

dition started out across the plains, struck the Platte River (near Grand Island, Kearney County, Nebraska), followed along its bank, crossed the South Fork (Lincoln County), marched along the south bank of the North Fork of the Platte; on June 9, 1832, passed "the Chimneys" (Chimney Rock, Banner County, Nebraska); reached the Black Hills (present State of Wyoming) June 15th, and Rock Independence, on Sweet-water River (Wyoming), on the 21st. "From this time to July 2, frost each night, and snow." July 2d: "This night, at about twelve o'clock, we were attacked by Indians, probably the Blackfeet. They fired about forty shots and some arrows into the camp."

On July 8, 1832, the expedition arrived at Pierre's Hole, and remained there to July 17th, "during which time all my men but eleven left me." July 18th, "when near starting we observed two parties of Blackfeet Indians coming, about two hundred in number. A skirmish ensued, and one of the Blackfeet was killed, and his blanket and robe brought into camp. The women and children were seen flying into the mountains. The Indians made for the timber, and fortified themselves in a masterly manner. We attacked them, and continued the attack all day. There were about twenty of them killed, and thirty-two horses were found dead. They decamped during the night, leaving their lodges and many of their dead. We lost three whites killed: eight badly wounded. Ten of the Nez Percés and Flatheads (fighting on the side of the whites) were killed or mortally wounded. One of our men who was killed inside of their fort was mutilated in a shocking manner. This affair will detain us some days."*

On July 25th the remnant of the expedition, eleven in number, with a small party of Nez Percé Indians, continued their march for the valley of the Columbia.

On the 21st of August they encountered a village of Snake Indians who were friendly. Ten days later, following the bed of a creek, "the rocks on each side closed over the top and formed a natural bridge, elevated about fifty feet."

From Pierre's Hole the route of the

* In Irving's *Bonneville* there is a thrilling description of this bloody encounter with the Blackfeet, in which Nathaniel Wyeth is spoken of in the highest terms of praise for the active part he took in the fight.

expedition was west and a little north until the Snake or Lewis River was reached, then along this stream, arriving at Fort Walla Walla, a trading station of the Hudson Bay Company, October 13, 1832, having on the way been forced to kill their horses for food. On the 19th they left Walla Walla, and travelled down the Columbia in canoes to Fort Vancouver, another station of the Hudson Bay Company, arriving there October 29, 1832. "Here I was received with the utmost kindness and hospitality by the acting Governor of the place. Our people were supplied with food and shelter from the rain, which is constant."

Scarcely without exception throughout the entire experience of Mr. Wyeth within the area controlled by the Hudson Bay Company, its officers were personally kind and courteous. It was in matters of business they were harsh, exacting, and ultimately ruinous to competition.

Later in a report to Congress he wrote, "Experience has satisfied me the entire might of this Company will be made to bear on any trader who shall attempt to prosecute his business within its reach."

He was impressed with the productiveness of the country around Fort Vancouver on the Columbia; "They raise 4000 bushels of wheat; barley, 3000; Indian corn, 3000; potatoes, 1500; peas, 3000; and a large quantity of pumpkins. There are about eight settlers on the Multnomah (Willamette), old 'engagés' of the Company. The soil is good, timber is heavy and thick, and almost impenetrable from underbrush and fallen trees."

November 4th, one of the remaining seven men of the twenty-one which left Boston eight months before died, and the others, becoming discouraged, asked to be released from their contract, which was to remain for five years in the attempt to settle Oregon. November 15, 1832, "I have now no men, and am afloat without stay or support, but in good hands, i. e., myself and Providence."

With the loss of his entire force Mr. Wyeth immediately set about to acquaint himself with the topography and resources of the country, determined to return to the States and enlist a larger and better-equipped expedition, and again seek a home and fortune in the valley of the Columbia. His will was indomitable. He

* House of Representatives, No. 101, February 16, 1839. Barrows's *Oregon*.