

ough beautiful little val-
mountain country, arriving
the verge of a steep and
which we descended to

This is a place well
in the country, where the
ich the Colorado runs ex-
y but pretty valley, about
length. The river was
rds in breadth, swollen
nks, near to which it was
een to twenty feet deep.
n boat which had been
rt, and, after a delay of a
pposite banks with much
been encountered on the
according to information,
the valley is the most
Colorado; and the lati-
tude, which was oppo-
of an old fort on the left
was 40° 48' 27", and, by
levation above the sea
bearing to the entrance
w was south 20° east.
ers between lofty preci-
and the country below is
very rugged character;
affluents passing through
d all access to the water.
le valley was formerly a
ground for the trappers,
n sufficient pasturage for
the surrounding moun-
ted with game.

lock of mountain sheep as
no river, and our hunters
the bottoms of a small
Vermilion creek, which
t of the river a short dis-
campment, were covered
a. *vermicularis*, and other
shrubs. From the lower
e we issued by a remark-
ty or sixty yards wide,
advanced, to the height
dred feet. Issuing from
a small green valley, we
ent of the same nature,
n the other, the rocks on
n nearly vertical precipi-
feet in height. These
ed, to give some idea of
down on the Colorado
opers usually apply the
country. The cañon
nd of water, where we
several flocks of mountain
among the rocks, which
of small arms. In the
ed upon an ugly, barren,
corresponding well with
ed a few degrees north,
of the Colorado. The

Vermilion creek afforded us brackish water
and indifferent grass for the night.

A few scattered cedar trees were the
only improvement of the country on the fol-
lowing day; and at a little spring of bad
water, where we halted to noon, we had not
even the shelter of these from the hot rays
of the sun. At night we encamped in a fine
grove of cotton-wood trees, on the banks of
the Elk Head river, the principal fork of
the Yampah river, commonly called by the
trappers the Hoar river. We made here a
very strong *corral* and fort, and formed the
camp into vigilant guards. The country we
were now entering is constantly infested by
war parties of the Sioux and other Indians,
and is considered among the most dangerous
war grounds in the Rocky mountains; par-
ties of whites having been repeatedly de-
feated on this river.

On the 11th we continued up the river,
which is a considerable stream, fifty to a
hundred yards in width, handsomely and
continuously wooded with groves of the
narrow-leaved cotton-wood, (*populus an-
gustifolia*;) with these were thickets of
willow and *grain du bœuf*. The character-
istic plant along the river is *F. vermicula-
ris*, which generally covers the bottoms;
mingled with this, are saline shrubs and ar-
temisia. The new variety of grass which
we had seen on leaving the Uintah for had
now disappeared. The country on either
side was sandy and poor, scantily wooded
with cedars, but the river bottoms afford-
ed good pasture. Three antelopes were
killed in the afternoon, and we encamped a
little below a branch of the river, called St.
Vrain's fork. A few miles above was the
ort at which Frapp's party had been de-
feated two years since; and we passed dur-
ing the day a place where Carson had been
fired upon so close that one of the men had
five bullets through his body. Leaving
this river the next morning, we took our
way across the hills, where every hollow
had a spring of running water, with good
grass.

Yesterday and to-day we have had before
our eyes the high mountains which divide
the Pacific from the Mississippi waters;
and entering here among the lower spurs,
or foot hills of the range, the face of the
country began to improve with a magical
rapidity. Not only the river bottoms, but
the hills, were covered with grass; and
among the usual varied flora of the moun-
tain region, these were occasionally blue
with the showy bloom of a *lupinus*. In the
course of the morning we had the first glad
view of buffalo, and welcomed the appear-
ance of two old bulls with as much joy as if
they had been messengers from home; and
when we descended to noon on St. Vrain's

fork, an affluent of Green river, the hunters
brought in mountain sheep and the meat of
two fat bulls. Fresh entrails in the river
showed us that there were Indians above;
and, at evening, judging it unsafe to encamp
in the bottoms, which were wooded only with
willow thickets, we ascended to the spurs
above, and fortified strongly in a small aspen
grove, near to which was a spring of cold
water. The hunters killed two fine cows
near the camp. A band of elk broke out of
a neighboring grove; antelopes were run-
ning over the hills; and on the opposite
river plains, herds of buffalo were raising
clouds of dust. The country here appeared
more variously stocked with game than any
part of the Rocky mountains we had visit-
ed; and its abundance is owing to the ex-
cellent pasturage, and its dangerous char-
acter as a war ground.

June 13.—There was snow here near
our mountain camp, and the morning was
beautiful and cool. Leaving St. Vrain's
fork, we took our way directly towards the
summit of the dividing ridge. The bot-
toms of the streams and level places were
wooded with aspens; and as we neared the
summit, we entered again the piny region.
We had a delightful morning's ride, the
ground affording us an excellent bridle path,
and reached the summit towards midday, at
an elevation of 8,000 feet. With joy and
exultation we saw ourselves once more on
the top of the Rocky mountains, and beheld
a little stream taking its course towards the
rising sun. It was an affluent of the Platte,
called *Pullan's* fork, and we descended to
noon upon it. It is a pretty stream, twenty
yards broad, and bears the name of a trap-
per who, some years since, was killed here
by the *Gros Ventre* Indians.

Issuing from the pines in the afternoon,
we saw spread out before us the valley of
the Platte, with the pass of the Medicine
Butte beyond, and some of the Sweet Water
mountains; but a smoky haziness in the air
entirely obscured the Wind River chain.

We were now about two degrees south of
the South Pass, and our course home would
have been eastwardly; but that would have
taken us over ground already examined,
and therefore without the interest which
would excite curiosity. Southwardly there
were objects worthy to be explored, to wit:
the approximation of the head waters of
three different rivers—the Platte, the Ar-
kansas, and the Grand River fork of the Rio
Colorado of the gulf of California; the Pass-
es at the heads of these rivers; and the
three remarkable mountain coves, called
Parks, in which they took their rise. One
of these Parks was, of course, on the west-
ern side of the dividing ridge; and a visit
to it would require us once more to cross