

No farther discovery in this direction was made for the next fifteen years. Though the French had explored the Missouri as far as the site of Fort Clark and the Mandan villages, they were possessed by the idea — due, perhaps, to Indian reports concerning the great tributary river, the Yellowstone — that in its upper course the main stream bent so far southward as to form a waterway to New Mexico, with which it was the constant desire of the authorities of Louisiana to open trade. A way thither was at last made known by two brothers named Mallet, who with six companions went up the Platte to its South Fork, which they called River of the Padoucas, — a name given it on some maps down to the middle of this century. They followed the South Fork for some distance, and then, turning southward and southwestward, crossed the plains of Colorado. Here the dried dung of the buffalo was their only fuel; and it has continued to feed the camp-fire of the traveller in this treeless region within the memory of many now living. They crossed the upper Arkansas, and apparently the Cimarron, passed Taos, and on the twenty-second of July reached Santa Fé, where they spent the winter. On the first of May, 1740, they began their return journey, three of them crossing the plains to the Pawnee villages, and the rest descending the Arkansas to the Mississippi.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Journal du Voyage des Frères Mallet, présenté à MM. de Bienville et Salmon.* This narrative is meagre and confused, but serves to establish the main points. *Copie du Certificat donné à Santa Fé aux*