manner. They gathered round us in crowds, and manifested an idle curiosity, very different from the Indians who live east of the Mississippi, one of whose characteristics is a studied indifference, as to everything strange which transpires around them.

On landing at the fort, on a very rocky shore, a soldier under arms, who waited for us at the water's side, escorted Mr. Lisa and myself to the fort, where we were politely received by the commanding officer.

While Mr. Lisa was transacting some business, accompanied by Mr. Sibley, the factor, and an interpreter, I went to deliver a pipe to Sans Oreille, (a warrior, and head man of this tribe) sent to him by General Clark. He received us, seated on a mat, and after smoking in the usual manner, requested the interpreter to inform me 'that he was the friend of the Americans and that he was flattered with this proof of Gen. Clark's good will towards him.' He was surround by a number of young warriors, who appeared to look upon him with great respect. This man, though not a chief, is evidently intriguing to be the head of his tribe, and has great influence with them; the chief, Young White Hairs, having but little to entitle him to respect from his own character, being extremely young, and of a gentle disposition. Sans Oreille, as is usual with the ambitious amongst these people, is the poorest man in the Nation; to set the heart upon goods and chattels, being reckoned indicative of a mean and narrow soul; he gives away everything he can obtain, in order to procure popularity. Such is ambition! Little know they of this state of society, who believe that it is free from jealousies, envy, detraction, or guilty ambition. No demagogue - no Cataline, ever used greater art and finesse, or displayed more policy than this cunning savage. The arts of seducing the multitude are nearly the same everywhere, and the passion for the power and distinction, seems inherent in human nature. He is a tall fine looking man, possesses very superior abilities, and esteemed the best warrior of the village.

The fort is handsomely situated about one hundred feet above the level of the river, which makes an elbow at this place, giving an extensive view up and down the river. Its form is triangular; this fort is small, not calculated for more than a company of men. A group of

buildings is formed by the factory, sutler's house, etc. The lodges of the Little Osage, are sixty in number, and within gun shot of the fort; but they are about to remove their village to a prairie, three miles off. Their lodges are a circular form, not more than ten or fifteen feet in diameter, constructed by placing of course rushes, over forks and poles.

All three of the Osage bands, together with some Kansas, were lately camped here for the purpose of trading, to the number of fifteen hundred warriors. The officer informed me, that about ten days ago, serious apprehensions had been entertained from them. A war party, of about two hundred, having scalped a few women and children, of the Ayuwas, their enemies, had returned to slated with this exploit, that they insulted the people of the fort. One of these warriors defied a sentinel on his post; the sentinel was commanded to fire over his head, this produced no effect, he was seized by a file of men. This he at first treated with indifference, declaring, that if he was confined, he would get some of the white men's bread; his tune was changed, however, by a liberal application of the cat o'nine tails to his back. Great commotions amongst the Indians were excited; they rushed forward with their arms; but the soldiers no sooner paraded and made ready a few pieces of cannon, than they thought proper to retreat. They maintained a threatening attitude for some days, and to give vent to their spite, killed a pair of the fine oxen, belonging to Mr. Audrain. The officer sent for the chiefs, and told them, that unless two others were given for the oxen, he would instantly fire upon their village. This spirited deportment had the desired effect, and after some consoling, the pipe was smoked, all matters adjusted.

Mr. Sibley informed me, that he was just setting out on a tour towards the Arkansas, to visit the Salines, on that river, and also to the Kansas and Platte, to see the Pani Nation.

These Indians are not to be compared to the nations east of the Mississippi; although at war with most of their neighbors, they are a cowardly race. One good trait, however, deserves to be mentioned; they have rarely, if ever, been known to spill the blood of a white man:-When a white hunter is found on their lands, they take away his furs and his arms, he is then beaten with ramrods, and driven off.

Thus far we have gained about one hundred miles upon the party of Hunt - we are in good spirits, and will renew the pursuit with augmented vigor.

This place is something better than three hundred miles up the Missouri, in lat. 38 deg. 40'.

Chapter III

Friday, April 26th1811 Heavy rains last night, our situation extremely uncomfortable. This morning we were awakened about daylight, by the most hideous howlings I ever heard. - They proceeded from the Osages, among whom this is a custom. On inquiry, I found that they were unable to give any satisfactory reason for it; I could only learn that it was partly religious, and if it be true, as is supposed by many, that they offer their worship only to the Evil Spirit, the

orison was certainly not unworthy of him. I was told, also, that it arises from another cause; when any one, on awaking in the morning, happens to think of a departed friend, even of some valued dog or horse, which has been lost, he instantly begins this doleful cry, and all the others hark in, as soon as it is heard.

About eleven o'clock, clearing up, but wind strong from the S.W. we set off with it, blowing directly in our faces. - About twelve we put to shore and remained for more than two hours. Crossed to the N.E. side, and continued our voyage. - Towards evening the weather moderated. Passed a small encampment of hunters. The Missouri is now what the Ohio was once, the paradise of hunters. Made nine miles to day. The water is at a good stage for ascending; the navigation becomes more agreeable. Weather somewhat cool.

We have now passed the last settlement of whites, and probably will not re-visit them for several months. This reflection caused us all to think seriously of our situation. I almost repented of having undertaken this voyage, without an object in view, of importance. Our men were kept from thinking too deeply, by the cheering songs, which were encouraged by Mr. Lisa, and the splashing of the oars, which kept time with them. So far removed, I seemed to look back, as from an eminence; thus abstracted, I faced that I contemplated my country with more accuracy than I could while protected in its bosom I heaved a sigh, when I reflected that I might never see it, or my friends again; that my bones might be deposited on some dreary spot, far from my home, and the haunts of civilized man; but this last, suggested a consolation, there is no spot however distant, where I may be buried, but will in time, be surrounded by the habitations of Americans, the place will be marked, and approached with respect, as containing the remains of one of the first who ventured into these distant and solitary regions!

Saturday, April 27th 1811 We are once more to be somewhat favored. This is a delightful morning, though cool. Set off at daylight, and at six, had a light breeze from the east. Passed Vincent's Island, above which the river is extremely narrow, and hills S.W. side. About eleven, met a party of traders in tow canoes lashed together, which form a kind of raft, heavily laden with furs, and skins. They came from the Sioux, who, they say, are peaceably disposed. They met Hunt's party, five days ago, at the Little Nimeha; it proceeds slowly, and had two days of contrary winds. - The traders think we shall be able to overtake them at the river Platte. - Hunt informed them that they would meet us below the Grand river. Wind fell shortly after leaving this party. The good news we have heard, animates our men very much.

Towards evening, passed Benito's Island, and sand bar, S.W. side, so called, from a trader of that name having been robbed by the Ayuwas of his peltry, and he, with his men, forced to carry enormous burdens of it on their backs to the river Des Moines. Instances of such insults were formerly very usual; several spots have been shown to me where like acts have been committed, and even accompanied with murder. Having come within two leagues of the Kansas river, we encamped. Large sand bars begin everywhere to appear.

Sunday, April 28th 1811 A cool morning, and somewhat foggy on the river - A light breeze from the east, but not sufficient to enable us to carry sails. Passed high land N.E. side, with some rocks on the shore; we are delighted with the gentle hills, or rather elevated upland of the Missouri. On a large sand bar, saw nearly thirty deer. They are very numerous in this part of the river.

Passed the Kansas, a very large river which enters on the S.W. side. It heads between the Platte and the Arkansas. - The country on its borders, is entirely open. The river can be ascended with little difficulty, more than twelve hundred miles. The Kansas nation of Indians reside upon it.

In the evening we passed the little river Platte, navigable with canoes fifty of sixty miles, and said to abound with beaver. We are encamped near a mile above it, having made about fifteen miles.

In the course of this day, we find the river, in most places, extremely narrow, and the sand bars very extensive.

Monday, April 29th 1811 Somewhat cloudy this morning - A light breeze from the S.E. At seven, breakfasted under sail. At nine, reached a beautiful island, called Diamond island, fifteen miles, above the Kansas. From this, there is a long reach of six or eight miles. The weather is fine - the breeze still continuing.

At three o'clock we had made twenty-four miles. The wind, from the change of the course of the river, could not serve us. We lost two hours in passing of the most difficult places I have ever seen on the river; after which, we had a fair wind again, until night.

Passed in the course of this day, some beautiful country on both sides; the upland chiefly S.W. and a greater proportion of prairie than we have yet seen. The river generally narrow, and the sand bars of great extent.

Having made about thirty miles, we encamped a short distance below Buffalo Island, opposite a range of hills, and at the upper end of a long view. During the whole of the day, we saw astonishing quantities of game on the shore; particularly deer and turkeys. The buffalo or elk are not yet seen.

Tuesday, April 30th 1811 Last night there was much thunder and lightning, but little rain. At day light embarked with a favorable wind, which continued until seven, when, from the course of the river, the wind failed us for an hour. The river extremely crooked. Mr. Lisa and myself went on shore, and each killed a deer. There were great numbers of them sporting on the sand bars. There are great quantities of snipes, of a beautiful plumage, being a curious mixture of dove color, and white. I saw one of a different kind, which was scarlet underneath the wings.

At two o'clock we hoisted sail at the beginning of a long reach, to the great joy of the whole company. High prairies S.W. side - continued under sail through another long reach, and had a view of the old Kansas village, at the upper end of it. It is a high prairie; smooth waving hills, perfectly green, with a few clumps of trees in the hollows. But for the scarcity of timber this would be a delightful situation for a town. At this place, the bend of the river rendered the wind unfavorable. - Continued under oars about 3 miles further, having in the course of this day made thirty three miles.

Wednesday, May 1st 1811 Very high wind all last night. Embarked this morning about daylight, and continued under sail until six o'clock. Upland N.E. side, thinly timbered. It may be remarked, that the hills of the Missouri are not so high as those of the Ohio, seldom rocky, and rise more pleasantly from the water's edge. Continued under sail until eleven, when we were brought off by a considerable bend in the river. Passed St. Michael's prairie, a handsome plain in front, with variegated hills in the back ground, and but little wood. At two o'clock we came to a very great bend in the river, but did not get through until evening. The river from being narrow, changes to an unusual width, and very shallow. We were detained about an hour, having so unlucky as to run aground.

Saw but one or two deer today, as we approached the open country their numbers will be found to diminish, there being no thickets to shelter them. They are to lessen perceptibly from Nowawa River, upwards.

In the evening, the weather, which has been for some days cloudy, cleared up, and the wind abated entirely; the Missouri and its scenery appeared in their natural state. The wind also became calm, and harmonized with nature. The river is falling fast, approaching to a low stage of water - came to day twenty-seven miles.

Thursday, May 2nd 1811 Embarked at daylight, the river unruffled by a breeze; the birds, as if rejoicing that the strife of the elements had ceased, tuned their sweetest notes.

At seven o'clock, breakfast opposite some bluffs N.E. side. A very large mass appeared at no distant period, to have slipped into the river, leaving a clay precipice fifty or sixty feet high. A little above, there are rocks of freestone at the edge of the water. Below this place, there is an extensive prairie, partly river bottom, and partly upland, with a considerable rivulet passing through it. What a delightful situation for a farm, or even a town! Description of such a country as this, can give no idea of its peculiar character. The hills, or bluffs, begin to appear, thinly wooded with dwarf trees, principally oak or ash.

In the evening arrived at Nodawa channel, on the N. E. side, and about five miles in length.

Friday, May 3rd 1811 A beautiful morning; set off at daylight as usual, and passed the wintering ground of Crooks and M'Clelland, some distance above Nodawa.

High hills on the S. W. side, with some bold places, and fine land on the N.E. side. In the afternoon passed Wolf River, fourteen miles from Nodawa. Shortly after this, a breeze from N.E. enabled us, from the course of the river, to sail four or five miles. Passed a large prairie S.W. side, and encamped at the commencement of another. In these places there is not even a shrub to the water's edge, the bottom of considerable width, the grass very luxuriant.

Saturday, May 4th 1811 Heavy rain last night, and drizzling this morning. Passed an extensive lowland prairie, above our encampment. At half past eight, passed an encampment of Hunt. In the evening passed the Nimeba and Tarkio creeks, and encamped a short distance above.

I overheard this evening, with considerable chagrin, while warming myself at the fire, some bitter complaints on the part of the men; they declared that it was impossible for them to stand it long, that they had never so severe a voyage. This discontent was of course excited by some Thersites of the party. - Great exertions have certainly been made and no moments lost; in advancing our voyage, but much of the time we were carried along by the wind, when there was no need for any labor on the part of the men. The weather is now fine, and their labor diversified, when there is no wind, by pole, the oars, or cordelle, which is little more than a promenade along the sand bars. I represented these things to them as well as I could, and endeavored to quiet their minds.

Sunday, May 5th 1811 Passed an encampment of Hunt this morning. The sun shone out, but the air was cool. - wind from N.E. but not so hard as to form any great obstacle. In the evening hailed two men descending in a bark canoe; they had been of Hunts party, and had left him on the 2d of May, two days above the Platte, at Boyer's river. They had fair wind it seems all the way up. Thus, it seems we have gained upon them as much as we expected.

The weather very fine throughout the day, encamped in the evening at the upper end of a handsome prairie, opposite a large sand bar.

Monday, May 6th 1811 About ten this morning, passed a river called Nis-na-botona, after which there are some long reaches very favorable for sailing. At four o'clock arrived at the little Nameha; the course of the river here is for a considerable distance nearly N.E. - Wind being N.W. were enabled to hoist sail, but having proceeded about a mile, a squall suddenly sprung up from the N. we were compelled with all dispatch to take in the sail, and gain the shore S.W. side. Here a dreadful storm raged during the remainder of the evening, and the greater part of the night.

Our encampment is at the edge of a large prairie, but with a fringe of wood along the bank of the river. The greater part of the country, particularly on the S.W. side, is now entirely open. The grass is at this time about six inches high.

Tuesday, May 7th 1811 Continued our voyage at daylight, the weather fine, though somewhat cool. Wind still continues N.W. - Passed an island and sand bar, and towed along a prairie S. side for nearly a mile. This prairie is a narrow, bounded by hills somewhat broken and stony.

At ten o'clock arrived at L'isle à Beau Soleil; the wind here became so high that we proceeded with great difficulty. In the evening, arriving at the head of the island, were compelled to put to shore. Mr. Lisa seized this opportunity of replanting his mast, by a young oak which he found in the wood along the shore. All hands were set to work on it, in order that it might be ready the next day. This was rendered necessary on account of the old one having given way.

I took this opportunity of making an excursion into the country. Ascended the hills of bluffs, which, through steep, are not much more than two hundred feet above the river, and command prospects of great extent. I could see the meandering course of the river, between the two ranges of hills, or more properly of high land, for thirty or forty miles. Some of these hills are cut into precipices forty or fifty feet high, without any appearance of stone. It is a light yellow colored earth, with a considerable mixture of sand. There is an immense extent of prairie on both sides of the river. The hills are not always abrupt, but in many places rise gently, and are extremely beautiful. The river hereabout is very crooked; in following the hills, along which there is an Indian path, I could go to a point up the river, which will probably be our place of encampment tomorrow night.

On my return to the boat, killed some pigeons and wild ducks, and saw a flock of turkeys.

Wednesday, May 8th 1811 Last night having finished our mast, we had it put up this morning before day, and set off on our voyage. Weather cool, but no wind, and the sun apparently regaining his empire.

Passed through a country in the course of the day, chiefly open, with very little wood. The river very wide; in one places it appeared to me nearly two miles. Encamped at the falling in banks, or grand eboulment. Wind has entirely abated.

Thursday, May 9th 1811 Set off at daylight - continued a short distance under sail with a light breeze.

Several of the men are sick; one has a pleurisy, and others slight fevers and coughs, from frequent exposure in the water.

There appears to be no hills or bluffs on the north east side, the whole distance to the Platte.

Encamped some distance above a hill, called L'oeil effroi, from an Indian chief who was scaffolded here some years ago.

Friday, May 10th 1811 A dreadful storm raged during the whole of last night. Set off this morning under sail, in expectation of reaching the Platte before twelve, but in the course of an hour it failed us, and changed to N.W. At ten, it became so violent that we were compelled to put to shore, where we remained until towards evening, and again attempting to proceed, but finding the wind too strong, again landed and encamped, having passed the mouth of the Platte. At the mouth of this river there is so great a number of bars and small islands, that its entrance is scarcely perceptible. The river enters by a number of channels or mouths; the color of its water is the same with that of the Missouri. The country hereabouts is entirely open, excepting in some spots along the river, where there are groves of cotton wood, and on the hills a few scattered dwarf oaks.

Saturday, May 11th 1811 The wind continues to high to proceed. This morning we advanced about three miles, and encamp until near noon - very cold.

Set off with my gun to take a walk into the country. Traversed the prairie which had been burnt, and reached the high land about three miles distant; the high land rises gradually to the height of about two hundred feet, the company then becomes waving. The other side of the Missouri appears extremely bare. I wandered toward the Platte, or rather to the point of the upland between this river and the Missouri, which commands a very extensive prospect. I discovered a great extent of open country, gently rising grounds, with a soil everywhere extremely rich. The Platte is full of islands and sand bars, and appears as wide as the Missouri. On my return, I saw several Indian mounds.

On reaching camp I found that the wind had abated, and that the river was rising fast.

The river Platte is regarded by the navigators of the Missouri as a point of much importance, as the equinoctial line amongst mariners. All those who had not passed it before, were required to be shaved, unless they could compromise the matter by a treat. Much merriment was indulged on the occasion. From this we enter what is called the Upper Missouri; Indeed the change is perceptible and great.

Chapter IV

Sunday, May 12th 1811 Weather pleasant - the river rising rapidly; the drift wood descends in great quantities, and the current seems to argument every moment. This may possibly be the annual flood. We were enabled to ascend the greater part of this morning with the towing line.

In the afternoon, some distance above the old Otto Village S.W. side, I went on shore, and wandered several miles through scrubby hills, and saw several elk and deer, without being able to approach them. Towards evening I entered a charming prairie, and of the richest soil. Followed a rivulet until it formed a lake in the river bottom, its banks for six or eight feet a rich black earth. In pursuing the upland I might have fallen upon the Missouri six miles above, in

the distance of a mile, the river forming here a considerable bend. The prairies or meadows to the water's edge, enabled us to continue the greater part of this day with the line.

Monday, May 13th 1811 Water falling - continued with the towing line. At ten, a fine breeze springing up, hoisted sail. Passed the river à Boyer, and the houses of M'Clelland, who wintered here. Some woody country hereabouts; but that on the upland is very inferior, chiefly scrubby oak. A short distance above this place we encountered a very difficult and rapid current, but being luckily a little aided by the sail, we passed tolerably well - We have now reached the highest point to which settlements will probably extend on the western side for many years.

In the evening passed high clean meadows, called the Council Bluffs, from the circumstance of Lewis and Clark having held a council with the Otto and Missouri Indians, when ascending this river. It is a beautiful place - Encamped four miles above this place on a large sand bar. In the course of this day found the river crooked and narrow; it appeared in one place almost closed up by drift wood and sawyers.

Tuesday, May 14th 1811 Set off with a slight breeze - compelled by heavy rain to put to shore for some hours, after which, continued under a fine wind that lasted throughout the day; but from the winding course of the river, we were not much benefited by it.

In some of the bends of the river, the timber, principally cotton wood, is heavy, but the prairies and upland are entirely bare of trees. The prairies compose more than two-thirds of the margin of the stream - the soil extremely rich; for the three first feet, generally a light mound, another stratum is a deep black, almost approaching the color of coal, but not hard or stiff; the lower stratum is marle. I have no doubt that these natural meadows would yield surprisingly - Encamped at the beginning of a great bend of the river, twelve miles round, and not more than three hundred paces across.

Wednesday, May 15th 1811 Although the wind is favorable, it was of no use to us, from the sudden turns of the river. At twelve hoisted sail, and passed the Soldiers' River, a small stream. After doubling some points we came into a reach of some extent; wind here became very violent, and blew almost a tempest; with our sail reduced to half its size we easily encountered the strongest current. The storm became at length so serious that it was deemed imprudent to continue under way. The air was darkened by clouds of sand, and we found ourselves at the upper end of the reach, in the midst of sawyers and planters, our situation dangerous in the extreme. We fortunately escaped safely to the shore, where we remained until evening, the wind abating we proceeded a few miles further.

Thursday, May 16th 1811 A tremendous storm of thunder and lightning last night - being fortunately in a good harbor we suffered but little. Were not able to get under weigh this morning until late. A fine serene morning, strangely contrasted with the turbulence of last night. Came in sight of the hills S.W. every one bitterly regretting that the wind of yesterday could not

serve us here, where there is a view of twelve miles up the river. There appears to reign an unusual calm, the sky cloudless, the river as smooth as a mirror. Words cannot convey what I feel, and it is only the lover of nature who could understand me.

The points are tolerably wooded - At the upper end of the long reach we saw an encampment of Hunt, where there were appearances of his having remained one or two days. The hordes of buffalo which they have killed were strewn about. If it be their encampment at the time we were at the river Platte, it is not more than six days since they were here. The reaches before described are now rarely seen - the woods more free from undergrowth. Encamped before sunset on a sand bar below La Coupe à L'Oiselle.

Friday, May 17th 1811 A charming morning- slight indication of wind from the S.E. Passed La Coupe à L'Oiselle. This name originated, in the circumstance of a trader having made a narrow escape, being in the river at the very moment that this cutoff was forming. It was a bend of fifteen miles round, and perhaps not more than a few hundred yards across, the neck, which was suddenly cut through by the river, became the main channel. This was effected in a few hours.

While remaining a short time at a sand bar in the river, a curious phenomenon occurred; the sand began to dissolve, and every instant diminish like melting of snow, it was thought prudent to embark immediately. This I am informed is not infrequent. Bars are sometimes formed during the continuance of a single flood, but being principally of loose sand, without any thing to unite, as soon as the waters begin to rise again, is entirely carried off.

At ten passed a similar cut-off called La Coupe à Jacque. At twelve continued under sail, made several long reaches - passed the Yellow Banks, and encamped within a few miles of the Black-bird Hill. Throughout this day the river border is chiefly wood.

Saturday, May 18th 1811 A fine breeze S.W.- At seven arrived at the Black-bird Hill. As this is one of the curiosities of the Missouri, a description may be amusing. It rises on the common range to the height of four or five hundred feet. The Missouri at its base, begins a strange winding course, several times returning upon its steps, and at length coming within nine hundred yards of where it is first approached; so that in a course of thirty miles the Black-bird hill is still near us. It takes its name from a celebrated chief of the Mahas, who caused himself to be interred on the top; a mound has been erected on the pinnacle, with a branch stuck in it, a flag was formerly attached to it.- He was buried, sitting erect on horseback; the reason why he chose this spot, was to enable him to see the traders as they ascended. This chief was as famous in his lifetime amongst all the nations in this part of the world, as Tamerlane of Bajeet were in the plains of Asia; a superstitious awe is still paid to this grave. Yet, the secret of his greatness was nothing more nor less than a quantity of arsenic, which he procured from some trader. He denounced death against anyone who displeased him, or opposed his wishes; it is therefore not surprising, that he, who held at his disposal the lives of others, should possess unlimited power, and excite universal terror. The proud savage, wherever this terrible being

appeared, rendered the homage of a slave. The gods and heroes of antiquity, were, perhaps, little better. We may learn this lesson, that ignorant and savage man, can only be ruled through means of fear.

At four o'clock, boat through the last bend, and hoisted sail, with a fine wind - sailed along some hills, S.W. side, and encamped amongst some cotton wood, in a low bottom.

Sunday, May 19th 1811 Continued our voyage this morning at daylight, with sanguine expectations of overtaking the party of Hunt, at the Maha village. Passed the bluffs; some of them very curious, faced with sand rock, of variegated and fantastic hues; at the first glance, it resembles the decorations of a theater. Continued with little interruption, under sail, and arrived about twelve at some trading houses, near which, the Maha village is situated, about two miles from the river. We saw a few Indians on the bank, and several traders with them, men who were on the point of setting off with their peltries. Hunt set out from this on the 15th, under sail.

Remaining here as short a time as possible, we continued our voyage, having sent our interpreter and an Indian by land, to the Poncas, to request Hunt to wait for us. The wind continued until towards evening, when it gradually sled away. Encamped near Floyds bluff, and river, fourteen miles above the Mahas. Sergeant Floyd, one of the party of Lewis and Clark, was buried here; the place is marked by a cross.

The appearance of the river is much changed - it continues a handsome width, with a diminished current. The banks low, and the trees much smaller in size; we now rarely see a large tree. The bluffs and upland on the N.E. side, are not high, and without any appearance of trees and shrubs.

Monday, May 20th 1811 Passed at daylight, the Great Sioux river, which takes its rise in the plains, between the Missouri, and the waters of lake Winiec; it is five or six hundred miles in length. I ascended the bluffs, high clay banks of sixty, or an hundred feet. The current is here very strong. Hailed a trader, descending in a large canoe, made of skins of the buffalo, upwards of twenty feet in length, who wintered at the river à Jaque. He met Hunt eight leagues below that river, proceeding with a fair wind, and is by this time, at the Qui Courre. - These skin canoes are stretched over the red willow, and require to be frequently exposed to the sun, and dried, as they would otherwise become too heavy, from the quantity of water absorbed. We are now nearly half way to the place of our destination.

Perceive a sudden rise of the water. Sand bars are nearly all covered, and banks, in places, overflowed.

Tuesday, May 21st 1811 This morning fine, though somewhat cool. Wind increasing from the N.E. Current rapid, but for the eddies in the bends, it would be almost impossible to ascend.- There are but few embarras, or collections of trees, etc. The sand bars are fringed with a thick

growth of willows, immediately behind which, there are young cotton wood trees, forming a handsome natural avenue, twenty or thirty feet wide. The banks are very low, and must be inundated every season.

Passed in the evening, a rapid, of frightful appearance, the water foaming and rolling in waves, as if agitated by violent wind in the middle of the river, while on either side it was calm. We were compelled to pass along the sand bar, and through the willows. It was with difficulty that we could obtain dry land this evening, the water, in most places, flows into the woods.- In the night, the water had risen so much, that the men were compelled to abandon their encampment, and sleep on board.- Very little prairie in the course of this day, but the timber of a small size.

Wednesday, May 22nd 1811 A delightful day- the water has risen to its utmost height, and presents a vast expense- the current uniformly rapid, in some places rolling with the most furious and terrific violence. One of these places, below Vermilion creek, was sufficient to appall the stoutest heart; the river forms an elbow at the termination of some bluffs, the water, compressed between them and the sand bar, dashes against the opposite rocks. The middle of the river appeared several feet higher than the sides. The distance to cross, before we could reach the opposite eddy, was no more than twice the length of the boat, but we were not able completely to effect it, being swept down the rapidly of flight, but fell into the current of the opposite side, before it had gained its full force, and were able, with great difficulty, to gain the eddy.

The high waters enable us to cut off points, which is no small saving of the distance. The water begins to fall, though great quantities of drift wood descending, and thirty or forty drowned buffalos pass every day.

I observe a much greater variety of trees and shrubs, than below, and some altogether new to me. There is a shrub which the French call graisse de boeuf, bearing a red berry, of a pungent taste; its leaves, though smaller and delicate, bear a resemblance to those of a pear tree. In the hollows, clumps of trees are usually found, but what surprises me, they are very low, through some of the oaks and ash are eighteen or twenty inches in diameter, they look like orchard trees, and have much greater resemblance to regular than wild woods.

Thursday, May 23rd 1811 Water falling rapidly.- a fine breeze S.E. sailed until eleven - passed the Hot, or Burning Bluffs, on the S.W. side Here I observed enormous masses of pumice, and other matter, which appeared to have undergone the action of heat, of a very high degree. I saw what was the fragment of a hill, the greater part at present composed of pumice. From not being able to discover other volcanic appearances, I concluded these appearances to have produced by the burning of coal.

About noon, espied a number of persons on a sand bar, which we at first supposed to be Indians, but on a nearer approach, recognized to be whites, amongst them, a Mons. Benit,

factor of the Missouri Company, at the Mandan village. These men were descending in a small boat, with some peltries. He tells us that the Indians are ill disposed to the whites everywhere on the Missouri. Mr. Henry is in a distressed situation over the Rocky mountains. The Crow Indians are supposed to be inimical - and the Sioux have broken out into open hostilities, and have killed several whites. Mr. Benit and crew were fired upon last night, by what they supposed to be Sioux, and returned it. They did not see the boats of Hunt.

Proceeded on our voyage at three o'clock, not a little disheartened at this intelligence. Mr. Benit and one other of the company returned with us. Passed some beautiful upland N.E. side, but without wood, an immense level plain stretches out, I am informed, for about an hundred miles. We observed a Sioux lodge or tent, of a conical shape, made of skins - it appears to be the custom of these people, to leave their dead in lodges of this kind, until it be convenient for them to gather up their remains.

Friday, May 24th 1811 Set off early - weather warm. The water is falling very fast- there is still a very strong current. Passed bluffs of a chalky appearance, perhaps limestone. A piece of ice floated by us this morning, probably from the breaking up of some of the northern rivers, which have contributed to the present rise. In putting off from a bluff on the S.W. side, to cross over, my attention was called to an object which attracted the notice of the company. A large buffalo bull made his appearance on the top of the bluff, standing at the edge of the precipice, and looking down upon us. It was the first we had seen. Long and matted wool hung over his head, and covered his large shoulders, while his body was smooth, as also the tail, except a tuft at the end. It was a striking and terrific object; he eyed us with the ferocity of the lion, seemed at length to "sniff the tainted gale," threw his head into the air, wheeled round, and trotted off.

Had a fine breeze towards evening - which enabled us to make five or six miles more than we expected.

Saturday, May 25th 1811 This morning ran a ground, and were detained several hours. Passed the river à Jaque; the principal rendezvous of the traders with the Yankton Sioux. It is a large handsome stream, tolerably well suited for a small settlement.

It is becoming very warm. Went out on a delightful prairie, the grass short, of a deep blue, intermixed with a great variety of beautiful flowers. I am forbidden to wonder far, on account of the Indians, who it is thought may be near. We discovered this morning, a great deal of smoke up the river - we supposed this to be a notification of the Indian spies, of our approach. We are now in the open country - no woods are to be seen, except some slender cotton wood trees in the points, and some clumps in the hollows of the upland. The beauty of the scenery, this evening exceeds any thing I ever beheld.- The sky as clear as in a Chinese painting, the country delightful. Convert the most beautiful parts of England or France, into one meadow, leaving a trifling proportion of wood, and some idea may be formed of this. But there appears to be a painful void - something wanting - it can be nothing else than a population of animated beings. It were vain to describe the melancholy silence which reigns over these vast plains.

Yet they seem to give a spring to the intellectual faculties. One never feels his understanding so vigorous, or thinks so clearly. Were it safe, with what delight would I roam over these lovely meads!

The water has fallen, and the current is much lessened.

Sunday, May 26th 1811 At daylight, discovered a canoe descending with two men, who prove to be sent by us, to Hunt. They bring information that he has agreed to wait for us at the Poncas village, where he intends to remain some days.

Saw some buffalo today, and with Mr. Lisa, went several miles in pursuit of them, but without success.

Passed a beautiful Island l'isle à Bon Homme, upon which there is the remains of an ancient fortification. In the evening our hunter killed a buffalo, upon which we all feasted.

Monday, May 27th 1811 Had to oppose a contrary wind, until eleven. At one, arrived at the Poncas village, where we remained until five. On our approach, we found the whole village crowded on the bank, and several had waded up to the waist in the water.- The greater part of the men were naked; the women and children filthy and disgusting. According to custom, had a talk with the chiefs, to whom we made some trifling presents. Hunt had not waited for us, according to promise. Saw two men, who had probably deserted from him, they informed us that as soon as he heard of our approach, which was quite unexpected, he had determined to exert himself to the utmost, to get out of our reach. The fact is, there does not exist the greatest confidence between the two commanders. Ours seems to think, that it is the intention of Hunt, to pass the Sioux, who may wish to detain him, by telling them that their trader is coming on with goods for them. While on the other hand, Hunt may believe that Lisa intends to pass him, and tell the same story. It is therefore determined to push our voyage, if possible, still more than before.

Encamped above the Qui Courre river - A most beautiful country, but very little wood. The country is much more hilly.

Tuesday, May 28th 1811 Weather smoky, and extremely warm. High land on both sides of the river, with some dwarf trees in the hollows, principally cedar. At ten, a fine breeze springing up, we continued under sail the rest of the day, and the greater part on the night, determining to strain every nerve, in order to overtake Hunt. There is scarcely any bottoms from the Qui Courre.

Wednesday, May 29th 1811 After lying a few hours, at one o'clock, again continued under sail - but the moon disappearing, and it becoming dark, it was thought advisable to lie by until daylight. The hills hereabouts, high and broken, and little or no river bottom on either side. At two o'clock, arrived at a beautiful island, called Little Cedar island, on which grows fine cedar,

the trees uncommonly large. This is a delightful spot, the soil of the island is rich, and it may contain about three thousand acres - the middle of the island is a beautiful prairie - the adjacent country is bleak and barren. At the point of the island, discovered an encampment of Hunt, and on examination, we discovered, to the great joy of the company, that the fire was not yet extinguished; it is therefore but a few days since they were here. Continued under sail until 11 at night, having in little better than twenty-four hours, made seventy five miles.

Thursday, May 30th 1811 This morning, favored with a continuance of the fair wind. The country is exceedingly rough and broken - the greater part without the least vegetation. The hills have a very singular appearance. Near the top they look black, and seem to have been burnt. About noon, saw some tracks, which we supposed to be of yesterday.

In the evening, passed a very fine river, called White river, about three hundred yards at the mouth. There is some bottom land, and wood points; the hills covered with grass. - Heard several gun shots, which we supposed to have been from the party of Hunt. This evening the wind abated.

Friday, May 31st 1811 This morning, contrary wind, and some rain. Proceeded with the cordelle. In the course of the day, saw a large flock of antelopes - they appear to be numerous in this part of the country. Observed in the sand, a number of Indian tracks, and a place, where it appeared that the boats of Mr. Hunt had stopped with the Indians some time. One of our men discovered a curious place, contrived by the Indians, for taking fish, it was something like a large fish basket - we found two fine catfish in it.

When about to put into the river, to cross, to a point, we discovered three buffalo, swimming towards us, and contrary to the precautions we had agreed to observe, in making no noise, least we should be discovered by the Indians, who were probably in the neighborhood, a firing was commenced upon the poor animals, which continued half an hour. The report of the guns, as might have been foreseen, brought an Indian to the top of the hill, but we were too far in the river, to return to him, or to be heard.

Towards evening, the boat having received some injury, was compelled to stop - went in pursuit of a buffalo calf - on my return found the party somewhat uneasy on account of the length of my stay, having been drawn by the eagerness of pursuit to a considerable distance.

Saturday, June 1st 1811 At daylight heard a number of guns fired on the hills below us on the other side of the river. We now concluded that all our precaution and labor had been vain. That we should be robbed or killed, or at least compelled to return. They soon arrived opposite to us, with an American flag, and fired one or two guns. There was but one thing to be done, which was to cross over to them at once, and meet the worst, every man preparing himself for defense. Each rower had his gun by his side - Mr. Lisa and myself, besides our knives and rifles, had each one a pair of pistols in our belts. On reaching the shore we discovered twelve or thirteen Indians on a log. Mr. Lisa and I, leaped on shore and shook hands with them.- We

supposed that the principal body was concealed behind in the woods, so as to be at hand if necessary. Having no interpreter at this critical juncture, we were fearful of not being understood; however, with the aid of signs, a language with which Mr. Lisa was well acquainted, he was enabled to communicate tolerably well. He told them that he was their trader, but that he had been very unfortunate, all the peltries which he had collected amongst them having been burnt, and his young men, who had passed 2 years before to go to the head of the Missouri, were attacked and distressed by the Indians of those parts, who are bad people. That he was now poor, and much to be pitied; that he was going to bring back his young men, having resolved to confine himself to the lower country. He so concluded, by telling them that he intended to return in three months to establish a trading house at the Cedar island, and requested the chief to send word of it to all the Sioux bands. This story, together with a handsome present, produced the desired effect, though not without some reluctance. We remained here as short a time as possible, and re-crossed the river. The chief is a fine looking Indian, the others were very young men, nearly naked, with long bands of hair hanging down their foreheads; they are the best looking people I have seen. It is two days since Hunt passed here. We did not cease to use every exertion, considering it still possible that we might be stopped.

About twelve reached the great bend, twenty-one miles around, and only one and an half across. Two men were sent to notify the boats of our near approach. In the evening a strong wind from the N.E. which would hardly have been favorable in any other part of the river, enabled us to hoist sail, and what is singular, continued changing to suit the running of the river. We by this means made fifteen miles - some part of the time it blew with violence, accompanied by rain.

Sunday, June 2nd 1811 Set out with my gun early this morning, on the S.W. side of the river - walked about four miles along the river hills and with much satisfaction perceived at a distance the boats of Mr. Hunt. I returned immediately to give the joyful intelligence to our people. On coming opposite the place where I had seen the boats, we discovered a great number of Indians, who beckoned to us to cross; but supposing them to be Sioux, we determined to continue on until we should overtake the party before us. We suffered them to shout, to gallop their horses, and to wave their robes unnoticed. Some distance above, our men came to us, they had been with Hunt, the Indians we had just past, were a party of three hundred Arikaras, who, on hearing of our approach, had come for the purpose of enabling us to ascend. It appears also, that we have passed all the Sioux bands, who had been seen by Hunt, but probably finding his party too strong, they had resolved to stop and plunder ours, that we must have past them in the night or under sail, as they did not expect to hear from us so soon.

At eleven o'clock we overtook Hunt's party, to the great satisfaction of our little company. It was with real pleasure I took my friend Bradbury by the hand; I have reason to believe our meeting was much more cordial than that of the two commanders. Continued under sail in company the rest of the day, forming a handsome little fleet of five sail. Encamped in the

evening opposite the larger Cedar Island, twelve hundred miles from the mouth of the Missouri.

Chapter V

Monday, June 3rd 1811 A strong wind from the N.E. this morning, compelled us, after proceeding a few miles, to encamp for the remainder of the day. Took my gun, and set off to make an excursion. The country is altogether open, excepting some groves of cotton wood in the bottom. The upland rises into considerable hills, about one-third covered with a very short grass, intermixed with a great variety of plants and flowers, the rest consists of clay, bare of almost every kind of vegetation. On the tops of the higher hills, at some distance from the river, there are masses of granite, of several tons weight, and great quantities of pebbles. In the course of my ramble, I happened on a village of barking squirrels, or prairie dogs, they have been called. My approach was announced by an incessant barking, or rather chirping, similar to that of a common squirrel, though much louder. The village was situated on the slope of a hill, and appeared to be at least two miles in length; the holes were seldom at a great distance from each other than twenty or thirty paces. Near each hole, there was a small elevation of earth, of six or eight inches, behind which, the animal posted himself, and never abandoned it, or ceased his demonstrations of alarm, "insignificantly fierce", until I approached within a few paces. As I proceeded through the village, they disappeared, one after another, before me. There was never more than one at each hole. I had heard that the magpie, the Missouri rattle snake, and the horn frog, were observed to frequent these places; but I did not see any of them, except the magpie. The rattle snake of the prairies, is about the same length with the common rattle snake, but more slender, and the color white and black.

Mr. Bradbury has met with great success in his pursuit.- He has found nearly an hundred undescribed plants. Within a few days he has found a great number, which he calls Mexican. The country thus far, has offered nothing remarkable as to minerals. There is in company, a gentleman of the name of Nuttal, engaged in the same pursuits, to which he appears singularly devoted; it seems to absorb every thought, so as to be troublesome to the company, which has sometimes to wait for him; it appears to have done away every regard of personal safety.- To the ignorant Canadian boatmen, who are unable to appreciate the science, it affords a subject of merriment; le fou, the fool, is the name by which he is commonly known. No sooner does the boat touch the shore, than he leaps out, and when his attention is arrested by a plant of flower, everything else is forgotten. The inquiry is sometimes made, ou est le fou? where is the fool? il est après ramasser des racines, he is gathering roots. He is a young man of genius, and very considerable acquirements, but unfortunately too much devoted to his favorite study. A sarcastic anecdote of this gentleman was related to me, by Mr. Miller, who commanded one of the boats, and shows to what astonishing degree the pursuit of natural history had taken possession of his mind, to the exclusion of everything else. The day after passing the Sioux tribes, they met, as I have before mentioned, three hundred Arikara Indians, these were so delighted to see them, that a number rushed into the river, to swim or wade to the boats; the party supposing them to be inimical, was on the point of firing; while everyone was in

momentary expectation that this would take place; Nuttal, who appeared to have been examining them very attentively, turned to Miller, "sir," said he, "don't you think these Indians much fatter, and more robust than those of yesterday."

In the course of the evening, had an opportunity of seeing the manner in which the antelope is hunted in these open plains, where there is no possibility of approaching by insidious means. A handkerchief is placed on the end of a ramrod, and waved in the air, the hunter lying flat on the ground. If any of the animals be in sight, they run instantly to the place, and perform a circuit around, approaching often within twenty or thirty yards, which gives an opportunity of firing on them.

The party of Mr. Hunt consists of about eighty men, chiefly Canadians; the rest are American hunters.

Tuesday, June 4th 1811 Set off at seven - wind contrary, though not as strong as yesterday. After doubling a point, we found that from the course of the river the wind would be favorable, and accordingly sailed for eight or ten miles. We saw at the mouth of a small creek, a herd of buffalo, of several hundred. The appearance of the country has varied but little for several days past. Bleak and dreary - the bottoms narrow; in some places none at all, and clay bluffs.

Wednesday, June 5th 1811 This morning, after proceeding a short distance, we were compelled, by rain, to put to shore, where we remained until the afternoon, and finding no appearance of the weather clearing up, crossed to the S.W. side, where Mr. Hunt was encamped.

I took a walk with Mr. Bradbury - in the course of which, I saw a number of antelopes, buffalo, and villages of prairie dogs. At some distance from the river, there is not the least appearance of a tree or shrub. The country appears to rise gradually. There was something picturesque in the appearance of herd of buffalo, slowly winding round the sides of the distant hills, disappearing in some hollow, and again emerging to view. The whole extent of the plain is covered with ordure, as in a pasture ground. Wide and beaten roads are everywhere to be seen.

On my return, I found that a disagreeable misunderstanding had taken place between the two chiefs of the parties. The interpreter of Mr. Hunt, had been in the employment of the company, and was indebted to it. Mr. Lisa had several times mentioned to him the impropriety of his conduct, and perhaps had made him some offers, in order to draw him from his present service. This was certainly imprudent, and placed him in the power of a worthless fellow, who, without doubt retailed the conversation to his master, with some additions. This evening, while in Hunt's camp, to which he had gone on some business, he was grossly insulted by the interpreter, who struck him several times, and seized a pair of pistols belonging to Hunt; - that gentleman did not seem to interest himself much in the affair, being acquitted by feelings of resentment, at the attempt to inveigle his man. On my return to our camp, I found Mr. Lisa

furious with rage, buckling on his knife, and preparing to return; finding that I could not dissuade, I resolved to accompany him. It was with the greatest difficulty I succeeded in preventing the most serious consequences. I had several times to stand between him and the interpreter, who has a pistol in each hand. I am sorry to say, that there was but little disposition on the part of Mr. Hunt, to prevent the mischief that might have arisen. I must, in justice to him, declare however, that it was through him that Mr. M'Clelland was induced not to put his threat in execution having pledged his honor to that effect. (A mortal enmity existed on the part of Mr. M'Clelland, towards Lisa, in consequence of some conduct of the latter, in the trade - and he had declared, that he ever fell in with Lisa, in the Indian country, he would shoot him. Those who knew M'Clelland, would not be surprised that such a threat should be put in execution.) I finally succeeded in bringing Lisa off to his boat. When it is recollected that this was at the distance of thirteen hundred miles from all civil authority, or power, it will be seen that there was but little to restrain the effects of animosity. Having obtained in some measure, the confidence of Mr. Hunt, and the gentleman who were with him, and Mr. Bradbury, that of Mr. Lisa, we mutually agreed to use all the arts of mediation in our power, and if possible, prevent anything serious.

Thursday, June 6th 1811 Weather clearing up. The water rising very fast - supposed the annual flood. This morning passed the ruins of an Indian village, there were great piles of buffalo bones, and quantities of earthen ware. The village appears to have been scattered round a kind of citadel, or fortification, enclosing four or five acres, and of an oval form. The earth is thrown up about four feet, there are a few cedar palisades remaining. Probably, in cases of siege, the whole village was crowded into this space.

Friday, June 7th 1811 Continued under way as usual. All kind of intercourse between the leaders has ceased. In the evening, passed several old villages, said to be of the Arikara nation. The bottoms, or points, become wider, and the bluffs of a less disgusting appearance; there are but a few clay hills, the country being generally covered with grass.

Saturday, June 8th 1811 Contrary wind to day - though delightful weather. This morning, passed a large and handsome river, called the Chienne, S.W. side. It appears as large at the mouth as the Cumberland or Tennessee. Saw at this place, the ruins of an old village, and fortification. The country hereabouts is fine, and better wooded than any I have seen for the last three hundred miles. A tolerable settlement might be supported here. Game is very abundant - elk, deer, and buffalo, without number.

Encamped a few miles above the Chienne river, in a beautiful bottom. No art can surpass the beauty of this spot; trees of different kinds, shrubs, plants, flowers, meadow, and upland, charmingly disposed. What coolness and freshness breathes around! The river is bordered with cotton wood, and a few elms, there is then an open space of 30 or 40 paces, after which begins a delightful shrubbery of small ash trees, the grasse de boeuf, the gooseberry, currant, etc... forming a most delightful avenue. We all remark, that the singing of the birds is much sweeter than in the forests of the states. This is fancifully accounted for by Mr. Bradbury, from

the effects of society; from the scantiness of the woods, they are compelled to crowd on the same tree, and in the same grove, and in this way impart improvement to each other. Assuming it as a fact, that birds of Europe sing better than those of America, he asks, can it be owing to any other reason than this?

The mosquitoes have been exceedingly troublesome for several days past. They disappear in the evenings, which are cool, or with the slightest wind.

Sunday, June 9th 1811 Got under way this morning, with fine weather. Discovered great numbers of buffalo; on the N.W. side, and extensive level meadow. Numbers began to swim across the river, as the party of Hunt, who were before us, got opposite; they waited, and killed as many as they wished; a number which were started from an island, swam towards us, and we killed several also.

Mr. Bradbury and I went out on the N.W. side, where the buffalo had been first seen, and walked several miles. A very beautiful and extensive meadow, at least a mile wide, but without a tree or a shrub - the upland equally bare. Passed a Sioux encampment of last fall - from appearances there must have been three or four hundred here. Amongst other things, our curiosity was attracted, by a circular space, about twenty feet in diameter, enclosed with poles in the middle, painted red, and at some distance, a buffalo head placed upon a little mound of earth. We are told, this is a place where an incantation of the buffalo plenty, had been performed.- Amongst other ceremonies, the pipe is presented to the head.

At four o'clock hoisted sail with a favorable wind. Passed a surprising number of buffalo in the course of this day, some herds on the sides of the hills, not less than a thousand. Towards evening we saw a great number crowded on the sand beach at the foot of an island, proceeding with caution, we approached under sail within twenty or thirty yards, and selecting the fattest, we fired upon him at once; and notwithstanding that he had received several wounds, he endeavored to make off.- We pursued him into the island, the animal had now become ferocious from his wounds, and it was dangerous to approach him. It was not until he had received the contents of ten or twelve guns, that he was brought to the ground. The island is beautiful. It is completely surrounded by cotton wood and cedar trees, but the space within is a beautiful clear meadow. On the edges of the woods in the inside, there are great quantities of currant and gooseberry bushes; these islands are much alike in this respect. They are more beautiful than any I have seen.

Monday, June 10th 1811 During the whole of this day had a fine wind which enabled us to make thirty-five miles. Encamped opposite a handsome stream, called Ser-war-cerna, N.W.

The country wears a handsome aspect; the hills gently swelling and some delightful prairie on the river. There is but little wood. In the course of the day we saw great numbers of buffalo, in herds of several hundred each.

Tuesday, June 11th 1811 Continued our voyage with a slight wind. The country much the same as that of yesterday. Encamped some distance below the island on which the Arikara village was situated some years ago - they have removed some miles further up. This evening I went to the camp of Mr. Hunt to make arrangements as to the manner of arriving at the village, and of receiving two chiefs. This is the first time our chiefs have had any intercourse directly or indirectly since the quarrel.- Mr. Lisa appeared to be suspected, they supposed his intention to be, to take advantage of his influence with the Arikara nation, and do their party some injury in revenge. I pledged myself that this should not be the case.

Wednesday, June 12th 1811 Heavy rains accompanied by thunder and lightning last night.

At nine o'clock two of the chiefs with the interpreter employed by the company, came on board our boat. They are both fine looking men, much above the common size, and with much fairer complexions than any Indians I have seen. At ten we put to shore opposite the village, in order to dry our baggage, which was completely wet. The leaders of the party of Hunt were still suspicious that Lisa intended to betray them.- M'Clelland declared that he would shoot him the moment he discovered anything like it. In the meantime, the chief spoke across the river, which is here about a half mile wide, we understood that he was giving orders to prepare the council lodge. The village appeared to occupy about three quarters of a mile along the river bank, on a level plain, the country behind it rising into hills of considerable height. There are little or no woods anywhere to be seen. The lodges are of a conical shape, and look like heaps of earth. A great number of horses are seen feeding in the plains around, and on the sides of the hills. I espied a number of squaws, in canoes, descending the river and landing at the village. The interpreter informed me, that they were returning home with wood. These canoes are made from a single buffalo hide, stretched over osiers and are of a circular form. There was one woman in each canoe, who kneeled down, and instead of paddling sideways, places the paddle before; the load is fastened to the canoe. The water being a little rough these canoes sometimes almost disappeared between the waves, which produced a curious effect; the squaws with the help of a little fancy, might be supposed, mermaids sporting on the billows; the canoe rising and sinking with them, while the women were visible from the waist upwards.

About two o'clock fourteen of us crossed over, and accompanied the chief to his lodge. Mats were laid around for us to sit on, while he placed himself on a kind of stool or bench. The pipe was handed around, and smoked; after which, the herald, (every chief or great man, has one of them ascended the top of the lodge and seated himself near an open place, and began to bawl out like one of our town criers; the chief every now and then addressing something to him through the aperture before mentioned. We soon discovered the object of this, by the arrival of the other chiefs, who seemed to drop in, one after the other, as their names were called.

When all were seated, the pipe was handed to the chief, who began as is usual on solemn occasions, by blowing a wiff upwards as it were to the sky, then to the earth, and after to the east and west, after which the pipe was sent round. A mark of respect in handling the pipe to another, is to hold it until the person has taken several whiffs. After this ceremony, Mr. Lisa

addressed a speech to the chiefs, in which, after common place which would be expected, he observed, that the strangers in company with him were going a long journey to the great Salt lake to the west, and ought to be treated well, that any injury done to them, he should consider as done to himself; that in this respect they were as one people. A number of speeches were as usual made on the occasion. The chief on the proposal of trading, required time to give an answer - with this the council concluded. The boats were ordered over, and encamped a little distance below the village. A guard of Indian warriors was placed to keep off the populace and prevent pilfering.

Chapter VI

Thursday, June 13th, 1811 This morning, found ourselves completely drenched by heavy rains, which continued the whole night. The chief has not given his answer as to the conditions of the trade. It is for him, usually to fix the price, on a consultation with his subordinate chiefs, to this, the whole village must conform.- The Indian women and girls, were occupied all this morning, in carrying earth in baskets, to replace that which the rains had washed off their lodges. Rambled through the village, which I found excessively filthy, the "villainous smells," which everywhere assailed me, compelled me at length, to seek refuge in the open plain. The lovers of Indian manners, and mode of living, should contemplate them at a distance. The rains had rendered their village little better than a hog pen; the police appeared to me, in some particulars, extremely negligent. Some of the ancient cities of the old world, were probably like this village, inattentive to that cleanliness so necessary to health, where a great mass of beings are collected in one place; and we need not be surprised at the frequency of desolating plagues and pestilence. The village is swarming with dogs and children. I rank these together, for they are inseparable companions. Wherever I went, the children ran away, screaming, and frightened at my outré and savage appearance. Let us not flatter ourselves with the belief, that the effect of our civilization and refinement, is to render us agreeable and lovely to the eyes of those whom we exclusively denominate savages! The dogs, of which every family has thirty or forty, pretended to make a show of fierceness, but on the least threat, ran off.- They are of different sizes and colors. A number are fattened on purpose to eat, others are used to draw their baggage.- It is nothing more than the domesticated wolf. In wandering through the prairies, I have often mistaken wolves for Indian dogs. The larger kind has long curly hair and resembles the shepherd dog. There is the same diversity amongst the wolves of this country. They may be more properly said to howl than bark.

The lodges are constructed in the following manner: Four large forks of about fifteen feet in height, are placed in the ground, usually about twenty feet from each other, with hewn logs, or beams across; from these beams, other pieces of wood are placed slanting; smaller pieces are placed above, leaving an aperture at the top, to admit the light, and to give vent to the smoke. These upright pieces are interwoven with osiers, after which, the whole is covered with earth, though not sodded. An opening is left at one side, for a door, which is secured by a kind of projection of ten or twelve feet, enclosed on all sides, and forming a narrow entrance, which might be easily defended. A buffalo robe suspended at the entrance, answers as a door. The

fire is made in a hole in the ground, directly under the aperture at the top. Their beds elevated a few feet, are placed around the lodge, and enclosed with curtains of dressed elk skins. At the upper end of the lodge, there is a kind of trophy erected; two buffalo heads, fantastically painted on a little elevation; over them are placed, a variety of consecrated things, such as shields, skins of a rare or valuable kind, and quivers of arrows. The lodges seem placed at random, without any regularity or design, and are so much alike, that it was for some time before I could learn to return to the same one. The village is surrounded by a palisade of cedar poles, but in a very bad state. Around the village, there are little plats enclosed by stakes, entwined with osiers, in which they cultivate maize, tobacco, and beans; but their principal field is at the distance of a mile from the village, to which, such of the females whose duty it is to attend to their culture, go and return morning and evening. Around the village they have buffalo robes stuck up on high poles. I saw one so arranged as to bear a resemblance to the human figure, the hip bone of the buffalo represented the head, the sockets of the thigh bones looked like eyes.

Friday, June 14th 1811 It rained again last night, which prevented the trade from commencing until sometime in the day. Mr. Lisa sent a quantity of goods to the lodge of the principal chief before mentioned, called Le Gauchée, and Hunt to the one who accompanied him to meet us, La Gros, the principal war chief. The price of a horse was commonly ten dollars' worth of goods first cost. Hunt had resolved to purchase horses at this price and proceed by land to the Columbia, being assured by some hunters, who met him before his arrival here, that this would be his best route.

Mr. Bradbury and I, took a walk into the upper village, which is separated from the lower by a stream about twenty yards wide.- Entered several lodges, the people of which received us with kindness, placed mats and skins for us to sit on, and after smoking the pipe, offered us something to eat; this consisted of fresh buffalo meat served in a wooden dish.- They had a variety of earthen vessels, in which they prepared their food, or kept water. After the meat, they offered us homony made of corn dried in the milk, mixed with beans, which was prepared with buffalo marrow, and tasted extremely well; also pounded and made into gruel. The prairie turnip, is a root very common in the prairies, with something of the taste of the turnip but more dry; this they eat dried and pounded, made into gruel. Their most common food is hominy and dried buffalo meat. In one of the lodges which we visited, we found the doctor, who was preparing some medicine for a sick lad.- He was cooling with a spoon a decoction of some roots, which had a strong taste and smell, not unlike jalap. He showed us a variety of samples which he used. The most of them were common plants with some medicinal properties, but rather harmless than otherwise. The boy had a slight pleurisy. The chief remedy for their diseases, which they contrive to be owing to a disorder of the bowels, is rubbing the belly and sides of the patient, sometimes with such violence, as to cause fainting. When they become dangerous, they resort to charms and incantations, such as singing, dancing, blowing on the sick, etc. They are very successful in the treatment of wounds. When the wound becomes very obstinate, they commonly burn it, after which it heals more easily.

Saturday, June 15th 1811 Fine weather- Took a walk with Mr. Bradbury through the country, which is entirely open, and somewhat hilly. Large masses of granite were usually found on the highest knobs. We saw a great variety of plants, and some new ones- One or two of the valleys are beautiful, and a few dwarf plum trees scattered along a rivulet.

On our return in the evening, an alarm prevailed in the village, which appeared to be all in commotion. We were informed that the Sioux, their enemies, were near. This was probably all pre-concerted. I was shown, at the distance of about two miles horsemen on the top of a hill, at full gallop, passing and re-passing each other; this I understand is the signal given by the scouts, some of whom are constantly on the alert, of the approach of an enemy. To give intelligence of the appearance of a herd of buffalo, instead of crossing each other, they gallop backward and forward abreast. Presently the warriors issued from the village with great noise and tumult, some on foot, others on horseback, and pursued the direction in which the signals were made, down the river, and past an encampment. They observed no regular march, but ran helter skelter, like persons on one of our towns to extinguish a fire - and keeping up a continued hallooing to encourage each other. Some of them were dressed in their most splendid manner. The tops of the lodges were crowded with women and children, and with the old men who could give no assistance, but by their lungs, which were kept busily employed; yet there were several who sallied forth, almost half bent with the weight of years. I counted upwards of five hundred in all. They soon after returned; whether they had chased away the enemy, or the alarm had turned out false, I never learned.

Sunday, June 16th 1811 In the course of the day several parties arrived from different directions. According to custom they were met by warriors and conducted to be the council lodge, where they gave an account of what had occurred, which was afterwards announced to the village by heralds. These contribute to enliven the village; though independent, they continually present a busy and animated scene. Great numbers of men are engaged in the different games of address and agility, others judging, or looking on, and many employed in a variety of other ways. There are a great number of women constantly at work in dressing buffalo robes, which are placed on frames before the lodges. One of the parties which arrived to day came from the Snake, where they had stolen horses. This arrested their employments for a moment, the immediate friends and relations of each as returned, spent the evening in rejoicing, while several females who had lost a relation, retired to the hills behind the village, where they continued to cry the whole afternoon.

In the evening they usually collect on the tops of the lodges, where they sit and converse; every now and then the attention of all was attracted by some old men who rose up and declaimed aloud, so as to be heard over the whole village. There was something in this like a Quaker meeting. Adair labors to prove the Indian tribes to be descended from the Jews, I might here adduce this as an argument in favor of these people being a colony of Quakers.

Monday, June 17th 1811 This day arrived a deputation from the Chienne nation, to announce that these people were on their march to this village, and would be here in fifteen days. I

sometimes amused myself with the idea of forming a gazette of the daily occurrences. We here see an independent nation, with all the interests and anxieties of the largest; how little would its history differ from that, of one of the Grecian states! A war, a treaty, deputations sent and received, warlike excursions, national mourning or rejoicing, and a thousand other particulars, which constitutes the chronicle of the most celebrated people.

In the evening, about sundown, the women cease from their labors, and collect into little knots, and amuse themselves with a game something like jack-stones; five pebbles are tossed up in a small basket, with which they endeavor to catch them again as they fall.

Tuesday, June 18th 1811 Confidence had been somewhat restored between the leaders of the two parties since the council in the village. Mr. Hunt having resolved to start from this village, a bargain was made with Mr. Lisa, for the sale of Hunt's boats and some merchandise; in consequence of which, we crossed the river, in order to make the exchange, after which we returned and encamped. We are to set off to-morrow to the Mandan villages.

Before I bid adieu to Arikara, I must note some general matters relating to their character and manners.

The men are large and well proportioned, complexion somewhat fairer than Indians commonly are. Generally go naked; the dress they sometimes put on, seems more for ornament than any advantage it is to them; this consists of a sort of cassock or shirt, made of the dressed skin of the antelope, and ornamented with porcupine quills, died a variety of colors; a pair of leggings, which are ornamented in the same way. A buffalo hide dressed with the hair on, is then thrown over the right shoulder, the quiver being hung on the other, if he be armed with a bow (A warrior is seldom seen without his arms, even in the village. His bow, spear, or gun, is considered part of his dress, and to appear in public without them, is in some measure disgraceful.) They generally permit their hair to grow long; I have, in one or two instances, seen it reach to their heels; they sometimes increase it by artificial means; commonly with horse hair. It is divided into a number of locks, matted at intervals, with a braid of white earth, a substance resembling putty. Sometimes it is rolled up in a ball, and fixed on the top of the head. They always have a quantity of feathers about them, those of the black eagle are most esteemed. They have a kind of crown made of feathers, such as we see represented in the usual paintings of Indians, which is very beautiful. The swan is in most estimation for this purpose. Some ornament the neck with necklace made of the claws of the white bear. To their heels they sometimes fasten fox tails, and on their leggings suspend deer's hoofs, so as to make a rattling noise as they walk. On seeing a warrior dressed out in all this finery, walking with his wife, who was comparatively plain in her dress of ornaments, I could not but think this was following the order of nature, as in the peacock, the stag, and almost all animals, the male is lavishly decorated while the female is plain and unadorned, I intend this as a hint to some of our petit maîtres. The dress of the female consists of a long robe made of the dressed skins of the elk, the antelope, or the agolia, and ornamented with blue beads, and strips of ermine, or in this place, of some white skin. The robe is girded round the waist with a broad zone, highly

ornamented with porcupine quills, and beads. They are no better off than were the Greeks and Romans, in what we deem at present to essential, but like them, they bathe themselves regularly, twice a day. The women are much fairer than the men; some might be considered handsome anywhere - they are much more numerous than the men, the consequence of the wars in which the nation is constantly engaged. Polygamy is general, they have often four or five wives. Their courtship and marriage resemble that of most Indian nations; if the parties are mutually agreeable to each other, there is a consultation of the family, if this be also favorable, the father of the girl, or whosoever gives her in marriage, makes a return for the present he had previously received from the lover - the match is then concluded.

They display considerable ingenuity of taste in their works of art; this observation applies to all the American nations, from the Mexicans to the most savage. Their arms, household utensils, and their dresses, are admirably made. I saw a gun which had been completely stocked by an Indian. A curious instance of native ingenuity which came under my notice, ought not to be omitted. I was told one day, of an old Indian who was making a blanket; I immediately went to see him. To my surprise, I found an old man, perfectly blind, seated on a stool before a kind of frame, over which were drawn coarse threads, or rather twists of buffalo wool, mixed with wolf's hair; he had already made about a quarter of a yard of a very coarse rough cloth.- He told me that it was the first they had attempted, and that it was in consequence of a dream, in which he thought he had made a blanket like those of the white people. Here are the rudiments of weaving. They make beautiful jugs or baskets with osier, so close as to hold water.

I observed some very old men amongst them - the country is so exceedingly healthy, that they arrive to a very great age.- About twenty years ago, the small pox destroyed a great number of them. One day, in passing through the village, I saw something brought out of a lodge in a buffalo robe, and exposed to the sun; on approaching, I discovered it to be a human being, but so shriveled up, that it had nearly lost the human physiognomy; almost the only sign of life discernible, was a continually sucking its hands. On inquiring of the chief he told me, that he had seen it so ever since he was a boy. He appeared to be at least forty-five. It is almost impossible to ascertain the age of an Indian when he is above sixty; I made inquiries of several, who appeared to me little short of an hundred, but could form no satisfactory conjecture. Blindness is very common, arising probably from the glare of the snow, during a great part of the year. I observed the goitre, or swelled neck, in a few instances.

Their government is oligarchical, but great respect is paid to popular opinion. It is utterly impossible to be a great man amongst them, without being a distinguished warrior, though respect is paid to birth, but this must be accompanied by other merit, to procure much influence. They are divided into different bands or classes; that of the pheasant, which is composed of the oldest men; that of the bear, the buffalo, the elk, the dog etc.. Each of these has its leader, who generally takes the name of the class, exclusively. Initiation into these classes, on arriving to the proper age, and after having given proofs of being worthy of it, is attended with great ceremony. The band of dogs, is considered the most brave and effective in war, being composed of young men under thirty. War parties are usually proposed by some

individual warrior, and according to the confidence placed in him, his followers are numerous or otherwise. In these excursions they wander to a great distance, seldom venturing to return home without a scalp, or stolen horses.- Frequently when unsuccessful, they "cast their robes," as they express it, and vow to kill the first person they meet, provided he not be of their nation. In crossing the river, they use canoes made of the buffalo hide, or a few pieces of wood fastened together. They usually have some token, as a stake, which is so as to convey some idea of their numbers, the direction which they have taken, etc. To avoid surprise, they always encamp at the edge of a wood; and when the party is small, they construct a kind of fortress, with wonderful expedition, of billets of wood, apparently piled up in a careless manner, but so arranged as to be very strong, and are able to withstand an assault from a much superior force. They are excellent horsemen - they will shoot an arrow at full speed, and again pick it up from the ground without stopping; sometimes they will lean entirely upon one leg, throwing their bodies to that side, so as to present nothing but the leg and thigh, on the other.- In pursuit of the buffalo, they will gallop down steep hills, broken almost into precipices. Some of their horses are very fine, and run swiftly, but are soon worn out, from the difficulty of procuring food for them in winter, the smaller branches of the cotton wood tree being almost the only fodder which they give them. Their hunting is regulated by the warriors chosen for the occasion, who urge on such as are tardy, and repress often with blows, those who would rush on too soon. When a herd of buffalo is discovered, they approach in proper order, within a half a mile, they separate and dispose themselves, so as, in some measures, to surround them, when at the word, they rush upon them at full speed, and continue as long as their horses can stand it; a hunter usually shoots two arrows into a buffalo, and then goes in pursuit of another; if he kills more than two in the hunt, he is considered having acquitted himself well, The tongue is the prize of the person who has slain the animal; and he that has the greater, is considered the best hunter of the day. Their weapons consist of guns, war clubs, spears, bows, and lances. They have two kinds of arrows, one for the purpose of the chase, and the other for war; the latter differs in this particular, that the barb or point is fastened so slightly, that when it enters the body, it remains in, and cannot be drawn out with the wood; therefore, when it is not in a vital part, the arrow is pushed entirely through. They do not poison them. Their bows are generally very small; an elk's horn, or two ribs of a buffalo, often constitute the materials of which they are made. Those of wood are willow, the back covered with sinews. Their daily sports, in which, when the weather is favorable, they are engaged from morning till night, are principally of two kinds. A level piece of ground appropriated for the purpose, and beaten by frequent use, is the place where they are carried on. The first is played by two persons, each armed with a long pole; one of them rolls a hoop, which after having reached about two-thirds of the distance, is followed at half speed, and as they perceive it about to fall, they cast their poles under it; the pole on which the hoop falls, so as to be nearest to certain corresponding marks on the hoop and pole, gains for that time. This game excites great interest, and produces gentle, but animated exercise. The other differs from it in this, that instead of poles, they have short pieces of wood, with barbs at one end, and a cross piece at the other, held in the middle with one hand; but instead of the hoop before mentioned, they throw a small ring, and endeavor to put the point of the barb through it. This is a much more violent exercise than the other.

With respect to their religion, it is extremely difficult, particularly from the slight acquaintance I had with them, to form any just idea. They have some notion of a Supreme Being, whom they call "The Master of Life," but they offer him no rational worship, and have but indistinct ideas of a future state. Their devotion manifests itself in a thousand curious tricks, of sleight of hand, which they call magic, and which the vulgar amongst them believe to be something supernatural. They are very superstitious. Besides their public resident lodge, in which they have a great collection of magic, or sacred things, everyone has his private magic in his lodge about his person. Anything curious, is immediately made amulet, or a talisman; and is considered as devoted or consecrated, so as to deprive them of the power of disposing of it. The principal war chief lately took advantage of this, ingeniously enough. He obtained a very fine horse, which he was desirous of keeping, but fearing that someone might ask him as a gift, and to refuse would be considered as evincing a narrowness of mind unbecoming a great man, who ought not to set his heart upon a matter of so little importance, he announced that he had given him to his magic.- Some parts of their religious exercises are the most barbarous that can be imagined. I observed a great number whose bodies were scarred and cut in the most shocking manner; I was informed that this was done in their devotion; that to show their zeal, they sometimes suspend themselves by the arms or legs, or the sides, by hooks. I was shown a boy, who had drawn two buffalo heads by cords drawn through the fleshy part of his sides, nearly a quarter of a mile. I might enumerate a variety of other particulars, in which this strange self-punishment is carried to the greatest lengths. They have frequent holy days, when the greater part of the village appears to desist from labor, and dress out unusually fine. On these occasions, each one suspends his private magic on a high pole before his door; the painted shields, quivers of a variety of colors, scarlet cloth, and highly ornamented buffalo robes, which compose those trophies, produce a very lively effect. I several times observed articles of some value, suspended in the woods. I was told they often leave their property in this manner, without being under any apprehension that any of the same tribe will touch it, provided that there be the least sign to show that it is not lost. A kind of superstition similar to that of the Druids, which protected their offerings hung up in the woods.

Since the affair of Lieut. Prior, who commanded the party dispatched by the United States, to take home the Mandan chief, these people have been friendly to the whites. They speak of the occurrence with regret, and declare that it was done by bad people whom they could not restrain.

To give an account of the vices of these people would be to enumerate some of the more gross, prevalent amongst us.- The savage state, like the rude uncultivated waste, is contemplated to most advantage at a distance. They have their rich and their poor, their envious, their proud, overbearing, their mean and groveling, and the reverse of these. In some respects they appear extremely dissolute and corrupt - whether the result of refinement, or vice, or the simplicity of nature, I am not able to say. It is part of their hospitality, to offer the guest, their wife, sister, or maid servant, according to the estimation in which the guest is held, and to refuse, is considered as treating the host with contempt. It appeared to me while we

remained at the village, that their females had become mere articles of traffic; I have seen fathers bring their daughters, brothers their sisters, and husbands their wives, to be disposed of for a short time, to the highest bidder. I was unable to account for this strange difference from all other people I had ever read of, unless from the inordinate passion which seized them for our merchandise. Chastity appeared to be unknown as a virtue. Yet this may not have been universal; a more minute acquaintance with these people, might have enabled to explain this strange phenomenon. From the remnant of a singular custom which prevails amongst them, one might suppose that this had not always been the case. On a certain occasion, a great number of young girls were collected before the medicine lodge or temple, prizes were exhibited, and a cedar bough was stuck on the lodge; the old men who reside in the temple, proclaimed, that whoever was yet a virgin, should come forward and touch the bough, and take the pier; that is was in vain to think of deceiving, the manitou would reveal everything; the young men were moreover required to declare against anyone who should attempt it, all they knew. A young metiff, daughter of the interpreter, a beautiful girl of sixteen, came forward, but before she could ascend to touch the bough, a young fellow stepped out and bade her remember a certain place! She withdrew, confused and abashed. There was a pause for a considerable time; I began to tremble for the maiden of Arikara, when a girl of seventeen, one of the most beautiful in the village, walked forward and asked, "where is the Arikara who can boast of having received favors from me?" then touched the bough, and carried off the prize. I feel a pleasure in adding, for the honor of the ladies of Arikara, that others followed, though I did not take the trouble of noting the number.

Seeing the chief one day in a thoughtful mood, I asked him what was the matter- "I was wondering" said he "whether you white people have any women amongst you." I assured him in the affirmative. "Then" said he, "why is it that your people are so fond of our women, one might suppose they had never seen any before?"

Chapter VII

Wednesday, June 19th 1811 It was resolved this morning by Mr. Lisa to leave one of his men to continue the trade with the Arikaras, and continue his voyage. As part of the price of the goods bought from Mr. Hunt, was to be paid in horses, a party was sent by land to the Mandan fort, for the purpose of bringing them. Mr. Bradbury being desirous of seeing the interior of the country, accompanied them.

Set off from the village about eleven o'clock, the wind favorable, but the weather rainy and disagreeable. Having made about fifteen miles, we encamped. The mosquitoes are more troublesome than I have known them. I am informed that this is not the case every year.

Thursday, June 20th 1811 Weather more pleasant, but the wind for a part of the afternoon contrary. The river is rising rapidly, it is at present at a very high stage. Having made five points, encamped.

Friday, June 21st 1811 Set off under sail, with a fine breeze, which continued the whole of the day. Made upwards of forty miles. The country improves - handsome green hills, and fine bottoms.

Saturday, June 22nd 1811 A continuance of favorable wind, but the river crooked. At ten, landed to kill some buffalo - they are numerous on the sides of the hills.

Sunday, June 23rd 1811 Bad weather - contrary wind, and violent storms. In the evening it cleared up; the wind continuing so as to prevent us from proceeding, we landed and went in pursuit of some buffalo. The whole surface of the country appeared covered with them. I continued the chase four or five miles from the river, in the middle of a very romantic country.

Monday, June 24th 1811 Proceeded this morning with delightful weather, the sky clear, and of a most enchanting blue. Continued the greater part of the day, with the cordelle, along the prairie. The country on either side, of a very pleasant appearance, and a number of wooded points.

Tuesday, June 25th 1811 Sailed this morning with a slight breeze.- At ten, passed an old Mandan village; and at some distance above, saw a great number of Mandan Indians on their march along the Prairie. They sometimes go on hunting parties by whole villages, which is the case at present; they are about five hundred in number, some on horseback, some on foot, their tents and baggage drawn by dogs. On these great hunting parties, the women are employed in preserving the hides, drying the meat, and making a provision to keep. Very little of the buffalo is lost, for after taking the marrow, they pound the bones, boil them, and preserve the oil. This evening the Mandan chief, She-he-ke, who was in the United States, came to us with his wife. Hearing of our approach, he had set off for the purpose. Encamped on a prairie of very rich soil. The country is very fine on both sides of the river. There are some high hills.

Wednesday, June 26th – Early August In the course of the day, passed by the Mandan villages, with a favorable wind, and arrived late at night, at the fort of the company, 1640 miles from the mouth of the Missouri.

Mr. Bradbury had already arrived. He describes the country at the distance of eight or ten miles from the river, as very handsome; a continued succession of meadows, with some wood along the water courses; on approaching the river, it becomes more broken and hilly.

We made several excursions to the villages below, and to the interior of the country, but as they afford but little new, I shall not give any detail of them. In the neighborhood of the fort there are a number of clay hills, washed into the most curious shapes, by the frequent rains, generally of a whitish color, though intermixed with strata of various hues. Some of them resemble clouds, being circular, and detached; at first glance they look like buildings. On some of them there is a beautiful creeping vine, or evergreen, which Mr. Bradbury informs me, is

described by Michaux, as growing on the lakes. There are great quantities of petrified wood scattered about; I traced a whole tree; the stump was more than three feet high, and at least four in diameter. This is a very extraordinary fact, in a country where the trees are everywhere small.

On the fourth day of July we had something like a celebration of the day; the two principal chiefs happened to be with us.- The Borgne is one of the most extraordinary men I ever knew. The description of Abelino might give some idea of this man. He sways with unlimited control, all these villages, and is sometimes a cruel and abominable tyrant. In stature he is a giant, and his one eye seems to flash with fire. I saw him on one or two occasions, treat She-he-ke with great contempt - Mr. Lisa citing something which She-he-ke expressed, "what" says the other, "does that bag of lies pretend to have any authority here?" She-he-ke is a fat man, not much distinguished as a warrior, and extremely talkative, a fault much despised amongst the Indians.

On a visit to the village, I saw a great number of small scaffolds scattered over the prairie, on which human bodies were exposed. The scaffolds are supported with four forks, and sufficiently large to receive one or two bodies. They are covered with blankets, cloth of different colors, and a variety of offerings. In this they are different from the Arikaras, who bury their dead as we do.

On the sixth of July, we set off from the fort, to return to the Arikara village, where we arrived two days after, without any remarkable occurrence. On our arrival, we found Mr. Hunt awaiting the arrival of the Chiennes, to complete his supply of horses. We continued here about ten days, Mr. Manuel Lisa having concluded to send two of his boats, with peltries, Mr. Bradbury who was desirous of returning, gladly embraced the opportunity. The boats were accordingly put under my command, with six men in each.

Two mornings before our departure, a great commotion was heard in the village, before daylight. We rose to discover the cause, and found that the war party, of which about three hundred men, were within a short distance of the village, on their return, after a battle with the Sioux the evening before, in which two or three were killed, and as many wounded. All the relations of those engaged, came out of the village to meet them. I accompanied them about a mile and an half. They advanced in a kind of procession, which moved slowly, with some regularity; each band separate, and sung its song. Some carried the scalps on poles, others the sacred standards, which consisted of a large bow and a spear, both beautifully ornamented. The scene which took place, would be worthy the pen of a Fenelon; the meeting of those connected by the most tender relations, was truly affecting. The whole would baffle description; I was touched with the tenderness of a woman, who ran to meet her son, a youth badly wounded, but who exerted himself to keep on his horse, and from his countenance, one would have supposed nothing had been the matter. The young man died almost as soon as he arrived at the temple, for it is the custom to carry those who have been wounded on these occasions to this place, to be taken care of at the public expence. As they approached the village, the old men who could hardly walk, whose voices were extremely shrill, came out

singing their songs also, and rubbing the warriors with their hands. The following day we spent in festivity by the village in general, and in grief by those who had lost their relations.

Towards the last of July, with glad hearts, we set off, to return once more to civilized life, after more than four months absence from it. My orders were to go day and night if possible, and not stop for any Indians. The water was extremely high, and with the assistance of six oars, we were able to make little short of twelve miles an hour. The first day we passed the Chienne river, and went sometime after night, but considering this something dangerous, I landed and continued until daylight. The next morning we reached the Great Bend, a vast number of buffalo were seen on all sides, and the most tremendous bellowing from the bulls, as this was about the time of their mixing with the herds of cows, for they generally stay in separate herds. The country this far is beautiful, the points sufficiently wooded, and the bottoms fine. The wind becoming high, we were compelled to lie by the whole of the afternoon, in the Great Bend. On the north west side, it is bounded the whole of the way by buffalo nearly bare, affording but a scanty vegetation of sand cherries, gooseberries, and dwarf plum trees. The next day we passed White river, where the black bluffs begin - a barren and miserable country nearly as hundred miles; there are scarcely any bottoms, and the bluffs in most places without even grass. In some places the hills rise to the height of mountains; it frequently afforded me amusement to see the herds of buffalo ascending these hills by a winding path. In the evening we were compelled to land in a little recess of the bluffs, there being appearances of an approaching storm; we were not disappointed. The continued and vivid flashes of lightening, and peals of thunder, shaking the solid earth, were succeeded by a tremendous storm. The winds blew with such violence, as to threaten our boats; for an hour, we were obliged to protect the sides with wet blankets, to prevent them from filling, while it rained on us incessantly the whole night. The next day we passed the Poncas village. The Indians were absent in the plains. The islands are generally fine thus far, and excepting the tract between the White river, and the Qui Courre, there are many delightful spots, though the bottoms are mostly prairie, and the upland with little or no wood.

In the evening, near a point above isle a Bon Homme, our attention was awakened by a tremendous noise. On landing, we discovered the woods literally swarming with buffalo, a heard of males had come amongst a number of females. The noise which they made is truly indescribable. On the hills in every direction, they appeared by thousands. Late in the evening we saw an immense herd running along the sides of the hills in full speed; their appearance had something in it, which, without incurring ridicule, I might call sublime - their footsteps resembled the roaring of distant thunder.

The next day we passed the Maha village, and had a most extraordinary run of forty-five leagues, from sun to sun. From the Qui Corre, to the Mahas, the bottoms are wider and better wooded than above, but the upland much of the same. We found them almost everywhere overflowed; we were obliged to encamp on some driftwood - the mosquitoes tormented us the whole night.

The following day we passed the Blackbird Hill, and the river Platte. The navigation in this part is much more dangerous than above, from the number of trees fixed in the bottom. The bottoms are much wider than above, and better wooded; in some places for twenty miles and upwards, we were out of sight of the high lands; but the low grounds were everywhere overflowed. The water rushed into the woods with great velocity, and in bends it poured over the gorge into the river again; a sheet of water sometimes for a mile, flowed over the bank.

In something better than two days afterwards, we arrived at Fort Clark, having come a thousand miles in eight or nine days, without meeting a living soul. Here we were treated politely by the officers. Mr. Sibley, the factor, had returned but a few days before, from a journey to the interior, and showed us specimens of salt, which he had procured at the salines, on the Arkansas.

We arrived at St. Louis early in August, having made fourteen hundred and forty miles in little better than fourteen days.