

passed a skirt of their territory for seven miles. He also saw near the hills a flock of the mountain-cock, or a large species of the heath-hen, with a long pointed tail, which the Indians below had informed us were common among the Rocky mountains. Having finished his course of ten miles west across a bend, he continued two miles N. 80° W., and from that point discovered some lofty mountains³⁷ to the N.W. of Tower mountain, bearing N. 65° W., at 80 or 100 miles' distance. Here he camped on the north side in a handsome low ground, on which were several old stick-lodges. He had seen but little timber on the river in the forepart of the day, but here there is a greater quantity than usual. The river itself is about 80 yards wide, from six to ten feet deep, and has a strong, steady current. The party killed five elk and a mule-deer; and by way of experiment roasted some burrowing-squirrels, which they found to be well-flavored and tender.

June 6th. Captain Lewis was now [rightly³⁸] convinced that this river pursued a direction too far north for our route to the Pacific, and therefore resolved to return; but waited till noon to take a meridian altitude. The clouds, however, which had gathered during the latter part of the night, continued and prevented the observation. Part of the men were sent forward to a commanding eminence, six miles S. 70° W., from which they saw, at the distance of about 15 miles S. 80° W., a point of the south bluff of the river, which

Amer. Nat. IX. 1875, p. 148 *seq.* It was unknown to science till 1822. The bird Lewis here mentions is the sage-grouse, *Centrocercus urophasianus*.

³⁷ These are the other two of the Three Buttes or Sweet-grass hills, now separable by the eye from that one (Tower mountain) which had before intercepted the view of them. See text of July 19th, 1806.

³⁸ That is to say, if the Expedition was to explore the Missouri to its source. To have followed up Maria's river and crossed the Continental Divide at Maria's Pass, would have been to discover the present route of the Great Northern Railway, north of Flathead and Pend d'Oreille lakes, over to Clark's fork of the Columbia. But the glory of the Great Falls—of Smith's, Dearborn's, Gallatin's Madison's, Jefferson's rivers—of nearly the whole Missouri above steamboat navigation—would not then have been Lewis and Clark's. This was worth striving for, even though it finally brought them to the worst possible point whence to reach the Columbia.