

EXCURSION TO THE OREGON.

America—a region without a single green thing to vary and enliven the scene, and abounding in swarms of ferocious little black gnats, which assail the eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth of the unhappy traveller. It is necessary, however, to pursue a route in this direction, in order to find accessible passes through the Rocky Mountains, which are impenetrable more to the north-west. Making the best of their way over the inhospitable desert, and fortunately escaping any roving bands of unfriendly Indians, the cavalcade struck through a range of stony mountains, called the Black Hills, and in a few days afterwards came in sight of the Wind River Mountains, which form the loftiest land in the northern continent, and are at all times covered with snow of dazzling whiteness. From the great height above the level of the sea which the party had attained, the climate was found to be cold, even although in summer; the plains were covered only by the scantiest herbage; and frequently there was great difficulty in obtaining a supply of water for the camp. The painfulness of the journey, therefore, was now extreme, both for man and beast.

Occasionally, however, a green spot did occur, where the jaded horses were allowed to halt, to roam about without their riders, and to tumble joyfully on the verdant sward; and as these *oases* always abounded in birds and plants, our two naturalists were loath to leave them. Nor was their journey through the inhospitable region of the hills devoid of incidents to vary the monotony of the way, and provoke hearty laughs from the whole party. One afternoon, one of the men had a somewhat perilous adventure with a grizzly bear. He saw the animal crouching his huge frame among some willows which skirted the river, and, approaching on horseback to within twenty yards, fired upon him. The bear was only slightly wounded by the shot, and, with a fierce growl of angry malignity, rushed from his cover, and gave chase. The horse happened to be a slow one, and for the distance of half a mile the race was severely contested—the bear frequently approaching so near the terrified animal as to snap at his heels, while the equally terrified rider, who had lost his hat at the start, used whip and spur with the most frantic diligence, frequently looking behind, from an influence which he could not resist, at his rugged and determined foe, and shrieking in an agony of fear, 'Shoot him! shoot him!' The man, who was a young hunter, happened to be about a mile behind the main body, either from the indolence of his horse or his own carelessness; but as he approached the party in his desperate flight, and his pitiable cries reached the ears of the men in front, about a dozen of them rode to his assistance, and soon succeeded in diverting the attention of his pertinacious foe. After the bear had received the contents of all the guns, he fell, and was soon despatched. The man rode in among his fellows, pale and haggard from overwrought feelings, and was