

could scarcely drag themselves along. At length one of the mules, being about to give out from fatigue and famine, they hastened to dispatch him. Husbanding this miserable supply, they dried the flesh, and for three days subsisted upon the nutriment extracted from the bones. As to the meat, it was packed and preserved as long as they could do without it, not knowing how long they might remain bewildered in these desolate regions.

One of the men was now dispatched ahead to reconnoitre the country, and to discover, if possible, some more practicable route. In the meantime, the rest of the party moved on slowly. After a lapse of three days, the scout rejoined them. He informed them that Snake River ran immediately below the sierra or mountainous ridge upon which they were travelling; that it was free from precipices, and was at no great distance from them in a direct line; but that it would be impossible for them to reach it without making a weary circuit. Their only course would be to cross the mountain ridge to the left.

Up this mountain, therefore, the weary travellers directed their steps; and the ascent, in their present weak and exhausted state, was one of the severest parts of this most painful journey. For two days were they toiling