

CHAPTER XI

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE OF COLUMBIA RIVER

*Description of the Columbia throughout its course—Descent—
Snow Birds—Trees—Chief of the Chinooks, Komkomle
—Chinook cradles—Klatsup Tribe—Slaves—War canoe—
Best navigable water found on the north shore of rivers
flowing east.*

I MAY now give some general description of this River from its source in Latitude 50°. 12'. 6" N Longitude 115°. 39'. 30" West to Cape Disappointment in Lat^{de} 46. 18. 10 N 123. 43. 6 West the distance in a straight line is about S 64 W 630 statute miles; it's source is 5960 feet above the level of the tide waters of the Pacific Ocean, including it's Falls and many strong Rapids some of them of thirty feet descent in two miles; did the River descend in a straight line, it would be at a change of level of 9 feet, 5½ inches p^r mile.¹ Such a change of level could not be ascended, but Providence in this country of Hills and Mountains has formed a bold vally through which it holds it's course, between Mount Nelson and the Rocky Mountains, and which gives it a length of 1348 miles, making an average change of level of four feet five inches p^r mile, and [it] is ascended with toil and hard labor. In the winter season there is very little snow on the ground for near 770 miles

¹ Thompson is singularly in error as to the fall of the Columbia from its source to its mouth. Its source in Upper Columbia lake is 2,700 feet above sea-level; and as its length is 1,400 miles, it has a fall of about two feet a mile. [T. C. E.]