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David Thompson's Narrative
of His Explorations in
Western America, 1784-1812
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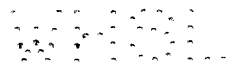


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DAVID THOMPSON'S
NARRATIVE
OF HIS EXPLORATIONS IN
WESTERN AMERICA

1784-1812

EDITED BY
J. B. TYRRELL



TORONTO
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CHAPTER XIII

JOURNEY TO MANDANE VILLAGES

Start for Mandane Villages—Ventures—Cross Stone Indian River—Journal—Warned by Stone Indians to be on our guard against the Sieux—Take great Traverse to Turtle Hills—Ash House—Camp of Stone Indians—Massacre in 1794—Peace in 1802—Storm on the Plains—Men Lost—All day in camp—Buffalo Hunt—Reach Mouse River—Follow Mouse River—Elbow of Mouse River—Sieux Indian war party—Dog Tent Hills—Mississourie Reached.

HAVING made our preparations for a journey to the Mandane Villages on the banks of the Mississourie River; on the 28th November 1797, we set off.¹ Our guide and interpreter, who had resided eight years in their Villages was a Mons^r René Jussomme who fluently spoke the Mandane Language. M^r Hugh M^cCrachan, a good hearted Irishman, who had been often to the Villages, and resided there for weeks and months; and seven french Canadians, a fine, hardy, good humoured sett of Men, fond of full feeding, willing to hunt for it, but more willing to enjoy it: When I have reproved them, for what I thought Gluttony, eating full eight pounds of fresh meat p^r day, they have told me, that, their greatest enjoyment of life was Eating. They are all extremely ignorant, and without the least education, and appear to set no value on it. All these

¹ The names of the men who accompanied Thompson on this journey are given by him in his note-books as follows: "René Jussomme, Joseph Boisseau, Hugh McCracken, Alexis Vivier, Pierre Gilbert, Fra^s Perrault, Tousst^s Vandril, L^s Jos. Houl, J. B^{te} Minie." For references to these men, see Coues, *New Light*, p. 301, &c.

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excepting my servant man, A. Brosseau, who had been a soldier, were free traders on their own account for this journey, each of them on credit from M^r M^cDonell, took a venture in goods and trinkets to the amount of forty to sixty skins to be paid in furs, by trading with the natives of the Villages. I was readily supplied with every thing I required which was chiefly ammunition, tobacco and a few trinkets for expenses. For my service I had two Horses. Mons^r Jussomme had one, and the men thirty dogs, their own property, each two hauled a flat sled upon which their venture was lashed ; these Dogs had all been traded from the Stone Indians, who make great use of them in their encampments. They were all like half dog, half wolf, and always on the watch to devour every thing they could get their teeth on ; they did not [do] willing work, and most of them had never hauled a flat sled, but the Canadians soon break them in, by constant flogging, in which they seem to take great delight ; when on the march the noise was intolerable, and made me keep two or three miles ahead.

As my journey to the Mississourie is over part of the Great Plains, I shall give it in the form of a journal, this form, however dull, is the only method in my opinion, that can give the reader a clear idea of them. With our three Horses and thirty Dogs with their Sleds, we crossed the Stone River on the ice ; the Snow on the ground was three inches in depth. We went about six miles and put up in the woods of the Mouse River,¹ which joins the Stone Indian River about two miles below the House. The dogs unused to hauling going any where, and every where from the Men, who employed themselves all the way in swearing at, and flogging them ; until we put up, when the Dogs were unharnessed, a piece of line tied round the neck of each, and one, or both fore feet were brought through it, to keep them quiet and from straying away. At 8 PM the Thermometer 20 degrees below zero.

¹ Souris river.

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November 29th. A westerly breeze, at 7 AM 27 below zero, the Men thought it too cold to proceed.

November 30th. 7 AM 32 being 64 degrees below the freezing point. 9 PM 36 too cold to proceed over the open plains: and certainly an intensity of cold not known on the same parallel of Latitude near the Mountains. Necessity obliged us to hunt the Bison, we killed two Bulls, we could bring only half the meat to the Tent, which satisfied ourselves and the Dogs.

December 1st. A WSW Gale. Thermometer 37 below Zero. We could not proceed but had the good fortune to kill a good Bison Cow which kept us in good humour. The severe cold and high wind made the Tent very smoky, so that, notwithstanding the bad weather, we walked about in the woods the greatest part of the day, and when in the Tent we had to lie down.

December 2nd. At 8 AM Ther 36, at 8 PM 15, the wind WSW. We killed a Bison Cow, which kept the Dogs quiet.

December 3rd. At 8 AM 3, at 8 PM 3 the weather was now mild but a WNW Gale came on with snow and high drift [so] that we could not see a fourth a mile from us. And our journey is over open plains from one patch of Wood to another patch; for the Mouse River, on which we are camped, has Woods only in places, and many miles distant from each other. And these patches of Wood must be kept in sight to guide over the plains and none of the Men knew the use of the Compass, and did not like to trust it. We could not proceed and the Tent was disagreeable with smoke.

December 4th. 7 AM 4 above Zero WSW gale of Wind. At 9 AM we set off, and went eleven miles to a grove of Oaks,¹ Ash,² Elm,³ Nut⁴ Trees, and other hard Woods; which are

¹ *Quercus macrocarpa* Michx. [E. A. P.]

² *Fraxinus*. [E. A. P.]

³ *Ulmus americana* Linn. [E. A. P.]

⁴ Probably Hickory, *Hicoria*, species uncertain. [E. A. P.]

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always the Woods of this River : At this place we came to five Tents of Stone Indians, who as usual received us with kindness ; they did not approve of our journey to the Mississourie : and informed us, that some skirmishes had taken place between the Mandane and Sieux Indians in which the latter lost several Men, which they attributed to the Ammunition furnished to the former by the trading parties from the Stone Indian River, such as ours were ; and that they had determined to way lay us, and plunder us of all we had, and also take all our scalps, and [they] warned us to be on our garde ; I did not like this news, but the Men paid no attention to it, thinking it proceeded from hatred to the Mandanes. We then followed the River banks for seven miles, and camped at 4 P.M. The River is about twenty yards wide, at present the water very low.

December 5th. 7 AM Ther 13 below zero, became mild, in the afternoon a WSW Gale came on and increased to a Storm by 6 P.M. Mons^r Jussomme, our Guide, informed us, that he would now take the great traverse to the Turtle Hill ; we were early up, and by 7½ AM set off : he led us about South four miles to a small grove of Aspens on the banks of a brook thence about six miles to the Turtle Brook from the Hill ; thence S by W seven miles ; we now came on a rising ground at 1 P.M. but the Turtle Hill was not in sight ; and all before and around us a boundless plain ; and Mons^r Jussomme could not say where we were ; the weather appeared threatening and preparing for a Storm ; our situation was alarming : and anxiety [was] in the face of every man, for we did not know to which hand to turn ourselves for shelter : I mounted my Horse and went to the highest ground near us, and with my telescope viewed the horizon all around, but not the least vestige of woods appeared ; but at due North West from us, where there appeared the tops of a few Trees like Oaks. They anxiously enquired if I saw Woods. I told them what I had seen, and that with my old

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Soldier I should guide myself by the Compass, and directly proceed as the Woods were far off; M^cCrachan and a Canadian joined us; the other six conferred among themselves what to do, they had no faith in the Compass on land, and thought best to march in some direction until they could see woods with their own eyes; but had not proceeded half a mile before all followed us, thinking there would be a better chance of safety by being all together. The Gale of Wind came on, and kept increasing. The Snow was four to six inches in depth with a slight crust on it. We held on almost in despair of reaching the Woods; fortunately the Dogs were well broken in, and gave us no trouble. Night came upon us, and we had carefully to keep in file, at times calling to each other to learn that none were missing. At length at 7 P.M., thank good Providence, we arrived at the Woods, very much fatigued; walking against the Storm was as laborious as walking knee deep in water. We got up our tent and placed ourselves under shelter. Although we had taken six hours on this last course, yet I found by my Observations we had come only thirteen miles.

December 6th. A heavy westerly gale of wind with mild weather. The Horses and Dogs as well as ourselves were too much fatigued to proceed. Two Bison Bulls were killed, though very tough, kept away hunger and fed the Dogs.

December 7th. At 7 A.M. Ther 25, only five degrees below the freezing point, a fine mild day. We proceeded five miles up the Mouse River to an old trading House, called "Ash House"¹ from the plenty of those fine Trees; it had to be given up, from it's being too open to the incursions of the Sioux Indians. Two Stone Indians came to us. They said

¹ Thompson's survey places this post sixteen and a half miles south and thirty-nine miles west of McDonnell's House, and his latitude is 40° 27' 32" N. It was probably near or opposite the village of Hartney in Manitoba, on the Canadian Northern Railway.

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their camp was not far off. Mons^r Jussomme's Mare and my yellow Horse had both become lame of each one foot, and could proceed no further through the Plains, each of these Horses had one white foot and three black feet; the white foot of each was lame in the same manner, the hair of the white foot was worn away by the hard snow, and a small hole in the flesh also above the hoof. The three black feet had not a hair off them. My other Horse was dark brown with four black feet. As the Horses of this country have no shoes, the colour of the hoof is much regarded; the yellow hoof with white hair is a brittle hoof and soon wears away; for this reason, as much as possible, the Natives take only black hoofed Horses on their War expeditions. As the camp of Stone Indians were going to the house of M^r John M^cDonell to trade, we delivered the Horses to the care of an old Indian to be taken to the house. Mons^r Jussomme was now without a Horse and had to purchase Dogs.

December 8th. 7 AM Ther 18 below Zero. A cold day which was employed in hunting, without success. I observed for Latitude and Longitude

December 9th. 7 AM Ther 26 below Zero. We went up the River SW $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles to eight tents of Stone Indians; who treated us with hospitality, and each of us got a good meal. Learning that we were going to the Mississourie, they warned us to beware of the Sioux Indians, whom they thought would lie in wait for us at the Dog Tent Hills, and [to] keep on our guard against a surprise. We offered a high reward to a young man to guide us to the Mandane Villages, but however tempting the offer, neither himself nor any other would accept the offer. They plainly told us that we might expect to find the Sioux Indians on our road; and they were not on good terms with the Mandanes. We went about three miles and put up in view of the Turtle Hill. We are near the place, where in 1794, fifteen Tents of Stone Indians were destroyed by a large War Party of Sioux Indians,

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although of the same Nation.¹ From their own accounts, some forty or fifty years ago a feud broke out, and several were killed and wounded on both sides; about five hundred Tents separated from the main body, and took up their hunting grounds on the Red River and the Plains stretching north westward along the right bank of the Saskatchewan River to within 300 miles of the Mountains, and being in alliance and strict confederacy with the Nahathaways, who accompanied them to war they were powerful, and with their allies, made their brethren the Sieux Nation, feel the Weight of their resentment for several years, until the small pox of 1782 came, which involved them all in one common calamity, and very much reduced the numbers of all parties. The Sieux had lost several of their men, who went to hunt but did not return, and suspicion fell on the Stone Indians and their allies. They determined on revenge, and the destruction of these fifteen Tents was the result. The Sieux afterwards found the loss of their Men was by the Chippaways, their never ceasing enemies, and deeply regretted what they had done; the old Men made an apology, and proffered peace, which was accepted in 1812, and a reunion took place; and in this Peace their allies and confederates were included; and which continues to this day.

December 10th. 7 AM Ther 20 below zero: The hummock of Woods on the Turtle Hill, which was our mark, gave our course by the compass S 30° E. As we had to cross a plain of twenty two miles, and having felt the severe changes of weather, I desired the Men to follow close in file, for they now had faith in the Compass. At 7½ AM our bit of a caravan set off; as the Dogs were fresh, we walked at a good pace for some time, a gentle south wind arose; and kept increasing; by 10 AM it was a heavy Gale, with high

¹ In his original notes, Thompson says that on December 16 they were on the very spot where these fifteen tents of Assiniboin were killed "last year."

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drift and dark weather, so much so that I had to keep the Compass in my hand, for I could not trust to the Wind. By Noon, it was a perfect Storm, we had no alternative but to proceed, which we did slowly and with great labor, for the Storm was ahead, and the snow drift in our faces. Night came on, I could no longer see the Compass, and had to trust to the Wind; the weather became mild with small rain, but the Storm continued with darkness; some of the foremost called to lie down where we were, but as it was evident we were ascending a gentle rising ground, we continued and soon, thank good Providence, my face struck against some Oak saplings, and I passed the word that we were in the Woods, a fire was quickly made, and as it was on an elevated place it was seen afar off: As yet the only one with me, was my servant who led the Horse, and we anxiously awaited the others; they came hardly able to move, one, and then another, and in something more than half an hour, nine had arrived; each with Dogs and Sleds, but one Man, and a Sled with the Dogs were missing; to search for the latter was useless: but how to find the former, we were at a loss: and remained so for another half an hour, when we thought we heard his voice, the Storm was still rageing, we extended ourselves within call of each other, the most distant man heard him plainly, went to him, raised him up, and with assistance brought him to the fire, and we all thanked the Almighty for our preservation. He told us he became weak, fell several times, and at length he could not get up, and resigned himself to perish in the storm, when by chance lifting up his head he saw the fire, this gave him courage; stand he could not but [he] shuffled away on hands and knees through the snow, bawling with all his might until we fortunately heard him. We threw the Tent over some Oak sapplings and got under shelter from showers of rain, hail and sleet: At 7½ PM Ther 36 being four degrees above the freezing point; by a south wind making in little more than

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twelve hours a difference of temperature of fifty six degrees. I had weathered many a hard gale, but this was the most distressing day I had yet seen.

December 11th. At 8 AM Ther 37, being five degrees above the freezing point. A south gale with showers of snow; a mild day, but we were all too tired to proceed. A fine grove of Aspens was within thirty yards, which the darkness prevented us seeing; we removed our Tent to it. The Dogs and Sled missing belonged to Francis Hoole and the value of sixty skins in goods, with all his things were on it, but none would accompany him to look for it, although he offered the half of all that was on it; so much was the chance of the similar distress of yesterday dreaded.

December 12th. Ther 30 two degrees below the freezing point. Wind a SSW gale. We went eight miles along the north side of the Turtle Hill and put up. We were all very hungry, and the Dogs getting weak; we had seriously to attend to hunting; a small herd of Bulls were not far off, and three of us went off to them, the two that were with me were to approach by crawling to them, and if they missed, I was to give chase on horseback, for which I was ready; after an hour spent in approaching them, they both fired, but without effect, the herd started, I gave chase, came up with them and shot a tolerable good Bull; This is the usual manner of hunting the Bison by the Indians of the Plains: This gave us provisions for the present and the Dogs feasted on the offal.

December 13th. At 7 AM Ther 15 below zero, clear weather with a north gale and high drift; we could not proceed, but as usual in clear weather, I observed for Latitude, Longitude and the Variation of the compass. We took the case of Francis Hoole into consideration who had lost his Dogs and all his venture; and each of us agreed to give him goods to the value of two beavers, and haul it for him, which gave him a venture of eighteen skins, and the Irishman

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McCrachan, and myself doubled it. For it was out of his power to return alone.

December 14th. At 7 AM Ther 18 below zero. At 8 AM set off, and kept along the Hill to shorten as much as possible the wide Plain we have to cross to the Mouse River. We proceeded in a SE course about seventeen miles; and put up, the day fine, though cold: As this was the last place where Poles to pitch the Tent could be got, we cut the number required of dry Aspin to take with us.

December 15th. At 7 AM Ther 21 below zero. Having no provisions, part of the Men went a hunting, and managed to kill an old Bull, who preferred fighting to running away; after boiling a piece of it for three hours, it was still too tough to be eaten, but by those who have sharp teeth, the tripe of a Bull is the best part of the animal.

December 16th. At 7 AM Ther 19 below zero. We could go no further along the Turtle Hill, and had to cross a wide Plain to a grove of Oaks on the Mouse River; the wind blowing a North Gale with drift, the Men were unwilling to proceed having suffered so much, but as [the] wind was on our backs I persuaded them to follow me, and at 8.20 AM we set [out], and safely arrived at the Grove; our course S by W nineteen miles. On our way we fortunately killed a fat Cow Bison, which was a blessing, for we had not tasted a bit of good meat for many days, and we had nothing else to subsist on. In the evening our conversation turned on the Sioux waylaying us: for we were approaching the Dog Tent Hills, where we were to expect them, and our situation with so many dogs and loaded sleds to take care of, was in a manner defenceless, but we had proceeded too far to return, my hopes lay in the lateness of the season, and the effects the stormy weather must have on a War Party, who frequently take no Tents with them: The last camp of Stone Indians advised us to leave the usual road; cut wood, and haul it with us to make a fire for two nights, and boldly cross to the

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Mississourie, which could be done in three days, but this was too much dreaded to be followed. In the evening a very heavy gale came on from the NW^d. We were thankful that we had crossed the Plain, and were well sheltered in a grove of tall Oaks.

December 17th. At 7 AM Ther 22 below zero, at 9 PM Ther 23 below zero. NW Gale with snow drift. Too cold to proceed.

December 18th. At 7 AM Ther 32 below zero. 2 PM 7 below zero, too cold to proceed although a fine clear day. We saw a herd of Cows about a mile from the tent, we crawled to them, and killed three, then went to the tent, harnessed the dogs to bring the meat. While we were busy, a dreadful Storm came on, fortunately an aft wind, had it been a head wind, we could not have reached the Tent.

December 19th. At 7 AM Ther 17 below zero. 9 PM 24 below zero. All day a dreadful Storm from the westward, with high drift. The Sky was as obscure as night, the roaring of the wind was like the waves of the stormy sea on the rocks. It was a terrible day, in the evening the Storm abated. My men attributed these heavy gales of wind and their frequency to the lateness of the season; but this cannot be the cause for no such stormy winds are known to the westward; here are no hills worth notice, all is open to the free passage of the winds from every quarter; for my part I am utterly at a loss, to account for such violent winds on this part of the Plains, and this may account for the few Bison we have seen, and the smallness of the herds, which rarely exceed twenty; whereas to the westward, and near the Mountains the ground is covered with them, and hitherto we have not seen the track of the Deer, and even a Wolf is a rare animal, as for Birds we have seen none: even the long, strong winged Hawks are not known. What can be the cause of these Storms, and the severe cold of this country.

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Our Latitude is now $48.9.16$ North, Longitude $100.34.12$ West, which ought to have a milder climate

December 20th. At 7 AM $\overline{41}$ below zero. NNW breeze, though very cold, yet a fine day. At $9\frac{1}{2}$ AM we set off, and went up along the Mouse River, about South, thirteen miles, and at $3\frac{1}{2}$ PM put up close to the River. The Woods are of Oak, Ash, Elm and some other hard woods, mixed with Poplar and Aspin but no Pines: When the grass is set on fire in the summer, which is too often the case, all the above woods, except the Aspin, have a thick coat of Bark around them, to which the grass does little, or no injury; but the thin bark of the Aspin however slightly scorched prevents the growth of the Tree, and it becomes dry, and makes the best of fuel, having very little smoke.

December 21st. A stormy morning with snow to 11 AM then clear and fine. We could not proceed as Hugh McCrachan was taken ill. An old Bull was killed for the Dogs. At 7 PM Ther $\overline{26}$ below zero.

December 22nd. At 7 AM Ther $\overline{32}$ below zero, NW breeze and clear, keen cold day. At $8\frac{1}{2}$ AM we set off, still following up the River, SSW^d for fifteen miles and put up. Where there are Woods along this River; they are in narrow ledges of forty, to one hundred yards in width. All the rest are the boundless Plains.

December 23rd. A cloudy, cold day, with snow until noon, when it became fine and clear. We set off up along the River SW twelve miles and camped: Three Men went ahead to hunt, they killed four Bulls, no Cows in sight. We have now plenty to eat, but very tough meat, so much so, we get fairly tired eating before we can get a belly full. We are now at the Elbow of the Mouse River¹ and can follow it no farther; as the River now comes from the northwestward

¹ The latitude given in Thompson's notes is $48^{\circ} 9' 15''$ N. He must have left the Souris river about the present site of the village of Villard, in McHenry county, in North Dakota.

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and is mostly bare of Woods. Although a small Stream of fifteen yards in breadth, it has every where, like all the Rivers of the Plains, double banks: the first bank is that which confines the stream of water, and [is] generally about ten to twenty feet in height; then on each side is a level of irregular breadth, generally called Bottom, of thirty to six hundred yards in breadth, from which rises steep, grassy sloping banks to the heights of sixty to one hundred feet which is the common level of the Plain. Large rivers have often three banks to the level of the Plain. It is in these Bottoms that the Trees grow, and are sheltered from the Storms: for on the level of the Plain, it is not possible a tree can grow but where the Bottoms are wide enough, the Trees come to perfection: here I measured Oaks of eighteen feet girth, tall and clean grown, the Elm, Ash, Beach [Birch] and Bass Wood,¹ with Nut Trees were in full proportion. For these Bottoms have a rich soil from the overflowing of the River

December 24th. Wind south, a steady breeze, with low drift, fine mild weather. At 8½ AM we set off, and went ESE ½ a mile to the heights of the River; and in sight of the Dog Tent Hill;² our course to a Ravine was S 48 W 19 miles; across a plain, the ground was undulating in form, without any regular vallies; but has many knolls; as we approached the Hill, we anxiously kept our eyes on it, being the place the Sioux Indians were to way lay us: About 2 PM I perceived something moving on the ridge of the hill, and by my Telescope, saw a number of Horsemen riding to the southward; I made signs to the men to lie down which they did, after watching their motions for about ten minutes; I saw plainly they did not see us, and rode descending the west side of the Hill, and were soon out of sight; thus kind Providence, by the Storms, and lateness of the season saved

¹ *Tilia americana* (Linn.). [E. A. P.]

² Now known as Dog Den Butte.

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our lives and property.¹ About a Month after, the Stone Indians informed M^r M^cDonell, that the above with the want of provisions were the occasion of their leaving the Hill; and they would return. From the eastward, the Dog Tent Hill (by the Stone Indians Sungur Teebe) has the appearance of an irregular bank of about 200 feet above the level of the east Plains, in steep slopes of hard gravelly soil; with nine or ten gullies, or ravines, each has a small spring of water, with a few Oak and Elm Trees in their bottoms; we put up at 4½ PM at the western spring and it's few trees of Oak and Elm. At 7 PM Ther 15 below Zero.

December 26th. 7 AM Ther 16 below zero. Noon Ther 2, at 8 PM 2 above zero. Early a terrible Storm arose from SSW and raged all day; the sound of the wind was like the waves of the sea on a shoal shore. Joseph Houle killed a good Cow but could only bring some of the meat on his back.

December 27th. At 7 AM Ther 5 at noon 20 at 9 PM 25 above zero. The day was clear with a heavy gale from WSW. We could not proceed and had no success in hunting. We cut fire wood to take with us; for we had learned the Mandanes and Pawnees, were hostile to each [other], and a large Village of the latter was but a short distance below the former, and it was to this Village we were journeying; and having very frequently conversed with Mess^{rs} Jussomme and M^cCrachan, on the Roads, the customs and the manners of the several Tribes of Indians of these countries I became acquainted with what we had to expect; in our defenceless state I was determined to avoid any collision with the Natives that were hostile to us. And with the consent of all the Men, took the resolution, to come on the Mississourie River several miles above the lower Mandane Village, and to do this we had a march of two days across the open Plains.

December 28th. At 7 AM Ther 20 above zero. A fine

¹ In his notes Thompson says that it was on December 28, after he had left the Dog Tent Hill, that he saw these Indians.

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clear mild day, thank God. At 7½ AM we set off taking fire-wood and Tent poles with us, and proceeded S 40 W 22 miles and at 4½ PM, pitched our Tent to pass the night. The ground we passed over is far from being level, and with six inches of snow, made tiresome walking; we saw but few Bisons, and about an hour before we put up, saw ten or twelve Horsemen far on our left. The night was fine.

December 29th. A very fine mild day. At 7.20 AM we set off, and seeing the heights of the Missisourie, changed our course to S 25 W 15 miles, to, and down, the heights of the River; and at 3½ PM put up close to the Stream in a fine bottom of hard wood. The country hilly, and tiresome walking; we lost much time, partly in viewing the country, but more so in bringing back the Dogs from running after the Bisons, of which there were many herds; An old Bull disdained to run away, but fortunately attacked the Sled, instead of the Dogs, and would soon have had it in pieces, had not the Men made him move off, run he would not. About two miles from the River two Fall Indians came to us, and killed a good Bull for us: The River is frozen over, it's width 290 yards but the water is low. The woods the same as those on the Mouse River, with Poplar, Aspin, and Birch all of good growth.

December 30th. A northerly gale with cloudy weather. At 7.40 AM we set off and walked partly on the River ice, and partly on the Bottoms S 6 E 6 miles to the upper Village of the Fall Indians: S 27 E 7 miles to the principal Village of these people. SE 1½ mile to another Village, thence S 11 E 2 miles to the fourth Village and S 55 E one mile to the principal Village of the Mandanes.¹

Thus from bad weather, we have taken thirty three days

¹ These villages were stretched out for eleven and a half miles along the banks of the Missouri river, the lowest and largest of them being in latitude 47° 17' 22" N. This would place them between Stanton and Hancock on the Northern Pacific Railway, in North Dakota. For further information regarding these villages, see Coues, *New Light*.

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to perform a journey of ten days in good weather, but [this] has given me the opportunity of determining the Latitude of six different places; and the Longitude of three, on the Road to the River. The distance we have gone over is 238 miles.

Three of the Men staid at the Fall Indian¹ Villages; one with Manoah a frenchman who has long resided with these people; the rest of us came to the great Village; and at different houses took up our quarters.

¹ In his notes, Thompson speaks of these people as Willow Indians, though he says that they were commonly called "flying Fall Indians." Later, he evidently confuses them with the Fall or Atsina Indians, who were in league with the Blackfeet.

CHAPTER XIV

MANDANES AND THEIR CUSTOMS

Chippeway War—Meet the “ Big White Man ”—Five Villages—Stockades—Form of Houses—Population—Weapons—Manner of building houses—Furniture—Manoab—Farming implements—Produce raised—Meals—Character—Law of Retaliation and compounding by presents—Dress—Appearance—Amusements—Curse of the Mandanes—Annual Ceremony among the Mandanes—Language of Fall Indians—Fall Indians.

THE inhabitants of these Villages, have not been many years on the banks of the Missisourie River : their former residence was on the head waters of the southern branches of the Red River ; and also along it's banks ; where the soil is fertile and easily worked, with their simple tools. Southward of them were the Villages of the Pawnees, with whom they were at peace, except [for] occasional quarrels ; south eastward of them were the Sieux Indians, although numerous, their stone headed arrows could do little injury ; on the north east were the Chippeways in possession of the Forests ; but equally weak until armed with Guns, iron headed arrows and spears : The Chippaways silently collected in the Forests ; and made war on the nearest Village, destroying it with fire, when the greater part of the Men were hunting at some distance, or attacking the Men when hunting ; and thus harassing them when ever they thought proper. The mischief done, they retreated into the forests, where it was too dangerous to search for them. The Chippaways had the policy to harrass and destroy the

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Villages nearest to them, leaving the others in security. The people of this Village removed westward from them, and from stream to stream, the Villages in succession, until they gained the banks of the Missisourie; where they have built their Villages and remain in peace from the Chippaways, the open Plains being their defence.

Mons^r Jussome introduced me to a Chief called the "Big White Man"; which well designated him; and told him I was one of the chiefs of the white men, and did not concern myself with trade, which somewhat surprised him, until told that my business, was to see the countries, converse with the Natives, and see how they could be more regularly supplied with Arms, Ammunition and other articles they much wanted: this he said would be very good; as sometimes they were many days without ammunition. Our things were taken in, and to myself and my servant Joseph Boisseau, was shown a bed for each of us. My curiosity was excited by the sight of these Villages containing a native agricultural population; the first I had seen and I hoped to obtain much curious information of the past times of these people; and for this purpose, and to get a ready knowledge of their manners and customs Mess^{rs} Jussomme and M^cCrachen accompanied me to every Village but the information I obtained fell far short of what I had expected; both of those who accompanied me, were illiterate, without any education, and either did not understand my questions, or the Natives had no answers to give. I shall put together what I saw and what I learned. In company with those I have mentioned; we examined the Villages and counted the houses. The upper Village has thirty one Houses and seven Tents of Fall Indians. The Village next below, is called the Great Village of the above people, it contains eighty two Houses, is situated on the Turtle River, a short distance above it's confluence with the Missisourie. The next Village has fifty two Houses, and is also on the Turtle river; This Village was the residence of

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Manoah. A few houses were of Fall Indians, the other Houses were of Mandanes. The fourth Village was on the right bank of the Missisourie, of forty houses of Mandanes. The fifth and last Village contained one hundred and thirteen houses of Mandanes. Except the upper village of the Fall Indians, they were all strongly stockaded with Posts of Wood of ten to twelve inches diameter; about two feet in the ground and ten feet above it, with numerous holes to fire through; they went round the Village, in some places close to the houses; there were two doorways to each of the Stockades, on opposite sides; wide enough to admit a Man on Horseback. I saw no doors, or gates; they are shut up when required, with Logs of wood.

The houses were all of the same architecture; the form of each, and every one was that of a dome, regularly built; the house in which I resided, was one of the largest: the form a circle, probably drawn on the ground by a line from the centre; On this circle was the first tier of boards, a few inches in the ground, and about six feet above it, all inclining inwards; bound together on the top by circular pieces of wood; on the outside of about five inches, and on the inside of about three inches in width; and in these were also inserted the lower end of another set of boards of about five feet in length; and bound together on their tops in the same manner; but inclining inwards at a greater angle than the lower tier; and thus in succession, each tier the boards were shorter, and more inclined inwards, until they were met at the top, by a strong circular piece of wood of about three feet diameter; to which they were fastened; and which served to admit the light, and let out the Smoke: The house in which I lodged was about forty feet in diameter; and the height of the dome about eighteen feet: On the outside it was covered with earth in a dry state to the depth of four or five inches, and made firm and compact. Every house was covered in the same manner. Between each house

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was a vacant space of fifteen to thirty feet. They appeared to have no order, otherwise than each house occupying a diameter of thirty to forty feet ; and a free space around it of an average of twenty feet. On looking down on them, from the upper bank of the River, they appeared like so many large hives clustered together : From what I saw, and the best information I could get, the average population of each house was about ten souls. The houses of the Mandanes had not many children, but it was otherwise with the Fall Indians : the former may be taken at eight soul, and the latter, at ten, to each House. This will give to the Mandanes for 190 houses, a population of 1520 souls ; of which they may muster about 220 warriors. The Fall Indians of 128 houses, and seven tents have a population of 1330 souls, of which 190 are warriors ; the whole military force of these Villages may be about 400 men fit for war. I have heard their force estimated at 1000 men, but this was for want of calculation.

The native Arms were much the same as those that do not know the use of Iron, Spears and Arrow headed with flint ; which they gladly lay aside for iron ; they appear to have adopted the Spear as a favorite weapon. It is a handle of about eight feet in length, headed with a flat iron bayonet of nine to ten inches in length, sharp pointed, from the point regularly enlarging to four inches in width, both sides sharp edged ; the broad end has a handle of iron of about four inches in length, which is inserted in the handle, and bound with small cords ; it is a formidable weapon in the hands of a resolute man. Their Guns were few in proportion to the number of Men for they have no supplies, but what are brought to them by small parties of Men, trading on their own account, such as the party with me ; we had ten guns, of which the Men traded seven ; and parties of Men of the Hudson's Bay Company in the same manner. They had Shields of Bull's hide a safe defence against arrows and the spear, but of no use against balls.

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They enquired how we built our houses, as they saw me attentively examining the structure of theirs; when informed; and drawing a rough plan of our Villages, with Streets parallel to each other, and cross Streets at right angles, after looking at it for some time; they shook their heads, and said, In these straight Streets we see no advantage the inhabitants have over their enemies. The whole of their bodies are exposed, and the houses can be set on fire; which our houses cannot be, for the earth cannot burn; our houses being round shelter us except when we fire down on them, and we are high above them; the enemies have never been able to hurt us when we are in our Villages; and it is only when we are absent on large hunting parties that we have suffered; and which we shall not do again. The Sieux Indians have several times on a dark stormy night set fire to the stockade, but this had no effect on the houses. Their manner of building and disposition of the houses, is probably the best, for they build for security, not for convenience. The floor of the house is of earth, level and compact; there is only one door to each house, this is a frame of wood, covered with a parchment Bison skin, of six feet by four feet; so as to admit a horse. To each door was a covered porch of about six feet, made and covered like the door. On entering the door, on the left sits the master of the house and his wife; on a rude kind of sofa; covered with Bison Robes; and before is the fire, in a hollow of a foot in depth; and at one side of the fire is a vase of their pottery, or two, containing pounded maize, which is frequently stirred with a stick, and now and then about a small spoonful of fine ashes put in, to act as salt; and [this] makes good pottage; when they boil meat it is with only water; and the broth is drank. We saw no dried meat of any kind; and their houses are not adapted for curing meat by smoke for although the fire is on one side of the house, and not under the aperture, yet there is not the least appearance of smoke, and the light from the

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aperture of the dome gave sufficient light within the house. Around the walls, frame bed places were fastened, the bottom three feet from the ground ; covered with parchment skins of the Bison, with the hair on except the front, which was open ; for a bed, was a Bison robe, soft and comfortable. On the right hand side of the door, were separate Stalls for Horses ; every morning the young men take the Horses to grass and watch over them to the evening, when they are brought in, and get a portion of maize : which keeps them in good condition ; but in proportion to the population the Horses are few : the Chief with whom I lodged had only three.

They do not require so many Horses as the Indians of the Plains who frequently move from place to place, yet even for the sole purpose of hunting their Horses are too few. We paid a visit to Manoah, a french canadian, who had resided many years with these people ; he was a handsome man, with a native woman, fair and graceful, for his wife, they had no children ; he was in every respect as a Native. He was an intelligent man, but completely a Frenchman, brave, gay and boastfull ; with his gun in one hand, and his spear in the other, he stood erect, and recounted to the Indians about us all his warlike actions, and the battles in which he had borne a part, to all of which, as a matter of course, they assented. From my knowledge of the Indian character, it appeared to me he could not live long, for they utterly dislike a boastful man. I learned that a few years after, coming from a Skirmish, he praised his own courage and conduct and spoke with some contempt of the courage of those with him, which they did not in the least deserve, and for which he was shot. As Manoah was as a Native with them I enquired if they had any traditions of ancient times ; he said, he knew of none beyond the days of their great, great Grandfathers, who formerly possessed all the Streams of the Red River, and head of the Mississippe, where the

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Wild Rice, and the Deer were plenty, but then the Bison and the Horse were not known to them : On all these streams they had Villages and cultivated the ground as now ; they lived many years this way how many they do not know, at length the Indians of the Woods armed with guns which killed and frightened them, and iron weapons, frequently attacked them, and against these they had no defence ; but were obliged to quit their Villages, and remove from place to place, until they came to the Mississourie River, where our fathers made Villages, and the Indians of the Woods no longer attacked us ; but the lands here are not so good, as the land our fathers left, we have no wild rice, except in a few Ponds, not worth attention. Beyond this tradition, such as it is I could learn nothing. They at present, as perhaps they have always done, subsist mostly on the produce of their agriculture ; and hunt the Bison and Deer,¹ when these animals are near them. They have no other flesh meat ; and the skins of these animals serves for clothing. The grounds they cultivate are the alluvials of the River, called Bottoms. The portion to each family is allotted by a council of old Men, and is always more than they can cultivate, for which they have but few implements. The Hoe and the pointed Stick hardened in the fire are the principal.

They have but few Hoes of iron ; and the Hoe in general use is made of the shoulder blade bone of the Bison or Deer, the latter are preferred ; they are neatly fitted to a handle, and do tolerable well in soft ground.

The produce they raise, is mostly Maize (Indian Corn) of the small red kind, with other varieties all of which come to perfection, with Pumpkins and a variety of small Beans, Melons have been raised to their full size and flavor. Every article seen in their villages were in clean good order, but the want of iron implements limits their industry ; yet they raise, not only enough for themselves, but also for trade with

¹ *Odocoileus hemionus* (Rafinesque). [E. A. P.]

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their neighbours. We brought away upwards of 300 pounds weight. In sowing their seed, they have to guard against the flocks of Rooks,¹ which would pick up every grain, and until the grain sprouts, out, parties of Boys and girls during the day are employed to drive them away. During the day they appear to have no regular meals; but after day set the evening meal is served with meat; at this meal, several are invited by a tally of wood, which they return, each brings his bowl and rude spoon and knife; the meat is boiled; roasting of it would give a disagreeable smell; which they are carefull to prevent, allowing nothing to be thrown into the fire, and keeping the fireplace very clean. The parties invited were generally from seven to ten men; women are never of the party, except the Wife of the master of the house, who sometimes joined in their grave, yet cheerful conversation. Loud laughter is seldom heard.

Both sexes have the character of being courteous and kind in their intercourse with each other; in our rambles through the villages everything was orderly, no scolding, nor loud talking: They look upon stealing as the meanest of vices, and think a Robber a far better man than a Thief. They have no laws for the punishment of crime, everything is left to the injured party, the law of retaliation being in full force. It is this law which makes Murder so much dreaded by them, for vengeance is as likely to fall on the near relations of the murderer, as on himself, and the family of the Relation who may have thus suffered, have now their vengeance to take; Thus an endless feud arises; to prevent such blood shed, the murderer, if his life cannot be taken, for he frequently absconds; the old men attempt to compound for the crime by presents to the injured party, which are always refused, except they know themselves to be too weak to obtain any other redress. If the presents are accepted the price of blood is paid, and the injured party has no longer any right to take

¹ Probably the Crow, *Corvus brachyrhynchos* Brehm. [E. A. P.]

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the life of the criminal. This law of Retaliation, and compounding by presents for the life of the murderer, when accepted, appears to be the invariable laws with all the Natives of North America.

The dress of the Men is of leather, soft and white. The covering for the body is like a large shirt with sleeves, some wear the Bison leather with the hair on, for winter dress ; with a leather belt ; the leggins of soft white leather, so long as to pass over the belt ; their shoes are made of Bison, with the hair on ; and always a Bison Robe. The Women's dress is a shirt of Antelope or Deer leather, which ties over each shoulder, and comes down to the feet, with a belt round the waist short leggins to the knee, and Bison Robe shoes, the sleeves separate, in which they looked well. Both Men and Women are of a stature fully equal to Europeans ; and as fair as our french canadians ; their eyes of a dark hazel, the hair of dark brown, or black, but not coarse : prominent nose, cheek bones moderate, teeth mouth and chin good ; well limbed ; the features good, the countenance mild and intelligent ; they are a handsome people. Their amusements are gambling after the manner of the Indians of the Plains. They have also their Musicians and dancing Women ; In the house of the Chief, in which I staid, every evening, about two or three hours after sunset, about forty or fifty men assembled. They all stood ; five or six of them were Musicians, with a drum, tambour, rattle, and rude flutes ; The dancing women were twenty four young women of the age of sixteen to twenty-five years. They all came in their common dress ; and went into a place set apart for them to dress ; and changed to a fine white dress of thin Deer skins, with ornamented belts, which showed their shapes almost as clearly as a silk dress.

They formed two rows of twelve each, and were about three feet apart ; The musicians were in front of the Men, and about fourteen feet from the front row of the Women.

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When the music struck up, part of the Men sung, and the Women keeping a straight line and respective distance, danced with a light step and slow, graceful motion towards the Musicians, until near to them when the music and singing ceased; the Women retired in regular line, keeping their faces towards the Musicians. A pause of three or four minutes ensued, the music struck up, and the dance renewed in the same manner; and thus in succession for the time of about an hour. Each dance lasted about ten minutes. There was no talking, the utmost decorum was kept; the Men all silently went away; the dancing Women retired to change their dress. They were all courtesans; a sett of handsome tempting women. The Mandanes have many ceremonies, in all of which the women bear a part but my interpreter treated them with contempt; which perhaps they merited.

The curse of the Mandanes is an almost total want of chastity: this, the men with me knew, and I found it was almost their sole motive for their journey hereto: The goods they brought, they sold at 50 to 60 p^r cent above what they cost; and reserving enough to pay their debts, and buy some corn; [they] spent the rest on Women. Therefore we could not preach chastity to them, and by experience they informed me that siphylis was common and mild. These people annually, at least once in every summer, have the following detestable ceremony, which lasts three days. The first day both sexes go about within and without the Village, but mostly on the outside, as if in great distress, seeking for persons they cannot find, for a few hours, then sit down and cry as if for sorrow, then retire to their houses. The next day the same is repeated, with apparent greater distress accompanied with low singing. The third day begins with both sexes crying (no tears) and eagerly searching for those they wish to find, but cannot; at length tired with this folly; the sexes separate, and the Men sit down on the ground in one line, with their elbows resting on their knees, and their

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heads resting on their hands as in sorrow ; The Women standing and crying heartily, with dry eyes, form a line opposite the Men ; in a few minutes, several Women advance to the Men, each of them takes the Man she chooses by the hand, he rises and goes with her to where she pleases, and they lie down together. And thus until none remain, which finishes this abominable ceremony. No woman can choose her own husband ; but the women who love their husbands lead away aged Men. Mess^{rs} Jussomme and M^cCrachan said they had often partaken of the latter part of the third day ; and other men said the same. Manoah strongly denied that either himself, or his wife had ever taken part in these rights of the devil.

The white men who have hitherto visited these Villages, have not been examples of chastity ; and of course religion is out of the question ; and as to the white Men who have no education, and who therefore cannot read, the little religion they ever had is soon forgotten when there is no Church to remind them of it.

Fall Indians who also have Villages, are strictly confederate with the Mandanes, they speak a distinct language ; and it is thought no other tribe of Natives speak it : very few of the Mandanes learn it ; the former learn the language of the latter, which is a dialect of the Pawnee language. The Fall Indians are now removed far from their original country, which was the Rapids of the Saskatchewan river, northward of the Eagle Hill ; A feud arose between them, and their then neighbours, the Nahathaways and the Stone Indians confederates, and [they were] too powerful for them, they then lived wholly in tents, and removed across the Plains to the Missisourie ; became confederate with the Mandanes, and from them have learned to build houses, form villages and cultivate the ground ; The architecture of their houses is in every respect the same as that of the Mandanes, and their cultivation is the same : Some of them continue to live in

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tents and are in friendship with the Chyenne Indians, whose village was lately destroyed, and now live in tents to the westward of them. Another band of these people now dwell in tents near the head of this River in alliance with the Peeagans and their allies; The whole tribe of these people may be estimated at 2200 to 2500 souls. They are not as fair as the Mandanes; but somewhat taller. Their features, like those of the plains have a cast of sternness, yet they are cheerful, very hospitable and friendly to each other, and to strangers. What has been said of the Mandanes may be said of them; except in regard to Women. The Fall Indians exact the strictest chastity of their wives; adultery is punishable with death to both parties; though the Woman escapes this penalty more often than the man: who can only save his life by absconding which, if the woman does not do, she suffers a severe beating, and becomes the drudge of the family. But those living in the Villages I was given to understand have relaxed this law to the man in favor of a present of a Horse, and whatever else can be got from him. As they do not suffer the hardships of the Indians of the Plains, the Men are nearly equal to the Women in number, and few have more than two wives, more frequently only one. It always appeared to me that the Indians of the Plains did not regard the chastity of their wives as a moral law, but as an unalienable right of property to be their wives and the mothers of their own children; and not to be interfered with by another Man. The morality of the Indians, may be said to be founded on it's necessity to the peace and safety of each other, and although they profess to believe in a Spirit of great power, and that the wicked are badly treated after death; yet this seems to have no effect on their passions and desires. The crimes they hold to be avoided are, theft, treachery and murder.

Christianity alone by it's holy doctrines and precepts, by it's promises of a happy immortality, and dreadful punish-

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ments to the wicked, can give force to morality. It alone can restrain the passions and desires and guide them to fulfil the intentions of a wise, and benevolent Providence. As the Missouri River with all its Villages and population are within the United States, it is to be hoped Missionaries will soon find their way to these Villages, and give them a knowledge of christianity, which they will gladly accept.

CHAPTER I

CROSS THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

*Cross the Rocky Mountains by the defiles of the Saskatchewan—
Build new Fort on the Columbia River—Animals—Salmon
—Drying of Salmon by the Indians—New Trading Post
established on M^cGillivray's River—Raid of the Peeagans
on the Trading Post—Winter in the Mountains—Leave
Trading Post.*

I BELIEVE that I have said enough [about the country] on the east side of the Mountains; I shall therefore turn to the west side; I have already related how the Peeagans watched us to prevent our crossing the Mountains and arming the Natives on that side; in which for a time they succeeded, and we abandoned the trading Post near the Mountains¹ in the spring of 1807; the murder of two Peagan Indians by Captain Lewis of the United States,² drew the Peagans to the Missouri to revenge their deaths; and thus gave me an opportunity to cross the Mountains by the defiles of the Saskatchewan River, which led to the head waters of the Columbia River, and we there builded Log Houses,³ and

¹ This was an outpost from Rocky Mountain House, which appears to have been kept by Jaco Finlay on the Kootenay Plain, near the headwaters of the Saskatchewan river, in the winter of 1806-07, and perhaps also at an earlier date.

² This refers to an attack upon Capt. Meriwether Lewis of the Lewis and Clark expedition by the Blackfeet at Marias river, Montana, on July 27, 1806, when Lewis killed a couple of Indians. See Thwaites (ed.), *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, New York, 1904, vol. v., pp. 223-7. [T. C. E.]

³ These log houses were "Kootanae House," the first trading post erected by white men, as far as is now known, upon the waters of the Columbia

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strongly stockaded it on three sides, the other side resting on the steep bank of the River : the Logs of the House, and the Stockades, Bastions &c were of a peculiar kind of a heavy resinous Fir, of a rough black bark. It was clean grown to about twenty feet, when it threw off a head of long rude branches, with a long narrow leaf for a Fir, which was annually shed, and became from green to a red color. The Stockades were all ball proof, as well as the Logs of the Houses.

At the latter end of Autumn, and through the winter there are plenty of Red Deer,¹ and the Antelope,² with a few Mountain Sheep :³ the Goats⁴ with their long silky hair were difficult to hunt from their feeding on the highest parts of the Hills, and the Natives relate that they are wicked, kicking down Stones on them ; but during the Summer and early part of Autumn very few Deer⁵ were killed, we had very hard times and were obliged to eat several Horses, we found the

river, ante-dating the first erected by an American trader, that of Andrew Henry on the headwaters of the Snake river, by more than three years. Simon Fraser had established trading posts on the Fraser river only the year before. Kootanae House was known to the North-West Company officers east of the mountains as "Old Fort Kootanae," to distinguish it from other posts established on the Kootenay river, south of the 49th parallel of latitude, one near Bonner's Ferry, Idaho, which is noted on Thompson's map, and a later one opposite Jennings, Montana. The chimney bottoms of the post are still to be seen upon Lot 7, Division B of Wilmer District of the Columbia Valley Irrigated Fruit Lands (as platted), about one mile north-west of the town of Athalmer, where the Columbia river leaves Lake Windermere flowing north, and just north of Toby Creek, but a quarter of a mile distant from the mouth of the creek. Thompson, in his survey notes of the Columbia river, says that the "due course" from the post to the junction of Nelson's Rivulet (Toby Creek) and Kootenay Rivulet is "N. 40° E. $\frac{1}{2}$ m. or a little better." According to these survey notes, Thompson first selected a site on what is now Canterbury Point at the north-west corner of Lake Windermere, and completed a warehouse there, but afterwards removed to the site farther north because of lack of easy access to water. [T. C. E.]

¹ *Cervus canadensis* Erxleben. [E. A. P.]

² Not *Antilocapra* ; see note on page 368. [E. A. P.]

³ *Ovis canadensis* Shaw. [E. A. P.]

⁴ *Oreamnos montanus* (Ord). [E. A. P.]

⁵ Mainly *Odocoileus hemionus* (Rafinesque). [E. A. P.]

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meat of the tame Horse, better than that of the wild Horse, the fat was not so oily : At length the Salmon¹ made their appearance, and for about three weeks we lived on them. At first they were in tolerable condition, although they had come upwards of twelve hundred miles from the sea, and several weighed twenty five pounds. But as the spawning went on upon a gravel bank a short distance above us, they became poor and not eatable. We preferred Horse meat. As the place where they spawned had shoal swift clear water on it, we often looked at them, the female with her head cleared away the gravel, and made a hole to deposite her spawn in, of perhaps an inch or more in depth, by a foot in length, which done, the male then passed over it several times, when both covered the hole well up with gravel. The Indians affirm, and there is every reason to believe them, that not a single Salmon, of the myriads that come up the River, ever returns to the sea : the shores of the River, after the spawning season, were covered with them, in a lean dying state, yet even in this state, many of the Indians eat them. At some of the Falls of the Columbia, as the Salmon go up, they are speared, and all beyond the wants of the day, are split, and dried in the smoke, for which they have rude sheds, and in their Houses, and often [they] dry enough to trade with other Tribes. When dried by the smoke of Aspin, or other woods of a summer leaf, I have found them good ; but dried by the resinous Wood of the Pine genus, the taste was harsh and unwholesome.

In my new dwelling I remained quiet hunting the wild Horses,² fishing, and examining the country ; two Canoes

¹ Probably *Oncorhynchus nerka* (Walbaum). [E. A. P.]

² Thompson, in an unpublished manuscript, gives the following account of these horses : "The horses all come from Spanish horses, which have very much multiplied, as every year the mares have a foal. There are several herds of wild horses in places along the mountains, especially on the west side of the mountains ; on the pine hills of Mount Nelson, these have all come from tame horses that have been lost, or wan-

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of goods arrived for trade, on Horses, by the defiles of the Saskatchewan River; half of these goods under the charge of M^r Finan M^cDonald¹ I sent to make a trading dered away from tents where sickness prevailed; they are always fat, with fine coats of hair. For the greatest part of two summers I hunted them, took several of them, and tamed them. Their feeding places were only about two miles from my residence. When I first made my appearance among them, they were in small herds of five to seven, sometimes of mares with a stallion, others were wholly of mares. Upon my approaching them, they appeared at a loss what to do; they seemed inclined to run away, yet remained. Their nostrils distended, mane erect, and tail straight out, snorting and prancing about in a wild manner. I shot one of them, and they ran off. I went to the horse I had shot and passed my hand over the body to feel its body and condition; by doing so my hand had a disagreeable smell, which washing my hand for two days with soap barely took away, yet when tamed this did not occur. We now agreed to try and run them down. For this purpose we took two long-winded horses and started a herd of five. They soon left us, but as these hills are covered with short grass, with very little wood, we easily kept them in sight. It was a wild steeple-chase, down hills and up others. After a chase of about four hours they brought us to near the place we started them. Here we left them frightened, tired, and looking wildly about them. The next day we took swift horses, and instead of following them quietly, we dashed at them full speed with a hunting holloa, forcing them to their utmost speed; the consequence was, two of them fell dead, a fine iron grey stood still; we alighted and tied his fore feet together and there left him. Following, we came to another horse, tied his feet and left him, we returned to the first horse. I passed my hand over his nostrils, the smell of which was so disagreeable that his nostrils and the skin of his head became contorted, yet when tame, the doing of this appeared agreeable. The next day we went for them on two steady horses, with strong lines, which we tied round his neck, put a bit in his mouth with a short bridle through which the lines passed, untied his feet, brought him to the house, where he was broken to the bit and to the saddle. They lose all their fat and become lean, and it takes about full two months to recover them to a good condition. When in this last state they are made use of to hunt and ride down wild horses, for strange to say, a horse with a good rider will always overtake a horse without a rider, wild or tame."

¹ This is the first mention in the text of this clerk of the North-West Company who accompanied Thompson on his first trip across the mountains, and whose name appears often in the rare and hidden annals of the Columbia river basin during the next nineteen years. He never advanced beyond the grade of clerk, but as such he was the first white man to visit many tribes west of the Rockies. He had been at Rocky Mountain House before Thompson's arrival there on November 29, 1806,

Post¹ at a considerable Lake in Mc Gillivray's River; the season was late, and no more could be done; about the middle of November² two Peeagans crossed the Mountains on foot and remained with him there during the winter. In the spring of 1807, he accompanied Thompson across the Rocky Mountains, and was with him while he was building Kootanae House at the headwaters of the Columbia river. On September 23, he went northward for another load of supplies, but returned with loaded horses on November 7. From that date he remained at or near the fort until June 9, 1808, when Thompson returned from his adventurous trip to Lake Kootenay. That summer he accompanied his chief eastward across the mountains; and on his return westward he was given a portion of the trading goods, and sent southward down the Kootenay river. He had gone but a short distance down the river when his canoe was frozen in the ice, and he was obliged to return to Kootanae House for horses. With them he continued down to the falls, where he built a warehouse for the goods, and where he and his men spent the winter in two leather tents. During the winter he appears to have sent Boisvert and Boulard on a trip to Pend d'Oreille lake. In the spring of 1809, he crossed the mountains as usual with Thompson, and descended to Fort Augustus. On July 14, he began his return journey, and on September 8 he arrived at Pend d'Oreille lake. Here he spent the winter of 1809-10. When Thompson left that post in the spring, he sent McDonald up to Saleesh House on Clark's Fork; and here he spent the summer, and probably also part at least of the following winter, varying the monotony of the fur-trader's life by joining the Salish Indians in a battle, fought some time in July, with the Piegan. Early in the year 1811, he appears to have gone with Jaco Finlay to Spokane House, where he was found by Thompson. After the union of the North-West and Hudson's Bay Companies in 1821, McDonald succeeded Donald McKenzie in charge of the Snake country trappers, and had evidently visited that district before. With Peter Skene Ogden in 1825 his name again appears as "avant courier" to the Klamath tribe of southern Oregon near Mount Shasta. Our last record of him is his written request to Dr. McLoughlin at Vancouver, in July, 1826, to be allowed to return across the Rockies, and his departure in September of that year with his family up the river from Kettle Falls. He intermarried with the Kutenai or Spokanes, and tradition connects his blood with some prominent families of Montana to-day. According to Ross Cox, who is our authority as to his personal appearance and characteristics, he was born at Inverness, Scotland. See Ross Cox, *The Columbia River*, London, 1832, vol. i. pp. 164-5. [J. B. T. and T. C. E.]

¹ Thompson's note-books show that McDonald's first trading station among the Kutenai was established in the autumn of 1808 (not 1807), when he built a small log warehouse just above Kootenay Falls.

² Thompson's memory of the exact order of occurrences has here failed him somewhat. His note-books show that on August 26, 1807,

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came to the House, to see how I was situated ; I showed the strength of the Stockades, and Bastions, and told them I know you are come as Spies, and intend to destroy us, but many of you will die before you do so ; go back to your countrymen and tell them so ; which they did, and we remained quiet for the winter ; I knew the danger of the place we were in, but could not help it : As soon as the Mountains were passable I sent off the Clerk and Men with the Furs collected, among which were one hundred of the Mountain Goat Skins with their long silky hair, of a foot in length of a white color, tinged at the lower end with a very light shade of yellow. Some of the ignorant self sufficient partners of the Company ridiculed such an article for the London Market ; there they went and sold at first sight for a guinea a skin, and half as much more for another Lot, but there were no more. These same partners then wrote to me to procure as many as possible, I returned for answer, the hunting of the goat was both dangerous and laborious, and for their ignorant ridicule I would send no more, and I kept my word.

I had now to prepare for a more serious visit from the Peagans who had met in council, and it was determined to send forty men, under a secondary Chief to destroy the trading Post, and us with it, they came and pitched their Tents close before the Gate, which was well barred. I had six men with me, and ten guns, well loaded, the House was perforated with large augur holes, as well as the Bastions,

while he was building Fort Kootanae, twelve Piegan men and two women arrived at the fort, having been sent by Kootanae Appee to see what he was doing. On September 26, twenty-three more Piegan arrived ; and these stayed for a week at the post, making themselves somewhat troublesome, but there is no mention of a state of siege. On October 30, Thompson says that two Piegan had left the fort, and that he believed a general attack on the fort was contemplated ; but no such attack was made. The information received about this time of the destruction of Fort Augustus on the Saskatchewan river by the Blackfeet would lend strength to any report of the contemplated hostility of the Piegan.

thus they remained for three weeks without daring to attack us. We had a small stock of dried provisions which we made go as far as possible; they thought to make us suffer for want of water as the bank we were on was about 20 feet high and very steep, but at night, by a strong cord we quietly and gently let down two brass Kettles each holding four Gallons, and drew them up full; which was enough for us: They were at a loss what to do, for Kootanae Appee the War Chief, had publickly told the Chief of this party, (which was formed against his advice) to remember he had Men confided to his care, whom he must bring back, that he was sent to destroy the Enemies not to lose his Men: Finding us always on the watch, they did not think proper to risque their lives, when at the end of three weeks they suddenly decamped; I thought it a ruse de guerre, I afterwards learned that some of them hunting saw some Kootanaes who were also hunting, and as what was done was an act of aggression, something like an act of War; they decamped to cross the mountains to join their own Tribe while all was well with them: the return of this party without success occasioned a strong sensation among the Peeagans. The Civil Chief harangued them, and gave his advice to form a strong war party under Kootanae Appee the War Chief and directly to crush the white Men and the Natives on the west side of the Mountains, before they became well armed, They have always been our slaves (Prisoners) and now they will pretend to equal us; no, we must not suffer this, we must at once crush them. We know them to be desperate Men, and we must destroy them, before they become too powerful for us; the War Chief coolly observed I shall lead the battle according to the will of the Tribe, but we cannot smoke to the Great Spirit for success, as we usually do, it is now about ten winters since we made peace with them, they have tented and hunted with us, and because they have guns and iron headed Arrows, we must break our word of peace with

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them : We are now called upon to go to war with a people better armed than ourselves ; be it so, let the Warriors get ready ; in ten nights I will call on them. The old, and the intelligent Men, severely blamed the speech of the Civil Chief, they remarked, " the older he gets, the less sense [he possesses]." On the ninth night the War Chief made a short speech, to have each man to take full ten days of dried provisions, for we shall soon leave the country of the Bison, after which we must not fire a shot, or we shall be discovered : On the tenth night he made his final speech, and exhorting the Warriors and their Chiefs to have their Arms in good order, and not forget dried provisions, he named a place ; there I shall be the morrow evening, and those who now march with me, there I shall wait for you five nights, and then march to cross the Mountains ; at the end of this time about three hundred Warriors under three Chiefs assembled ; and took their route across the Mountains by the Stag River, and by the defiles of another River of the same name, came on the Columbia, about full twenty miles from me ; as usual, by another pass of the Mountains, they sent two Men to see the strength of the House ; I showed them all round the place, and they staid that night. I plainly saw that a War Party was again formed, to be better conducted than the last ; and I prepared Presents to avert it : the next morning two Kootanae Men arrived, their eyes glared on the Peagans like Tigers, this was most fortunate ; I told them to sit down and smoke which they did ; I then called the two Peagans out, and enquired of them which way they intended to return. They pointed to the northward. I told them to go to Kootanae Appee and his War Party, who were only a days journey from us, and delivering to them the Presents I had made up, to be off directly, as I could not protect them, for you know you are on these lands as Enemies ; the Presents were six feet of Tobacco to the Chief, to be smoked among them, three feet with a fine pipe of red porphyry

and an ornamented Pipe Stem ; eighteen inches to each of the three Chiefs, and a small piece to each of themselves, and telling them they had no right to be in the Kootanae Country : to haste away ; for the Kootanaes would soon be here, and they will fight for their trading Post : In all that regarded the Peeagans I chanced to be right, it was all guess work. Intimately acquainted with the Indians, the Country and the Seasons, I argued and acted on probabilities ; I was afterwards informed that the two Peeagans went direct to the camp of the War Party, delivered the Presents and the Message and sat down, upon which the War Chief exclaimed, what can we do with this man, our women cannot mend a pair of shoes, but he sees them, alluding to my Astronomical Observations ; then in a thoughtful mood he laid the pipe and stem, with the several pieces of Tobacco on the ground, and said, what is to be done with these, if we proceed, nothing of what is before us can be accepted ; the eldest of [the] three Chiefs, wistfully eyeing the Tobacco, of which they had none ; at length he said, You all know me, who I am, and what I am ; I have attacked Tents, my knife could cut through them, and our enemies had no defence against us, and I am ready to do so again, but to go and fight against Logs of Wood, that a Ball cannot go through, and with people we cannot see and with whom we are at peace, is what I am averse to, I go no further. He then cut the end of the Tobacco, filled the red pipe, fitted the stem, and handed it to Kootanae Appee, saying it was not you that brought us here, but the foolish Sakatow (Civil Chief) who, himself never goes to War ; they all smoked, took the Tobacco, and returned, very much to the satisfaction of Kootanae Appee my steady friend ; thus by the mercy of good Providence I averted this danger ; Winter came on, the Snow covered the Mountains, and placed us in safety : The speeches of the Indians on both sides of the Mountains are in plain language, sensible and to the purpose ; they sometimes repeat a few

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sentences two or three times, this is to impress on the hearers the object of the speech ; but I never heard a speech in the florid, bombastic style, I have often seen published as spoken to white men, and upon whom it was intended to have an effect. Although through the mercy of Providence we had hitherto escaped, yet I saw the danger of my situation. I therefore in the early part of the next spring took precautions to quit the place.

CHAPTER II

JOURNEY FROM KOOTANAE HOUSE TO RAINY LAKE HOUSE AND RETURN

Journey from Kootanae House—Arrive at the source of the Columbia River—Animal of the tiger species—Woods—Carrying place at the lower Dalles River—Moss bread—Return journey—Lay up the canoe and proceed on horseback—Deserted by the guide—New guide, the Chief Ugly Head—Hardships of the journey—Bridging a river—Loss of sixty pounds of Beaver furr—Camp at M^cGillivray's River—Arrive at the source of the Columbia—Descend the Saskatchewan—Reach Rainy Lake House—Destruction of kegs of Alcohol—Kill two Bison cows—Seepanee—Arrive at the Columbia River—Arrive back at Kootanae House.

BY my journal of 1808 I left the Kootanae House on the 20th of April,¹ proceeded to the Lakes, the sources of the Columbia River, carried everything about two miles across a fine plain to M^cGillivray's River,² on which we embarked, and proceeded down to look for Indians; where the rocky banks somewhat contracted the Stream, the Water made a hissing noise as if full of small icicles; on examining the surface, I found it full of small

¹ The men who accompanied Thompson on this expedition were Mousseau, Lussier, Beaulieu, and La Camble. Finan McDonald remained at the post.

² This is the Kootenay river of to-day. It was named by Thompson "McGillivray's in honour of the family to whom may justly be attributed the knowledge and commerce of the Columbia River." The "Kootanae River" of Thompson's note-books is the Columbia river of to-day. [T. C. E.]

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whirlpools of about two inches diameter, all in motion, drifting with the current, and striking against each other, which occasioned the hissing sound. On proceeding to the Lake,¹ where we arrived on the 14th of May; after much loitering along the River looking for Indians, whom at length we found near, and at the Lake; the navigation of the River was very dangerous from violent eddies and whirlpools, which threatened us with sure destruction, and which we escaped by hard paddling, keeping the middle of the River. (Note. M^r D^d Ogden² of the Hudson's Bay Company relates a most sad instance of the effects of these whirlpools. He was proceeding down the Columbia River to Point Vancouver with eleven men in his Canoe, at the upper Dalles, a name given to where the River is contracted by high steep rocks, he ordered the Canoe ashore, he landed and advised them to carry, they preferred running the Dalles, the path is close along the River without wood, the Canoe entered the Dalles, was caught by a whirlpool, whirled round a few times beyond the power of the Men to extricate it, it approached the centre of the whirlpool, the end of the canoe entered it, and the canoe in a manner became upright, the men clinging to the Bars of the Canoe, and in this manner was drawn into the vortex of the whirlpool and went end foremost down into it; at the foot of this Dalle, not a vestige was seen, but the body of one man much mangled by sharp rocks. The rocks of these Dalles and of many parts of the River are of Basalt Rock, steep sided, of an irregular form, having many sharp Points and small Bays, under the former are strong eddies, and the latter too often [have] whirlpools; which the Canoe must cautiously avoid.)

On the 22nd April altho' in Latitude 50° 10' N, the Willows and Gooseberry bushes had fine leaves; in hunting we were not successful, but killed an Animal of the Tiger

¹ Lake Kootenay.

² See note on p. 496.

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species.¹ He was three feet in height on the fore leg, from the nose to the insertion of the tail seven feet and a half, the Tail two feet ten inches; very strongly legged with sharp claws, the Back and upper part of the Tail of a Fawn color, the Belly and under part of the Tail and its tip white, the flesh was white and good, in quantity equal to the Antelope, the Liver was rich, and the two men that eat it, for several hours had a violent head ache, which passed away: The Indians say the habits of this Animal is to lie in covert, and spring upon the back of the Deer, to which he fastens himself by his claws, and directly cuts the back sinew of the neck, the Deer then becomes an easy prey: The Lake I have spoken of, is about three to four miles in width enclosed by ridges of high Mountains, upon which there was much snow. Along the River, in places are very fine woods of Larch,² Red Fir,³ Alder,⁴ Plane⁵ and other woods: of the Larch, at five and a half feet above the ground I measured one thirteen feet girth and one hundred and fifty feet clean growth, and then a fine head. This is one of many hundreds. I could not help thinking what fine Timber for the Navy [exists] in these forests, without a possibility of being brought to market. The other Woods, fine Red Fir, Pine, Cypress, white Cedar,⁶ Poplars, Aspens, Alders, Plane and Willows.

At the lower Dalles⁷ we had to carry everything on the right side, up a steep bank of Rock, and among the debris of high Rocks, apparently rude basalt, the slope to the River

¹ Mountain Lion or Puma, *Felis oregonensis hippolestes* Merriam. [E. A. P.]

² *Larix occidentalis* Nuttall. [E. A. P.]

³ Probably *Abies grandis* Lindley. [E. A. P.]

⁴ *Alnus*. [E. A. P.]

⁵ Probably Dwarf Maple, *Acer glabrum* Torrey. [E. A. P.]

⁶ *Thuja plicata*. [E. A. P.]

⁷ Kootenay Falls, Lincoln county, Montana, between Libby and Troy on the Great Northern Railway. The "brook" is Falls Creek, just below the falls. Thompson's description is corroborated to the letter by later travellers on this part of the regular Indian trail between Jennings, Mon-

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Bank was at a high angle, and our rude path among loose fragments of rock was about three hundred feet above the River, the least slip would have been sure destruction, having carried about one mile, we came to a Brook where we put up for the night. Each trip over this one mile of debris took an hour and a quarter, and cut our shoes to pieces. The banks of the brook were about two hundred feet in height, with a steep slope of debris to descend, with not a grain of sand, or earth, on them, to relieve our crippled feet. From the brook we had one mile to carry to the River, to which we descended by a gap in the Rocks; the River had steep banks of Rocks, and [was] only thirty yards in width; this space was full of violent eddies, which threatened us with destruction and wherever the river contracted the case was always the same, the current was swift, yet to look at the surface the eddies make it appear to move as much backward as forward; where the river is one hundred yards wide and upwards the current is smooth and safe.

In the evening we came upon the remains of an Antelope, on which an Eagle was feeding. We took the remainder, it was much tainted, but as we were hungry, we boiled and eat of it; which made us all sick; had we had time to make charcoal, and boil this with the meat, the taint would have been taken from the meat. The next day we came to ten Lodges of Kootanae and Lake Indians. They had nothing to give us but a few dried Carp and some Moss bread, this is made of a fine black moss, found on the west side of the Mountains attached to the bark of a resinous rough barked Fir and also to the larch. It is about six inches in length, nearly as fine as the hair of the head; it is washed, beaten, and then baked, when it becomes a cake of black bread, of a

tana, and Bonner's Ferry, Idaho. The cañon at the falls is about one mile long, and terminates at a gorge where the trail is compelled to leave the river and picks its way along a dizzy slope of steep bed-rock. [T. C. E.]

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slightly bitter taste, but acceptable to the hungry, and in hard times, of great service to the Indians. I never could relish it, it has just nourishment enough to keep a person alive. They informed us that a few days ago, forty seven Peeagans crossed the Mountains and stole thirty five of their Horses, in doing of which, the old Kootanae Chief killed one of them; thus is war continued, for want of the old Men being able to govern the young men.

May 14th. To this date we had the meat of a few small Antelopes, by no means enough to prevent us eating Moss Bread and dried carp, both poor harsh food; for the Carp were of last year's catch and old tasted; the water, from the melting of the snow in the Mountains, had risen upwards of six feet; and overflowed all the extensive fine meadows¹ of this country: We now began our return.² The several small camps we came to of Lake Indians all make use of canoes in the open season, made of the bark of the White Pine, or of the Larch, they serve for two seasons but are heavy to carry. The inner side of the bark (that next to the Tree), is the outside of the Canoe, they are all made of one piece, are generally eighteen to twenty feet in length by twenty four to thirty inches on the middle bar, sharp

¹ Known in later years as the Kootenay Bottoms. The Great Northern Railway from Bonner's Ferry, Idaho, north to Lake Kootenay in British Columbia, runs along and through this extensive flat, which is subject to overflow. [T. C. E.]

² Thompson now returns upstream to lay up his canoe somewhere near Bonner's Ferry, and to buy horses and proceed overland across this southern loop of the Kootenay river by the same trail as was used by Governor Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1841. This later became the much used line of travel by miners and pack trains when gold was discovered in the Kootenay district in 1863-64. It followed the bench lands north from Bonner's Ferry, and then turned north-east across "Sarvice Berry Hill" (Thompson's "very hilly country") to the valley of the Moyie river, close to Curzon Junction on the Canadian Pacific Railway; from there it ran along the Moyie river and lakes, across Joseph's Prairie (Cranbrook) to the Kootenay river below Fort Steele. [T. C. E.]

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at both ends. We engaged two men with one of these Canoes to guide us over the overflowed meadows, and avoid the current of the River which we knew to be unnavigable; to effect which we made several short carrying places over strips of land yet dry; On the sixteenth we met two Canoes from whom we traded twelve singed Musk Rats,¹ and two shoulders of an Antelope: thankful for a change from Moss Bread which gave us all the belly ache.

On the nineteenth of May, learning the country was too much flooded for any of the several tribes of Indians around us, to come to us, I bought Horses, laid up my Canoe as the River was unnavigable to proceed against the current, and proceeded by land over very hilly country; I engaged a Kootanae Indian to guide us, and he, as well as myself endeavoured to procure another man, but none would undertake the journey.

On the twentieth we came to a large Brook, so deep and rapid, the light Horses could not cross it, we had to cut down a large Cedar Tree on it's banks, which fell across it; and became a bridge over which we carried everything; we had to take each Horse separate, and with a strong cord of hide, haul him across, we went up the bank and camped; our Guide went a hunting; in the evening he came to us without success, and we went fasting to sleep, for we were tired. Early next morning he killed a small Antelope, which was a blessing to us. Our guide now deserted us, and went back to the camp, this left us in a sad situation in these Mountains without provisions, or a guide; the melting of the Snow had made every Brook a torrent, and did not allow the usual paths to be taken, we prayed the Almighty to relieve us.

On the twenty second we waited with faint hopes for his return, when at ten AM I sent off two Men to the camp of the Kootanae and Lake Indians to procure another Guide, on their arrival, Ugly Head (so named from his hair curling)

¹ *Fiber z. osoyoosensis* Lord. [E. A. P.]

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the Lake Indian Chief made a speech, in which he bitterly reproached them for want of a strong heart, and contrasting their cowardly conduct, with ours, who braved every hardship and danger to bring them Arms, Ammunition and all their other wants : calling upon them to find a man, or two, who would be well paid ; but none answered the call : the dangers of the Mountains at this season were too great, and too well known to them, and I was not aware of this until it was too late ; finding no answer given to his call on them, he said while I am alive, the White Men who come to us with goods, shall not perish in the Mountains for want of a Guide and a Hunter. Since your hearts are all weak, I will go with them ; he kept his word, and on the evening of the twenty fourth of May, he came with the two men, and I thanked God, for the anxiety of my situation was great, and was now entirely relieved, for I knew the manly character of the Lake Indian Chief, and justly placed confidence in him.

On the next day our Guide, early went off a hunting, but without success. We set off and came to a large Brook which we named Beaulieu (the name of one of my faithful men) here we had to make a bridge of a large Cedar Tree, and carry everything over, and crossed the Horses by a strong line. About 1½ PM, thank God, we killed an Antelope, and by boiling and roasting on the spit, made a hearty meal, for we were all very hungry ; the rest of the day was through pathless woods over debris of the Mountains to 8 PM, when we had to stop and lie down for want of light to guide us.

On the 26th day we as usual, set off very early, our Guide a hunting without success. We soon came to a deep River with a strong current overflowing the low grounds ; we went up it's rude banks ; our Guide went forward, and at 4½ PM came to us and told us, we can go no further, we must make a Canoe to cross the River,¹ as the Mountains are too steep.

¹ The Moyie river of the present day. The name Moyie is a corruption of the French *mouiller*, to wet, and was given by the trappers owing

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Hungry and tired, with heavy hearts we set to work, and got the materials ready to put together the next morning ; In the evening our Guide returned, quite undetermined what to do ; the sharp Rocks had cut our Horses, they could be traced by their blood ; On the 27th our noble Guide told us not to make a Canoe, but try the Mountains higher up the River, we set off over rude rocks and patches of pathless woods, both our Horses and ourselves weak and tired, at length we came to better ground and a path which led to a bold Brook, which our Horses could not cross, and we had to proceed over tolerable ground with small Cypress Woods ; late in the afternoon we came to a Family of Lake Indians, of whom we got a bowlfull of small dried Trout, two pounds of dried Meat and four cakes of very clean, well made moss bread, by far the best we had had. We were very hungry, and with a keen appetite devoured the fish, the meat, and a cake of moss bread. Our Guide told us to camp for the night, and he would get information of the way through the Mountains, as usual. In a straight line we have come about ten miles to-day, with the hard work of full twenty miles.

On the 28th we set off very early, but soon came to overflowed ground, and had to take to the Mountains climbing up the hills and descending them, to the overflowed pathless woods up to our middle in water, we made slow progress, to near Noon, when we stopped to refresh our Horses, our Guide telling us, that for the present we had passed the inundated Ground. We then had a path over tolerable ground to the evening, when we put up at a Lake from which the River comes ; having marched fourteen miles in a straight line in nearly as many hours.

On the 29th we had to proceed up along the River to the moist conditions which Thompson describes. Thompson elsewhere calls it McDonald's river, after his clerk Finan McDonald. Governor Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company called it the Grand Quête, after an Indian chief of that name. The lakes mentioned a little farther on are the Moyie lakes. [T. C. E.]

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find a place where we could cross it, the country tolerable, but [covered with] much fallen wood ; near noon our Guide killed an Antelope, thank God ; upon which we made a hearty meal ; we then proceeded and in the evening came to a place where the River was narrow, but the current very strong, we put up, and our Guide killed a Red Deer : which gave us provisions for three days. Early next morning we commenced cutting down large Cedars and Pines to fall across the River and form a Bridge to cross on, but the torrent was so rapid, that every tree we threw across the stream was either broken by the Torrent or swept away : as our last hope, a fine Larch of full twelve feet girth, standing twenty four feet from the bank was cut down, and fell directly across the River, but in falling the middle of the tree bended and was caught by the rapid current, the head was swept from the opposite bank, the butt end of four feet diameter was carried off the ground, as if it had been a Straw ; our last hope being gone, and near noon, we desisted, and with our Horses proceeded up the River to the foot of a steep Hill, where the River was divided into five channels, the channel next the opposite bank having most of the water with it's headlong current, and on this side of it a pile of drift wood, which we name an Embarras : The Guide and one of the Men crossed ; at the fifth channel swimming their Horses, they then threw down a number of Aspin Trees to form a Bridge to the Embarras, but all were broken, or swept away by the current. I had about three hundred pounds weight of fine Furrs which the water would injure, and I was at a loss what to do, the four channels were easily crossed to the Embarras, upon which we laid everything ; we had now no alternative but [to] tie all up in small parcels, as hard as we could, to be hauled across by a Line of Bison hides, which in the water distends and becomes weak ; a hempen line contracts in the water and becomes stronger ; we thus crossed everything but the large parcel, which was

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about sixty pounds of Beaver, and the little Baggage of two of the men, the line too much distended broke, and the parcel [was] lost. We crossed swiming our Horses and thus thank kind Providence, crossed and got clear of this terrible River by sun set, and put up. The next day being fine we spread out everything to dry to 11 AM when we set off, and in the evening camped at M^cGillivray's River, having had a fine country all day. We now raised the bark of a large white Pine, of which to make a Canoe; this work took us a day and a half, when we crossed the River, and held on near it to Skirmish Brook,¹ at 3 PM, the rest of the day was spent in throwing Trees across the Brook for a Bridge but they were swept away. At sun set we felled a large Red Fir of full ten feet girth, this broke, but served our purpose though very hazardous, we all got across and camped at 8 PM.

June 3rd: Early set off and passed two large Brooks, as usual by throwing Bridges of Trees across them. We camped late, and heard distinctly a shot fired about one mile from us. Supposing it to be of Enemies, we passed a rainy night under Arms. The next morning our Guide examined all around for the tracks of Men, or Horses, but found none, he killed an Antelope of which we were in want; we marched to past 5 PM, when thank God, we arrived at the last crossing place of M^cGillivray's River; here we had to make a Canoe to cross it. On June the 5th by 5 PM we had all crossed to M^cGillivray's Carrying Place to the source of the Columbia River. Here we bid adieu to our manly humane Guide, without whose assistance we could never have crossed

¹ This is the Wild Horse Creek of to-day, very prominent in mining days, emptying into the Kootenay at Fort Steele. Almost opposite to it, and flowing into the Kootenay river from the west, is his Torrent river, now known as St. Mary's river. The next stream crossed on the way northward, as he followed the east bank of the main stream, was Lussier (now Sheep) river, called after one of his men who had recently lost his baggage in crossing McDonald's river. Two other streams are mentioned by Thompson as flowing into the Kootenay from the east, namely, Bad river, now Bull river, and Stag river, now Elk river. [T. C. E.]

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the secondary Mountains, we had come over ; he descended the River for his own Country which he would reach in two days. The foregoing tedious detail, informs the reader what travelling is in high hilly countries when the Snow is melting ; the same Brooks which cost us so much hard work and were crossed with danger, in Autumn have very little water ; and [are] almost everywhere fordable, the water not a foot in depth. We were acquainted with the Kootanae Country before us, and on the 8th came to M^r Finan McDonald,¹ and four Men in charge of the Furs traded in winter, they have had also hard times, and have been obliged to eat all the Dogs.

We set off for the Mountain defiles to the Saskatchewan River, having killed a Horse for food ; at the east end of the defile we had laid up a large Birch Rind Canoe which we put in good order ; the Snow was much melted and the upper part of the River a torrent of water, we had a Canoe with three Men and a Chepaway Indian who had followed us from the Rainy River as Hunter, he sat in the middle of the Canoe, as ballast ; We embarked with the rising Sun, and merely paddled to give the Canoe steerage way for guidance, the descent of the River is great in the Mountains and from them, and [it] foamed against every rock, Snag or root of a Tree in it's current. Near sun set we came to the Craigs, which are about fifty feet of steep limestone, at the foot of which, we put up on the beach, the Canoe unloaded, and all safe on shore ; as usual my share of the work was to light the fire, while the Men got wood ; everything being done and the Kettle on the fire, I noticed the Indian sitting with

¹ According to his journals, Thompson reached his Kootanae House, then unoccupied, on June 6, and thence continued down the west bank of the river on horseback for about a day, when he decided to stop, and built a canoe of the bark of a pine tree. The next day, just after starting in his new canoe, he came to where McDonald and his own family were camped, and they continued down the river together to the place where they were to begin the crossing of the mountains.

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his hands on his knees, and his head resting on his hands, supposing him to be ill, I enquired what was the matter with him. Looking at me he said, I cannot make myself believe, that from where we embarked in the Mountains we have come here in one day ; it must be two days, and I have not slept. By my Journals, I found we had come one hundred and thirty two miles ; the first part must have been at ten miles p^r hour, as for the last three hours the current was moderate, and we did not advance more than five miles p^r hour.

[We] embarked the Furs, and with five men set off for the Rainy River House and arrived July 22, where we landed our cargo of Furs, then made up an assortment of Goods, for two Canoes, each carrying twenty pieces of ninety pounds weight ; among which I was obliged to take two Kegs of Alcohol, over ruled by my Partners (Mess^{rs} Don^d M^cTavish and Jo M^cDonald [of] Gart[h]) for I had made it a law to myself, that no alcohol should pass the Mountains in my company, and thus be clear of the sad sight of drunkenness, and it's many evils : but these gentlemen insisted upon alcohol being the most profitable article that could be taken for the indian trade. In this I knew they had miscalculated ; accordingly when we came to the defiles of the Mountains, I placed the two Kegs of Alcohol on a vicious horse ; and by noon the Kegs were empty, and in pieces, the Horse rubbing his load against the Rocks to get rid of it ; I wrote to my partners what I had done ; and that I would do the same to every Keg of Alcohol, and for the next six years I had charge of the furr trade on the west side of the Mountains, no further attempt was made to introduce spirituous Liquors.

Near the head of the eastern defile, we had the good fortune to kill two Bison Cows ; these animals often frequent the gorges of the Mountains for the fresh grass, water, and free[dom] from flies ; but are careful not to be shut in by impassable rocks ; and on being hunted uniformly make for

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the open country ; yet when found in a narrow place I have seen the Bisons take to the rocky hills and go up steep places where they could barely stand, the Bison is a strong head-long animal. While proceeding up the River,¹ the strong current obliging [the] Men to track up the Canoes, I walked ahead for hunting, on a low point of gravel, I mortally wounded a Doe Red Deer, and as she was dying the Canoes came up, the Men began skinning her, and one man cut off her head, upon this the Deer arose and for half a minute stood on her feet, the Men became frightened, said she was a devil, and would have nothing more to do with her, I cut a piece of meat for my supper, put it in the Canoe, and marched on, when we camped, I expected my piece of meat for supper, but found they had tossed it into the River, and my servant said to the Men, "Does he wish to eat a piece of the devil, if he does, it is not me that will cook it." Instances of this nature are known to the Indians, who call them Seepanee, that is strong of life.

On the 21st we laid up our Canoes for the Winter ; the Canoes rest upon their Gunwales, on logs of wood to keep them about one foot from the ground, the timbers are slightly loosened, to prevent the Birch Rind cracking with the frost. Pine Trees, in the form of the roof of a House, with all their branches, are placed over the Canoes to prevent any weight of snow lying on the bottom of the Canoe.

We had now a journey of ten days with horses through the defiles to the Columbia River. We had a Chepaway Indian with us for a hunter who killed a mountain sheep² in good condition : On the evening of the 31st October we arrived at the Columbia River ; and found the Canoe we had laid up in bad order : In this journey we had plenty of provisions, the Hunter having killed two Goats, from the inside of the male, we had twelve pounds of soft grease ; also a Bison Bull

¹ The Saskatchewan river.

² *Ovis canadensis* Shaw. [E. A. P.]

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and two Cows. Having detained Goods for the cargo of the Canoe, I sent off the Horses up the River with the rest ; we now, as usual, find a great change in the climate, on the east side, hard frosts and deep snow, here on the west side the grass is green, even all the leaves are not fallen ; and our poor half starved Horses will now recover their flesh, and become in good condition, and be free from lameness. I have noticed that we found the Canoe in bad order ; rainy weather came on and delayed us to the afternoon of the 2nd of November when we had the Canoe repaired, and embarked the Goods for to winter at the Kootanae House of last winter, where we arrived on the tenth of November, and where we shall winter, please God.