

through our camp, yelling like fiends, the barking and baying of savage wolf-dogs, and the incessant cracking of rifles and carbines, render our camp a perfect bedlam. A more unpleasant situation for an invalid could scarcely be conceived. I am confined closely to the tent with illness, and am compelled all day to listen to the hiccoughing jargon of drunken traders, and the swearing and screaming of our own men, who are scarcely less savage than the rest, being heated by the detestable liquor which circulates freely among them. It is very much to be regretted that at times like the present there should be a positive necessity to allow the men as much rum as they can drink; but this course has been sanctioned and practised by all the leaders of parties who have hitherto visited these regions, and reform cannot be thought of now. The principal liquor in use is alcohol diluted with water. It is sold to the men at *three dollars* the pint! Tobacco, of very inferior quality, such as could be purchased in Philadelphia at about ten cents per pound, here fetches two dollars! and everything else in proportion. There is no coin in circulation, and these articles are therefore paid for by the independent mountain-men in beaver skins, buffalo robes, &c.; and those who are hired to the companies, have them charged against their wages. I was somewhat amused by observing one of our newly-hired men enter the tent and order, with the air of a man who knew he would not be refused, twenty dollars worth of rum and ten dollars worth of sugar, to treat two of his companions who were about leaving the rendezvous."

At the rendezvous a number of men belonging to Captain Wyeth's party left it to join returning parties; but the diminution of numbers thus occasioned was made up for by the accession of about thirty Indians—Flatheads, Nez Percés, and others, with their wives, children, and dogs. These Indians joined the party in order to enjoy the benefit of its convoy through the tract of country infested by the Blackfeet Indians—a fierce and warlike race, the terror both of Indians and whites. Here also the party was joined by two English gentlemen roaming the prairies for amusement. At length, on the 2d of July, the party bade adieu to the rendezvous, packed up their moveables, and journeyed along the bank of the river. The horses were much recruited by the long rest and good pasture, and, like their masters, were in excellent spirits for renewing the route across the wilderness.

They had now reached the confines of the Rocky Mountains, from which originate the upper tributaries of the Missouri on the one side, and those of the Columbia on the other. The plains in this high region are more rugged and barren than in the lower territories, and occasionally present evidences of volcanic action, being thickly covered with masses of lava and high basaltic crags. The principal vegetation on the hills consists of small cedars, while on the plains nothing flourishes but the shrubby wormwood or sage. Mr Townsend had an opportunity, in these