

the summit of the Rocky mountains to the west, and then to recross to the east; making, in all, with the transit we had just accomplished, three crossings of that mountain in this section of its course. But, no matter. The coves, the heads of the rivers, the approximation of their waters, the practicability of the mountain passes, and the locality of the THREE PARKS, were all objects of interest, and, although well known to hunters and trappers, were unknown to science and to history. We therefore changed our course, and turned up the valley of the Platte instead of going down it.

We crossed several small affluents, and again made a fortified camp in a grove. The country had now become very beautiful—rich in water, grass, and game; and to these were added the charm of scenery and pleasant weather.

June 14.—Our route this morning lay along the foot of the mountain, over the long low spurs which sloped gradually down to the river, forming the broad valley of the Platte. The country is beautifully watered. In almost every hollow ran a clear, cool mountain stream; and in the course of the morning we crossed seventeen, several of them being large creeks, forty to fifty feet wide, with a swift current, and tolerably deep. These were variously wooded with groves of aspen and cotton-wood, with willow, cherry, and other shrubby trees. Buffalo, antelope, and elk, were frequent during the day; and, in their abundance, the latter sometimes reminded us slightly of the Sacramento valley.

We halted at noon on Potter's fork—a clear and swift stream, forty yards wide, and in many places deep enough to swim our animals; and in the evening encamped on a pretty stream, where there were several beaver dams, and many trees recently cut down by the beaver. We gave to this the name of Beaver Dam creek, as now they are becoming sufficiently rare to distinguish by their name the streams on which they are found. In this mountain they occurred more abundantly than elsewhere in all our journey, in which their vestiges had been scarcely seen.

The next day we continued our journey up the valley, the country presenting much the same appearance, except that the grass was more scanty on the ridges, over which was spread a scrubby growth of sage; but still the bottoms of the creeks were broad, and afforded good pasture grounds. We had an animated chase after a grizzly bear this morning, which we tried to lasso. Fuentes threw the lasso upon his neck, but it slipped off, and he escaped into the dense thickets of the creek, into which we did not like to venture. Our course in the after-

noon brought us to the main Platte river, here a handsome stream, with a uniform breadth of seventy yards, except where widened by frequent islands. It was apparently deep, with a moderate current, and wooded with groves of large willow.

The valley narrowed as we ascended, and presently degenerated into a gorge, through which the river passed as through a gate. We entered it, and found ourselves in the New Park—a beautiful circular valley of thirty miles diameter, walled in all round with snowy mountains, rich with water and with grass, fringed with pine on the mountain sides below the snow line, and a paradise to all grazing animals. The Indian name for it signifies "*cow lodge*," of which our own may be considered a translation: the enclosure, the grass, the water, and the herds of buffalo roaming over it, naturally presenting the idea of a park. We halted for the night just within the gate, and expected, as usual, to see herds of buffalo, but an Arapahoe village had been before us, and not one was to be seen. Latitude of the encampment $40^{\circ} 52' 44''$. Elevation by the boiling point $7,720$ feet.

It is from this elevated *cove*, and from the gorges of the surrounding mountains, and some lakes within their bosoms, that the Great Platte river collects its first waters, and assumes its first form; and certainly no river could ask a more beautiful origin.

June 16.—In the morning we pursued our way through the Park, following a principal branch of the Platte, and crossing, among many smaller ones, a bold stream, scarcely fordable, called Lodge Pole fork, and which issues from a lake in the mountains on the right, ten miles long. In the evening we encamped on a small stream, near the upper end of the Park. Latitude of the camp $40^{\circ} 33' 22''$.

June 17.—We continued our way among the waters of the Park, over the foot hills of the bordering mountains, where we found good pasturage, and surprised and killed some buffalo. We fell into a broad and excellent trail, made by buffalo, where a wagon would pass with ease; and, in the course of the morning, we crossed the summit of the Rocky mountains, through a pass which was one of the most beautiful we had ever seen. The trail led among the aspens, through open grounds, richly covered with grass, and carried us over an elevation of about $9,000$ feet above the level of the sea.

The country appeared to great advantage in the delightful summer weather of the mountains, which we still continued to enjoy. Descending from the pass, we found ourselves again on the western waters; and halted to noon on the edge of another