

EXCURSION TO THE OREGON.

appointed hour, and posts them around outside the camp in such situations that they may command a view of the environs, and be ready to give the alarm in case of danger. The captain cries the hour regularly by a watch, and *all's well*, every fifteen minutes, and each man of the guard is required to repeat this call in rotation, which if any one should fail to do, it is fair to conclude that he is asleep, and he is then immediately visited and stirred up. In case of defection of this kind, our laws adjudge to the delinquent the hard sentence of walking three days. As yet, none of our poor fellows have incurred this penalty, and the probability is, that it would not at this time be enforced, as we are yet in a country where little molestation is to be apprehended; but in the course of another week's travel, when thieving and ill-designing Indians will be out, lying on our trail, it will be necessary that the strictest watch be kept; and for the preservation of our persons and property, that our laws shall be rigidly enforced."

For about a fortnight the caravan proceeded without any very remarkable incident occurring. The cook of the mess to which Mr Townsend belonged decamped one night, having no doubt become tired of the expedition, and determined to go back to the settlements. The man himself was little missed; but he had taken a rifle, powder-horn, and shot-pouch along with him, and these articles were precious. In a few days after, three other men deserted, likewise carrying rifles with them. In the course of the fortnight the caravan passed through several villages of the Kaw Indians, with whom they traded a little, giving bacon and tobacco in exchange for hides. These Indians do not appear, on the whole, to have been very favourable specimens of the American aborigines. The men had many of them fine countenances, but the women were very homely. The following is a description of one of their chiefs:—"In the evening the principal Kansas chief paid us a visit in our tent. He is a young man about twenty-five years of age, straight as a poplar, and with a noble countenance and bearing, but he appeared to me to be marvelously deficient in most of the requisites which go to make the character of a *real* Indian chief, at least of such Indian chiefs as we read of in our popular books. I begin to suspect, in truth, that these lofty and dignified attributes are more apt to exist in the fertile brain of the novelist than in reality. Be this as it may, *our* chief is a very lively, laughing, and rather playful personage; perhaps he may put on his dignity, like a glove, when it suits his convenience."

On the 8th of May the party had a misfortune in the loss of Mr Milton Sublette, who, owing to a fungus in one of his legs, was obliged to return to the settlements. On the afternoon of next day, the party crossed a broad Indian trail, bearing northerly, supposed to be about five days old, and to have been made by a war-party of Pawnees. Hoping to escape these for-