
PIERRE GAUTIER DE LA VERENDRYE

winter season when they would be unprepared for an attack. The elder Vérendrye remained at the camp to guard the baggage, while his younger brother, Chevalier, and his two companions continued with the Indians upon the march. They moved forward in good order, and although they were all well mounted, it took them twelve days to reach the foot of the mountains, owing to the rough character of the country through which they passed. The scouts of the party discovered the village of the enemy, but it was deserted, and no trace of them could be seen. This fact alarmed the others, who feared that by a circuitous route the Snakes might reach their undefended camp and slaughter all the occupants before their return, so they decided upon an immediate retreat.

While Chevalier shared the general anxiety as to the safety of the camp, he could not bear the thought of returning at a time when he had, as he supposed, so nearly attained the object for which he and his father and brother had been striving for years, for he believed that could he once scale the snow-capped barriers that rose up so majestically before him, he would be able to look upon the blue waters of the long-sought Pacific. But as the Indians were resolute, and no arguments could