

vigation would be broken by shallows at low water. Bearing in towards the river, we were again forced off by another slough; and passing around, steered towards a clump of trees on the river, and, finding there good grass, encamped. The prairies along the left bank are alive with immense droves of wild horses; and they had been seen during the day at every opening through the woods which afforded us a view across the river. Latitude, by observation, $37^{\circ} 08' 00''$; longitude $120^{\circ} 45' 22''$.

April 5.—During the earlier part of the day's ride, the country presented a lacustrine appearance; the river was deep, and nearly on a level with the surrounding country; its banks raised like a levee, and fringed with willows. Over the bordering plain were interspersed spots of prairie among fields of *tulé* (bulrushes), which in this country are called *tulares*, and little ponds. On the opposite side, a line of timber was visible, which, according to information, points out the course of the slough, which at times of high water connects with the San Joaquin river—a large body of water in the upper part of the valley, called the *Tulé* lakes. The river and all its sloughs are very full, and it is probable that the lake is now discharging. Here elk were frequently started, and one was shot out of a band which ran around us. On our left, the Sierra maintains its snowy height, and masses of snow appear to descend very low towards the plains; probably the late rains in the valley were snow on the mountains. We travelled 37 miles, and encamped on the river. Latitude of the camp, $120^{\circ} 28' 31''$, and latitude $36^{\circ} 49' 12''$.

April 6.—After having travelled fifteen miles along the river, we made an early halt, under the shade of sycamore trees. Here we found the San Joaquin coming down from the Sierra with a westerly course, and checking our way, as all its tributaries had previously done. We had expected to raft the river; but found a good ford, and encamped on the opposite bank, where droves of wild horses were raising clouds of dust on the prairie. Columns of smoke were visible in the direction of the *Tulé* lakes to the southward—probably kindled in the *tulares* by the Indians, as signals that there were strangers in the valley.

We made, on the 7th, a hard march in a cold chilly rain from morning until night—the weather so thick that we travelled by compass. This was a *traverse* from the San Joaquin to the waters of the *Tulé* lakes, and our road was over a very level prairie country. We saw wolves frequently during the day, prowling about after the young antelope, which cannot run very fast. These

were numerous during the day, and two were caught by the people.

Late in the afternoon we discovered timber, which was found to be groves of oak trees on a dry *arroyo*. The rain, which had fallen in frequent showers, poured down in a storm at sunset, with a strong wind, which swept off the clouds, and left a clear sky. Riding on through the timber, about dark we found abundant water in small ponds, 20 to 30 yards in diameter, with clear deep water and sandy beds, bordered with bog rushes (*juncus effusus*), and a tall rush (*scirpus lacustris*) twelve feet high, and surrounded near the margin with willow trees in bloom; among them one which resembled *salix myricoides*. The oak of the groves was the same already mentioned, with small leaves, in form like those of the white oak, and forming, with the evergreen oak, the characteristic trees of the valley.

April 8.—After a ride of two miles through brush and open groves, we reached a large stream, called the River of the Lake, resembling in size the San Joaquin, and being about 100 yards broad. This is the principal tributary to the *Tulé* lakes, which collect all the waters in the upper part of the valley. While we were searching for a ford, some Indians appeared on the opposite bank, and, having discovered that we were not Spanish soldiers, showed us the way to a good ford several miles above.

The Indians of the Sierra make frequent descents upon the settlements west of the Coast Range, which they keep constantly swept of horses; among them are many who are called Christian Indians, being refugees from Spanish missions. Several of these incursions occurred while we were at Helvetia. Occasionally parties of soldiers follow them across the Coast Range, but never enter the Sierra.

On the opposite side we found some forty or fifty Indians, who had come to meet us from the village below. We made them some small presents, and invited them to accompany us to our encampment, which, after about three miles through fine oak groves, we made on the river. We made a fort, principally on account of our animals. The Indians brought otter skins, and several kinds of fish, and bread made of acorns, to trade. Among them were several who had come to live among these Indians when the missions were broken up, and who spoke Spanish fluently. They informed us that they were called by the Spaniards *mansitos* (tame), in distinction from the wilder tribes of the mountains. They, however, think themselves very insecure, not knowing at what unforeseen moment the sins of the latter may be visited on them. They are dark-