

fact, that Mr. Ashley, in an expedition in 1836, drew a field piece, (a six pounder) from Missouri, across the prairies, through the southern pass, to a fort on Utah lake (to the south of the southern boundary line,) the whole journey being a distance of 1200 miles; and to the additional fact that in 1828, a large number of heavily laden waggons performed the same journey with ease and without an accident.

It will be remarked that I have slurred over portions of the route and neglected the regular incidents of much of our daily travel, but when it is remembered that the journey lasted six months, and that the events of many successive days scarcely varied from each other, the reader will come to the conclusion that it would have been hardly wise in me to have taxed his patience with each day's dull routine. The great object, I considered to be, the furnishing the course of the route, a view of its general aspect and difficulties, the distances between points of travel, (the main object of the present chapter) and to impart an accurate notion of the region which the settler must make his future home. I have therefore avoided every thing that did not contribute to this design, with the exception of a few trifling incidents of humor inseparable from such an expedition, which I introduced to enliven the monotony of the narrative, and which, moreover, I considered useful, as affording an idea of camp life, and the amusements of a journey over the prairies.

Emigrants should start as early as possible in ordinary seasons. The first of May should be set down if possible as the outside limit, and even as early as the first of April would do. For those coming from the Platte country, it is thought to be most advisable to cross the Missouri at McPherson's ferry, in Holt county, and to take up the ridge between the Platte and the Kansas rivers.

Companies of forty or fifty waggons are large enough, and I would advise bodies of travellers for this region to keep within that measure. Large bodies prove unwieldy to arrange and to control; the numerous stock attached to them become troublesome, and moreover large bodies of Americans are prone to differ in opinion. Small collections offer but few inducements to a disordered ambition, but large ones are conducive of selfish strife and discord. This has been seen to have been the case with our expedition; which divided after crossing the Kansas; and which was further subdivided af-