

were two vessels belonging to Capt. Sutter at anchor near the landing—one a large two-masted lighter, and the other a schooner, which was shortly to proceed on a voyage to Fort Vancouver for a cargo of goods.

Since his arrival, several other persons, principally Americans, have established themselves in the valley. Mr. Sinclair, from whom I experienced much kindness during my stay, is settled a few miles distant, on the Rio de los Americanos. Mr. Condrols, a gentleman from Germany, has established himself on Feather river, and is associated with Captain Sutter in agricultural pursuits. Among other improvements, they are about to introduce the cultivation of rape seed (*brassica rapus*), which there is every reason to believe is admirably adapted to the climate and soil. The lowest average produce of wheat, as far as we can at present know, is thirty-five fanegas for one sown; but, as an instance of its fertility, it may be mentioned that Señor Valejo obtained, on a piece of ground where sheep had been pastured, 800 fanegas for eight sown. The produce being different in various places, a very correct idea cannot be formed.

An impetus was given to the active little population by our arrival, as we were in want of everything. Mules, horses, and cattle, were to be collected; the horse mill was at work day and night, to make sufficient flour; the blacksmith's shop was put in requisition for horse shoes and bridle bits; and pack-saddles, ropes, and bridles, and all the other little equipments of the camp, were again to be provided.

The delay thus occasioned was one of repose and enjoyment, which our situation required, and, anxious as we were to resume our homeward journey, was regretted by no one. In the meantime, I had the pleasure to meet with Mr. Chiles, who was residing at a farm on the other side of the river Sacramento, while engaged in the selection of a place for a settlement, for which he had received the necessary grant of land from the Mexican Government.

It will be remembered that we had parted near the frontier of the States, and that he had subsequently descended the valley of Lewis's fork, with a party of ten or twelve men, with the intention of crossing the intermediate mountains to the waters of the bay of San Francisco. In the execution of this design, and aided by subsequent information, he left the Columbia at the mouth of *Malheur* river; and making his way to the head waters of the Sacramento with a part of his company, travelled down that river to the settlements of *Nueva Helvetia*. The other party, to whom he had committed his wagons, and mill irons and saws, took a

course further to the south, and the wagons and their contents were lost.

On the 22d we made a preparatory move, and encamped near the settlement of Mr. Sinclair, on the left bank of the Rio de los Americanos. I had discharged five of the party; Neal, the blacksmith (an excellent workman, and an unmarried man, who had done his duty faithfully, and had been of very great service to me), desired to remain, as strong inducements were offered here to mechanics. Although at considerable inconvenience to myself, his good conduct induced me to comply with his request; and I obtained for him, from Captain Sutter, a present compensation of two dollars and a half per diem, with a promise that it should be increased to five, if he proved as good a workman as had been represented. He was more particularly an agricultural blacksmith. The other men were discharged with their own consent.

While we remained at this place, Dercier, one of our best men, whose steady good conduct had won my regard, wandered off from the camp, and never returned to it again; nor has he since been heard of.

March 24.—We resumed our journey with an ample stock of provisions and a large cavalcade of animals, consisting of 130 horses and mules, and about thirty head of cattle, five of which were milch cows. Mr. Sutter furnished us also with an Indian boy, who had been trained as a *vaguero*, and who would be serviceable in managing our cavalcade, great part of which were nearly as wild as buffalo; and who was, besides, very anxious to go along with us. Our direct course home was east; but the Sierra would force us south, above five hundred miles of travelling, to a pass at the head of the San Joaquin river. This pass, reported to be good, was discovered by Mr. Joseph Walker, of whom I have already spoken, and whose name it might therefore appropriately bear. To reach it, our course lay along the valley of the San Joaquin—the river on our right, and the lofty wall of the impassable Sierra on the left. From that pass we were to move southeasterly, having the Sierra then on the right, and reach the "*Spanish trail*," deviously traced from one watering place to another, which constituted the route of the caravans from *Puebla de los Angeles*, near the coast of the Pacific, to *Santa Fé* of New Mexico. From the pass to this trail was 150 miles. Following that trail through a desert, relieved by some fertile plains indicated by the recurrence of the term *vegas*, until it turned to the right to cross the Colorado, our course would be northeast until we regained the latitude we had lost in arriving at the *Eutah* lake, and thence to the Rocky mountains at