

7th of April. The course of the river from this point lies considerably more to the west: from about the great bend, already mentioned, to where they now were, their course had been nearly north. After this, it was mostly west; inclining at first towards the north; afterwards west, with a little south, for a great length.—The river preserves the same character, decreasing slowly in magnitude, and still flowing through an alluvial country; where there is no very high ground, and where the plains are traversed by the elk, the buffalo, the antelope, &c.

As they held on their course, they found the same appearances of salt and coal; also of pumice-stone and a kind of burnt earth. A little farther on, the hills exhibited large, irregular, broken masses of rocks, some of which, although 200 feet above the river, seemed, at some remote period, to have been subject to its influence, and were apparently worn smooth by the agitation of the water. The rocks, as here enumerated, consist of white and grey granite, flint, limestone, freestone, and occasionally broken strata of a black coloured stone like petrified wood, which make good whetstones.—The usual appearances of coal and pumice-stone continued, the coal being of a better quality when burned, making a hot and lasting fire, but emitting very little smoke or flame. At a point a little higher up than this, the bed of coal is said to be in some places six feet thick. It seems a remarkable fact in the history of this country, that even on the side of so large a river, dew is extremely rare.

They were now approaching to the Rocky Mountains,—those which form the partition between the waters of the east and of the west; and some of the points of this remarkable chain were occasionally in view. The elevation at which they were, was certainly now very considerable. There was no timber on the hills; and only a few scattered trees of cotton-wood, ash, box, alder, and willow, by the water side. The scenery was very romantic; and in the midst of it, says the narrative, are vast ranges of walls, which are so singular, that they seem the productions of art. They rise perpendicularly from the river, sometimes to the height of 100 feet, varying in thickness from one foot to 12, but equally broad at top and bottom. The stones of which they are formed are black, thick, and durable, and are almost invariably parallelopipeds of unequal sizes, but equally

deep, and laid regularly in ranges over each other like bricks, each covering the interstice of the two on which it rests.

Such a wall, 100 feet high, and 12 feet broad, must be a very magnificent object, and seems in due proportion to the great scale on which every thing in this country is laid down. The top of this wall must have once been level with the surface; so we may judge from this of the quantity of strata worn away. It is a satisfaction to see the same characters prevailing in the geological structure of countries most remote from one another, and to observe basaltic walls intersecting the strata of the Missouri, just as they cut the Waken of the island of Mull, or the columnar rocks of the Giant's Causeway.

As they approached the mountains, and had got considerably beyond the walls just described, at the meridian nearly of 110 deg. and the parallel of about 47 deg. 20 min. there was a bifurcation of the river, which threw them into considerable doubt as to which was the true Missouri, and the course which it behoved them to pursue. The commanders of the expedition determined to follow the southern branch.—They proceeded till the 13th, when finding that the river bore considerably to the south, fearing that they were in an error, they changed their course, and proceeded across the plain.—In this direction Captain Lewis had gone about two miles, when his ears were saluted with the agreeable sound of a fall of water; and, as he advanced, a spray, which seemed driven by the high south-west wind, rose above the plain like a column of smoke, and vanished in an instant. Towards this point he directed his steps; and the noise increasing as he approached, soon became too tremendous to be mistaken for any thing but the great falls of the Missouri. Having travelled seven miles after first hearing the sound, he reached the falls about 12 o'clock. The hills, as he approached, were difficult of access, and about 200 feet high. Down these he hurried with impatience; and seating himself on some rocks under the centre of the falls, enjoyed the sublime spectacle of this stupendous cataract, which since the creation had been lavishing its magnificence on the desert.

These falls extend, in all, over a distance of nearly twelve miles; and the medium breadth of the river varies from 300 to 600 yards. The principal fall is near the lower extremity, and is upwards of 80 feet perpendicular. The river