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A LARGE BAND OF INDIANS AHEAD.

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we passed, at a distance of $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles, a small rivulet in a bend on the north; two miles further, an island on the same side; half a mile beyond which we came to a grove of trees, at the entrance of a run in a bend to the south, and camped for the night on the northern shore. The eight miles which we made to-day cost us much trouble. The air was cold and rendered more disagreeable by the rain, which fell in several slight showers in the course of the day; our cords broke several times, but fortunately without injury to the boats.

On ascending the hills near the river, one of the party found that there was snow mixed with the rain on the heights. A little back of these the country becomes perfectly level on both sides of the river. There is now no timber on the hills, and only a few scattering cottonwood, ash, box-elder, and willows along the water. In the course of the day we passed several camps of Indians, the most recent of which seemed to have been evacuated about five weeks since. From the several apparent dates we supposed that they were made by a band of about 100 lodges, who were traveling slowly up the river. Although no parts of the Missouri, from the [village of the] Minnetarees to this place, exhibit signs of permanent settlements, yet none seem exempt from the transient visits of hunting-parties. We know that the Minnetarees of the Missouri extend their excursions on the south side of the river as high as the Yellowstone; and the Assiniboin visit the northern side, most probably as high as Porcupine [Poplar] river. All the lodges between that place and the Rocky mountains we supposed to belong to the Minnetarees of Fort de Prairie, who live on the south fork of the Saskatchewan.

May 31st. We proceeded in the two periogues, leaving the canoes to bring on the meat of two buffaloes killed last evening. Soon after we set off it began to rain; and though it ceased at noon, the weather continued cloudy during the rest of the day. The obstructions of yesterday continue, and fatigue the men excessively. The banks are so slip-