

EXCURSION TO THE OREGON.

of trade with them. The bales were usually made to weigh about eighty pounds, of which a horse was to carry two. Captain Wyeth insured the good-will and obedience of the men by his affable but firm manner, and showed himself every way suitable for his very important mission. In the company there were also five missionaries, the principal of whom, Mr Jason Lee, was "a tall and powerful man, who looked as though he were well calculated to buffet difficulties in a wild country." Before setting out, they were joined also by Mr Milton Sublette, a trader and trapper of several years' standing, who intended to travel a part of the way with them. Mr Sublette brought with him about twenty trained hunters, "true as the steel of their tried blades," who had more than once gone over the very track which the caravan intended to pursue—a reinforcement which was very welcome to Captain Wyeth and his party.

THE CARAVAN SETS OUT.

On the 28th of April, at ten o'clock in the morning, all things being prepared, the caravan, consisting of seventy men and two hundred and fifty horses, began its march towards the west. All were in high spirits, and full of hope of adventure; uproarious bursts of merriment, and gay and lively songs, constantly echoed along the line of the cavalcade. The road lay over a vast rolling prairie, with occasional small spots of timber at the distance of several miles apart, and this was expected to be the complexion of the track for some weeks. For the first day and night the journey was agreeable, but on the second day a heavy rain fell, which made the ground wet and muddy, soaked the blanket bedding, and rendered camping at night anything but pleasant. The description given of a nightly camp is interesting:—"The party is divided into messes of eight men, and each mess is allowed a separate tent. The captain of a mess (who is generally an 'old hand') receives each morning rations of pork, flour, &c. for his people, and they choose one of their body as cook for the whole. Our camp now consists of nine messes, of which Captain Wyeth's forms one, although it contains only four persons besides the cook. When we arrive in the evening at a suitable spot for encampment, Captain Wyeth rides round a space which he considers large enough to accommodate it, and directs where each mess shall pitch its tent. The men immediately unload their horses, and place their bales of goods in the direction indicated, and in such manner as, in case of need, to form a sort of fortification and defence. When all the messes are arranged in this way, the camp forms a hollow square, in the centre of which the horses are placed and staked firmly to the ground. The guard consists of from six to eight men, is relieved three times each night, and so arranged that each gang may serve alternate nights. The captain of a guard (who is generally also the captain of a mess) collects his people at the