

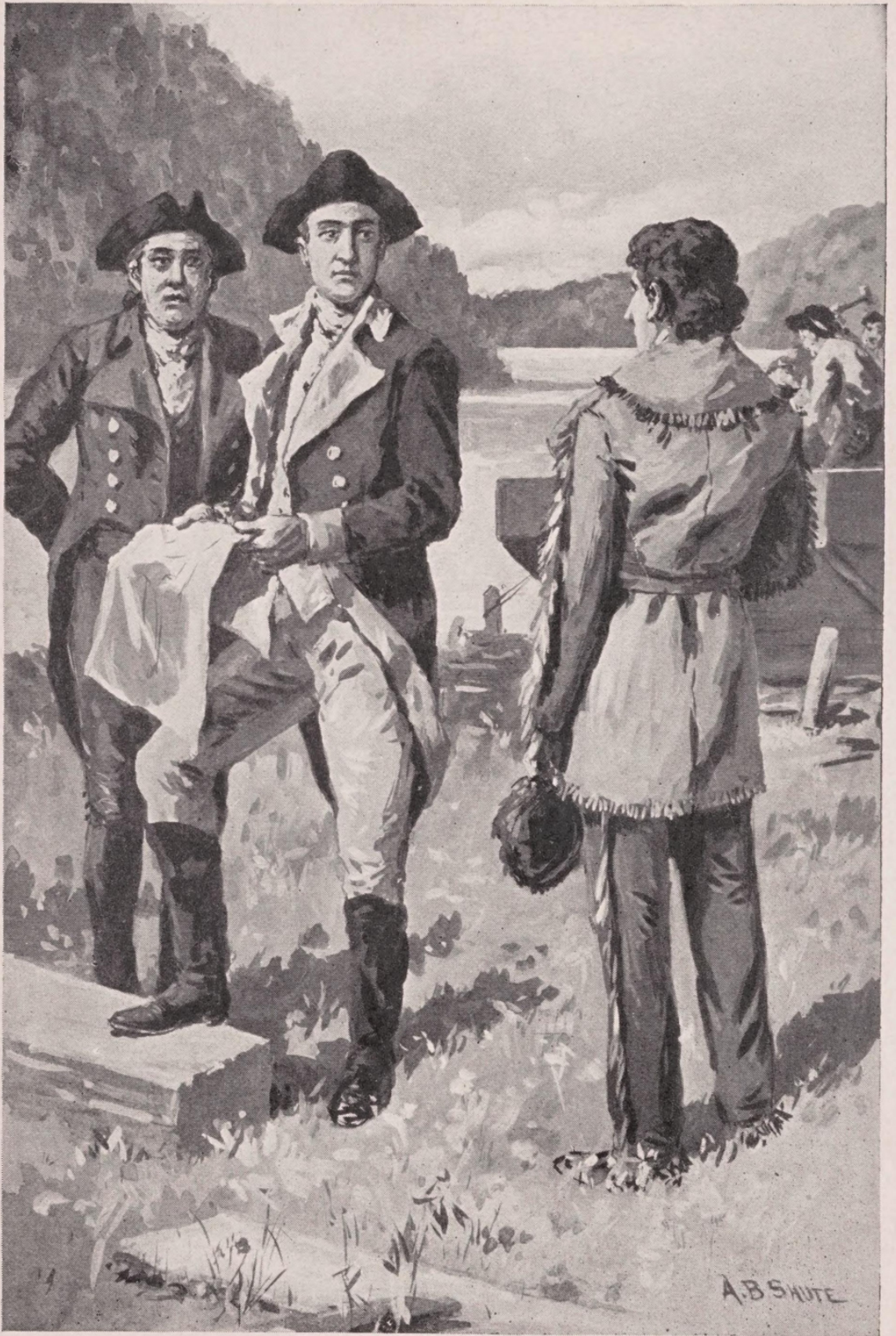


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THE BOY PATHFINDER



A STORY OF THE OREGON
TRAIL



“I have come to ask you to take me with you, Captain Lewis.”
Page 29.

Making of Our Nation Series

THE BOY PATHFINDER

A STORY OF THE OREGON TRAIL

BY

WILLIAM C. SPRAGUE

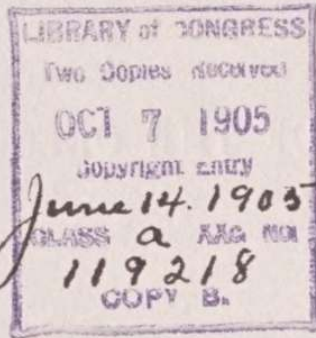
Editor of "The American Boy," Author of "The Boy Courier
of Napoleon," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY A. B. SHUTE



BOSTON
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THE BOY PATHFINDER

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
A DREAM OF CONQUEST	1

CHAPTER II

MEETS MERIWETHER LEWIS	18
----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III

DOWN THE OHIO	35
-------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV

THE STORY OF VINCENNES	55
----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER V

THE STARS AND STRIPES WAVE OVER A NEW EMPIRE	69
--	----

CHAPTER VI

UP THE MUDDY MISSOURI	86
---------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VII

LOST IN THE WILDERNESS	104
----------------------------------	-----

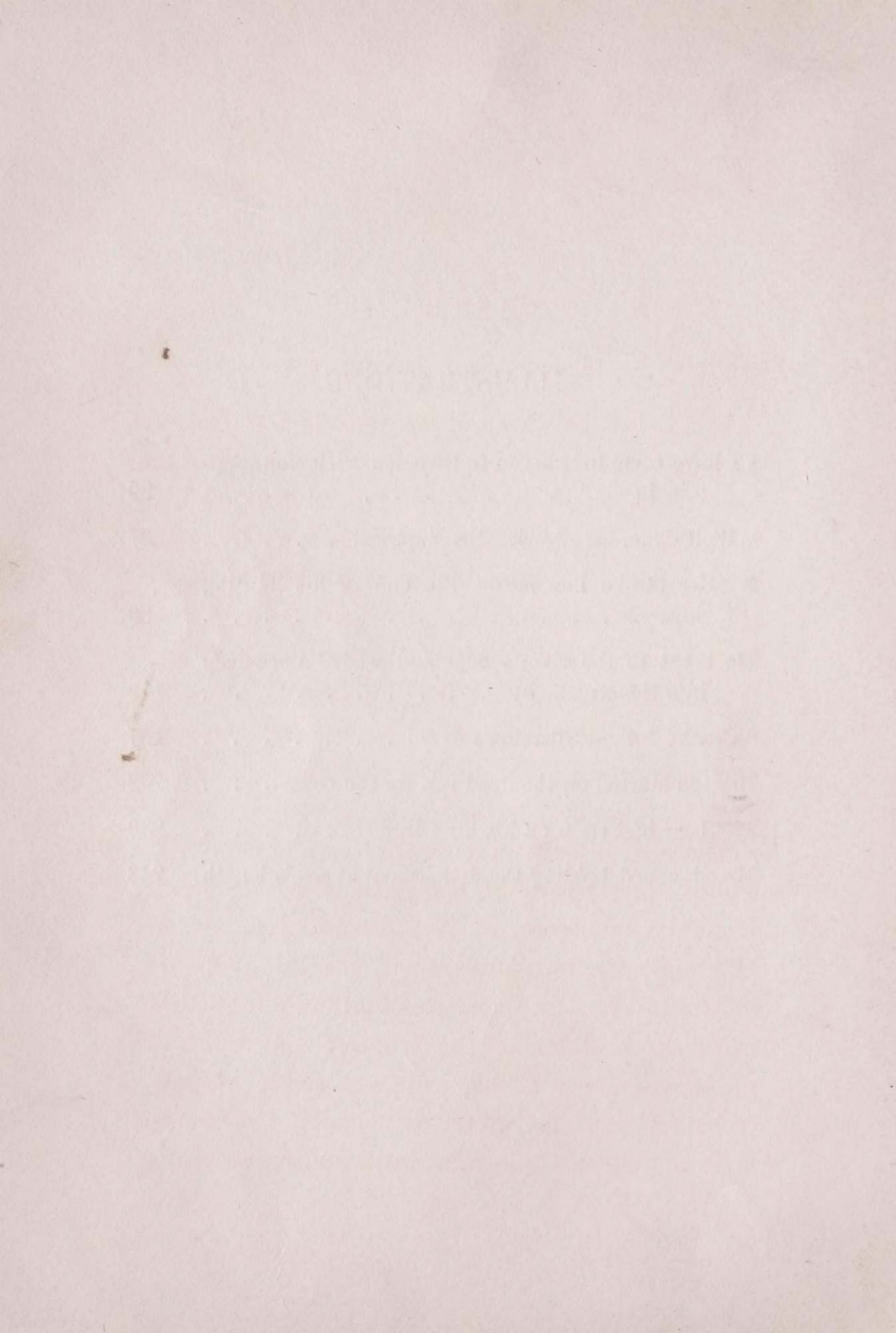
CHAPTER VIII

A VISIT TO THE SIOUX INDIANS	120
--	-----

CHAPTER IX		PAGE
PRAIRIE DOGS—THE RICKAREES		134
CHAPTER X		
A BUFFALO HUNT		151
CHAPTER XI		
WINTER AMONG THE MANDAN INDIANS		172
CHAPTER XII		
GRIZZLY BEARS DISPUTE THE PROGRESS		191
CHAPTER XIII		
“THE SHINING MOUNTAINS” AND THE FALLS OF THE MISSOURI		209
CHAPTER XIV		
THE LONG PORTAGE—THE KING OF WHITE BEAR ISLAND—WOLVES		221
CHAPTER XV		
CHIEF CAMEAHWAIT AND THE SHOSHONES		244
CHAPTER XVI		
SACAJAWEA FINDS HER PEOPLE		264
CHAPTER XVII		
TO THE COLUMBIA AND THE SEA		286

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
“I have come to ask you to take me with you, Captain Lewis” (<i>Frontispiece</i>)	29 ✓
“Well done, lad!” cried the Captain	37 ✓
A false stroke now meant the end of his hunting days	80 ✓
He crept to the river’s edge and waded knee-deep into the stream	119 ✓
“Crack!” went Shannon’s pistol	167 ✓
Bratton started on the dead run for the boats	202 ✓
The bear had risen on his hind legs	230 ✓
He advanced, holding the articles out at arm’s length	248 ✓



CHAPTER I

A DREAM OF CONQUEST

It was late in March of the year 1803. The sun was just setting behind the hills that skirted the eastern banks of the Monongahela, now swollen out of its course by the melting snows from the mountains. A young hunter, with a rifle on his shoulder, was making his way down the slopes on the western side of the river by a bridle path that led to old Fort Pitt. When halfway down the hillside he stopped and gazed fixedly for some moments upon the turbid waters that rolled beneath him, as if in deep thought.

The youth wore a coonskin cap, from under whose edges cropped a mass of curling black hair. His face was clean-shaven, firm, and handsome. His blue eyes were large, clear, and full of the fire of youth. His forehead was high and noble. He wore the costume of the frontier hunter of the period—a loose-fitting hunting shirt, buckskin trousers, leggings, and heavy boots. Suspended from his belt were powder horn and bullet pouch,

while from his shoulders hung a brace of wild turkeys, the trophies of his chase.

Though but seventeen years of age, he was broad-shouldered, full-chested, round and hard of limb—a young Goliath of the wilderness. That together with nobility of form and bearing went courage and strength of mind and heart was evidenced by the poise of his head and the clear blue of his eye.

At his feet, looking up into his face, stood a large hound, whose quick breathing and lolling tongue betrayed the fact that his master had led him a pretty chase.

The thoughts of the young man as he stood looking upon the river were far away. As he watched the broken and heaving surface of the ice floe borne down upon its bosom, he was wishing that he, too, were a part of its moving spirit bound for the Ohio and thence west into the unknown wilderness. Often he had stood thus upon the banks of the Monongahela where its sister current, the Allegheny, contributes its flood to form the great Ohio and longed to follow their united fortunes. On such occasions, he looked forward with eager anticipation to the time when, full master of himself, he might launch a canoe upon the broad river

and ride with it into that land of mystery of which the daring pioneers had brought back marvelous reports.

To-day his heart beat high with exultation. His school days were nearly over. Already he was beginning to sniff the air of freedom. A consciousness that he was strong fired his spirit with an unquenchable purpose. It was a moment of inspiration with him such as only young men of high courage and high purpose can know, as, pausing suddenly in his path, he looked down upon the river that typified so nearly his restless, ambitious, aspiring spirit.

A moment later his eye, keen for the hunt, sighted a stag standing knee-deep in the water at the river's edge. His rifle came quickly to his shoulder, and a report rang out over the valley. Peering through the smoke that arose from his weapon, the youth saw the stag bound away unhurt into the bushes that lined the bank and heard from the hillside above him a loud laugh.

“Oho, George Shannon, it is well your father did not see that shot.”

The next moment there stepped from out the shadows of the trees a rough, full-bearded man, whose bronzed, wrinkled face and tangled, gray

hair, which fell far down over his shoulders, gave evidence of advanced age.

“ Ah, Simon Drake, it is you,” replied the boy. “ My foot slipped upon a stone as I fired or that stag were mine.”

“ ’Twas not like your father to make excuse,” answered the old ranger. “ You should have been sure of your footing first. Haste makes waste with the hunter; forget not that. But surely you will not let the stag escape you. See, our dogs have driven him ’round the hill yonder. He will go up yon ravine. Come, let’s follow, and the prize be to the man who first wings him.”

A hurried scramble through the underbrush and the two soon reached the summit of the ridge and gained a point near where sooner or later the stag must pass. A few breathless moments and, pushing through the small timber and followed by the yelping dogs, the stag reached the bottom of the ravine, with a nimble leap sprang over a swollen rivulet, and made for the hills upon the opposite side. At the same moment, almost, the crack of two rifles bit the air; the stag bounded, fell to his knees, rose again, and then dropped lifeless at the base of a great rock.

“ ’Twas your shot that did it,” cried the old man, pressing forward. “ I aimed too high. The prize is yours.”

Shannon grasped the old man’s hand. “ Not so, Simon Drake. That trusty rifle of yours ne’er played you false. ’Twas your shot that killed the stag. He’s none of mine.”

“ Well, we’ll not quarrel over the matter. It’s enough that the stag is dead. We’ll share the spoils.”

“ Give me the antlers,” said the boy, “ and you may have hide and meat. I have wanted such antlers as these. They shall be a present to the schoolmaster.”

“ Then you are at school! How comes it so far away from home? Are there not schools in Ohio? Is learning so scarce there that boys must travel thus far to find it? ”

“ My mother wanted me to go to college,” answered Shannon. “ There was no school in Ohio near home that could prepare me, so she sent me here to Pittsburg. A few more months and I am through, but as for college, that cannot be until I earn the money.”

“ You speak of your mother; and what of your father? ”

“ He is dead, Simon Drake,—last winter he went hunting, was lost in the forest, and when found was dead—frozen to death.”

“ Your father dead? My old friend and comrade dead? Why, we fought together at Yorktown. We lay nights under the same blanket. We ate in the same mess. We shot redcoats shoulder to shoulder. Ah, my mind goes back to those days. Many is the time, too, that I have eaten a meal at your home in the Ohio woods and no better meal did man ever eat. I used to see you as a little boy, strong of muscle and generous of spirit even then, just as you look to be now. I knew your face the moment I saw it, as, standing yonder on the hillside, you looked down on the river. You are the picture of that father. And that mother of yours, how is she? I can understand now how you are here at school in Pennsylvania. No woman ever had higher ambitions for her children. E’en now I can believe that every penny saved in that frugal cabin goes to furnish your head with knowledge. Is it not so? ”

“ With shame I confess it, Simon Drake. I know what my father was. We have his old musket at home and I have sworn by it to be worthy of him. I know the sort of a woman my mother is.

It grieves me to think that I, a great, sturdy lad, should be idling away my time getting book knowledge when she and my brothers and sisters are suffering—I know they are—for the necessities of life. I was thinking, as I looked down into the water yonder, that there must come an end to this; that I must be a man and cease to be a boy; that I must go out into the world and make my own way. My mother shall no longer drudge for me. I want to go into the Mississippi country. I want to become a trapper and a trader. In a few years I could make enough money so that I could return to Ohio and bring comfort to my people and then, perhaps—for an education.”

“Your heart is all right, my lad. You’ve got the stuff in you. But you will do nothing to disappoint that mother of yours. Be sure first that you are right before you drop your studies.”

“That I will, Simon Drake. I shall write home to my mother to-night and ask her to let me go out into the mountains or down the river. Let me have freedom for two years and I will show her and all the world that I will not abuse it. It will be weeks before I will get her reply. In the meantime, perhaps you will help me to lay my plans. You know the West as few men know it.”

“ Where would you go? ” asked Drake, as if to test the boy.

“ Anywhere that there is honest work to do to earn money.”

Drake was silent for some moments. Then he asked, “ Have you heard of President Jefferson’s new scheme? ”

“ You mean the purchase of Louisiana from the French? ”

“ No, but something as important and surely as necessary, if Louisiana is really to become ours. It is this: Perhaps I should not tell it to you, as I have received the information in confidence; but you will bear trusting. President Jefferson has sent to Congress a message asking for twenty-five hundred dollars to pay the expenses of an exploring expedition into the country west of the Mississippi.”

Shannon’s eyes shot fire. “ And who is to go on this expedition? Where will they get the men? ”

“ Wait and I will tell you. This project means that a company of the bravest and hardest Americans, under the leadership of some skilled commander, shall bid good-bye to civilization for months, perhaps years, of dangerous travel into the heart of the American wilderness. They must

pass through unknown rivers, over trackless plains and snow-covered mountains, among savage beasts and still more savage people, until they reach the great ocean. They may never see home again. If, perchance, they escape death by starvation, they may meet it by wild animals or by disease or by the poisoned arrows of hostile Indians. There is no one to show them the way—no guides that have ever been over the track—no one to tell them where are the wild beasts and the wilder men—where they may find water to drink or food to eat. It means death——”

“And glory!” cried Shannon, swinging his coonskin cap above his head. “Oh, that I might be one of those men! Why can’t I, Simon Drake? I am young and strong. I’ve never known an hour of sickness. I can shoot, I can swim, I can go without eating. Many is the time I have hunted for days in the woods around my Ohio home without a mouthful to eat. See, I have tramped all day and I am not weary. President Jefferson will need young men for this thing. I am going, Simon Drake. I’ll be one of that company.”

The boy threw back his head, brushed the curls from his forehead, replaced his cap, and shouldering his rifle, made as if to start away.

“ Not so fast, Shannon. Where will you go? ”

The boy stopped, abashed.

“ You will help me, Simon Drake,” he said, almost pleadingly. “ Tell me where to find out about this.”

“ First, let us cut up this deer; then, as I am going to Fort Pitt, we will walk along together and I will tell you more.”

Soon the old hunter, by the aid of his long, keen knife, had the choice pieces of the flesh in his game pouch, and the two, Shannon carrying the broad, spreading antlers, took their way along the banks of the river toward the settlement.

“ What I am about to tell you,” said Drake, when they were fairly started, “ is for your ears only. This project of President Jefferson is not to become publicly known.”

“ Why not? ” asked Shannon, in some surprise.

“ The reason is simple enough,” answered the other. “ All that part of the Continent west of the Mississippi to-day belongs to Spain, unless, as rumor has it, the wily Napoleon has really bought it back for France, whose once it was. There are those who say a deal has been made between Spain and France, but that Napoleon is keeping it quiet because he is afraid that England, with whom he

is not on good terms, may swoop down on it from her Canadian forts and take it away from him. Napoleon knows very well, too, that the United States would not rest satisfied to have so formidable a neighbor on her western borders as France, with a Napoleon in the saddle.

“ You know, doubtless, that President Jefferson recently sent Robert Livingston and James Monroe to Paris to find out the truth about these rumors. He authorized Monroe and Livingston to purchase New Orleans, if Napoleon had it for sale, in order to open up the Mississippi to American trade. There is a rumor that Monroe and Livingston have bought, not only New Orleans, but all the territory of Louisiana, which means that the boundaries of the United States have been shoved back from the great river, the Mississippi, to the ocean.

“ At the moment when Jefferson made the proposition to Congress to send an expedition to explore the great West of which I spoke a while ago, that portion of the Continent did not belong to us. You can understand, therefore, why such a project must be carried on in secret. Even now it is not positively known who are the owners of the Louisiana Territory. There is only one thing sure, and

that is the Spanish flag is floating at St. Louis and New Orleans. And so long as that flag floats there, no American military expedition such as that proposed, will be permitted to cross the Mississippi. For President Jefferson to send men into that country would be like his sending an expedition with guns and ammunition into Spain itself, and that, you will understand, the Spaniards would not permit for one moment. No more will they permit it in the case of their territory in North America, unless it is evident that the expedition is bound on some peaceful errand, as for scientific research and study; and that is the very pretense on which Jefferson is sending it out. But all the time, my lad, Jefferson and all far-sighted statesmen in America know that the time must come when the boundless territory to the west of us is ours. Jefferson is only taking time by the forelock."

"But," said Shannon impatiently, "who is to do it? Who is to win this country for our flag? Why cannot I be one of the men to do it?"

"You will promise secrecy, then?"

"I will promise anything, everything, if you will but tell me where I may go for permission to be one of this expedition."

"Listen. You have heard of General George

Rogers Clark, the Washington of the West, that brave soldier who, with a few hundred daring Americans, captured Vincennes from the British; built forts throughout our Western country, in Kentucky, Ohio, and Illinois; protected our settlers and kept the British and Indians at bay. You may not know his brother, William Clark, a lieutenant in the regular army and the hero of many a fight. William Clark is to be one of the leaders, but there is another, and he no less a personage than Meriwether Lewis, President Jefferson's private secretary, an army officer of experience and courage. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark are to command it."

"Meriwether Lewis!" exclaimed Shannon. "I know him. I met him here at the time of the whisky rebellion."

The boy's face shone with joy, for the information opened to him visions of a chance by which he might realize his hopes.

"And how did you learn all this?" inquired the boy eagerly.

"I was about to tell you that a short time ago I received a message from Captain Lewis, asking me to join the expedition."

"And you said yes?"

“ No, I begged off. I am too old. A year ago the rheumatism got hold of my leg, and I am done for, so far as roughing it is concerned. You have no idea how hard it goes for me to say no.”

“ Yes, I have,” cried Shannon. “ I would go if I had no legs at all. Will you not write for me to Captain Lewis and tell him that you have a substitute? Tell him how I want to go. Tell him what you have just said about my father and my mother. Tell him that I will do anything; that no hardship will be too great; no sacrifice too severe for me. Tell him that I am not married, that no one depends on me, that I am young, and that I am strong. Do this for me, Simon Drake, and I will pray your name every night.”

Drake looked long and earnestly at the lad; he measured him from the top of his head to the soles of his feet; his eye swept the breadth of his shoulders and caught the healthy glow of color in his cheeks and the resolute look in his eye.

“ You’ll do, Shannon. You’re just the boy. It is of such stuff that heroes are made. Would God I were as young and strong as you! You needn’t pray for me. I’m not worth it. I’ll get pay enough in thinking there is one in my place who will do honor to his country in every emergency. I’ll do

what I can for you, my lad, though that may not be much. Perhaps Captain Lewis has already selected his men. The number is to be limited, he told me, and only the bravest and best can go. He is selecting them from our border forts and from among the hardiest and most trustworthy of our frontier soldiers; but he will need hunters, interpreters, and guides. You can hunt, and perhaps your schooling will not come amiss, for Jefferson has commanded that the expedition shall study the people, the plant and the animal life, the geography of the country, and bring back complete information of everything seen. Captain Lewis writes me that after President Jefferson intrusted the command to him, he wrote to his friend, William Clark, of whom I spoke, who is now in Kentucky, to join him in the command of the expedition, and that then he ran up to Philadelphia from Washington and took a two months' scientific course to fit himself for the work. You see, my boy, it will be no child's play."

"It will be grand!" cried Shannon. "Every word you tell me fires me with a stronger purpose to go. I must go, Simon Drake, and if it were today I would leave school at once."

"But your mother——"

“ She would not—she could not object. There would be no time to hear from her. The mail travels too slowly. Why cannot I be off to Washington this very night? ”

“ What, alone? And do you know the way? Have you the money? ”

The boy's eyes drooped, and a perplexed expression crossed his face.

“ No, you need not go to Washington. Captain Lewis himself will be in Pittsburg soon, ” continued Drake reassuringly.

“ Captain Lewis in Pittsburg? Perhaps he is there now. Suppose I should miss him? ” An anxious look came into the boy's face.

“ No, not yet. Pittsburg is a long way from Washington. It will be several weeks yet before he is here. He proposes to buy some of his supplies and recruit some of his men here. Then, too, he will have to build a boat to take him and his stuff down the Ohio to St. Louis. I shall be in Pittsburg when he arrives, and I will see that you meet him. ”

Shannon took the old ranger's hand in his.

“ Simon Drake, you have done me the greatest favor ever one man did another. I feel that I shall go; that the dream of my life is about to be real-

ized. I had longed for the West, but never did I think it would be as a bearer of the flag, with a commission from the great Jefferson to conquer an unknown land. Simon Drake, no boy ever had my heart and my ambition, and no boy will ever work harder to prove himself worthy of trust.”

The man and the boy had reached the Pittsburg settlement, and on its outskirts they parted company: the man to seek his cabin home, the boy to find his school, where books and tutor were no longer to be his masters, but where dreams of conquest filled up the days, the hours, and the minutes of his life, until Meriwether Lewis, with the commission of President Jefferson in his saddle-bag, reached Pittsburg.

CHAPTER II

MEETS MERIWETHER LEWIS

ON the morning of July 5, 1803, there walked out of the White House in Washington a young military officer, aged twenty-eight, clothed in a brand-new uniform, wearing on his head a three-cornered chapeau, and carrying at his side a new sword whose hilt was burnished so that it glistened in the sunlight. He had just shaken hands with President Jefferson and received from him a commission, the importance of which neither the President nor he himself then fully appreciated. Along with this commission in his pocket lay folded a letter of credit by which this young officer was empowered to borrow for his needs on the credit of the President of the United States, and to an amount without limit.

The young man was Meriwether Lewis, slim, but well built, erect and trim, to whom President Jefferson had just intrusted the carrying out of no less a design than the exploration of the unknown

West, even so far as the "shining mountains" and the ocean beyond. No young man had ever before gone forth on a more important mission nor one fraught with greater hardships and dangers.

Jefferson knew the man he was trusting. For two years Meriwether Lewis had been his private secretary. Together they had lived so intimately that every fiber of the younger man had been tested and tried out by the older. Jefferson, too, knew the breed of the young man, for the Jeffersons and Lewises had been neighbors in Albemarle County, Virginia.

August 18, 1774, in the little village of Charlottesville, Va., Meriwether Lewis first saw the light. He was of no mean parentage. His ancestors had taken a prominent part in the affairs of the colony and had proved themselves to be of that stock of sincere, honest men and women that made Virginia the earliest battleground of freedom. His father died while he was yet a child, and the boy then lived in the household of an uncle who himself had been a fighter, and, when Meriwether was but two years old, commanded a regiment in a war with the Cherokees.

When eight years old the boy Meriwether, named for his mother's family, was a hunter, and from

then on until fourteen years of age, when he was sent away to school, he roamed the forests and haunted the streams about his home, bringing in all kinds of game as the result of his skill and bravery. From fourteen to nineteen he attended a Latin school, and from nineteen to twenty-one managed his mother's farm and became a student of nature—something that was to serve him in the great work of his after life.

In 1794 the whisky distillers in western Pennsylvania banded together against the Government and refused to pay the tax imposed upon them by Congress. George Washington, then President of the United States, promptly ordered the militia of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia to go against them. Meriwether Lewis enlisted as a private and marched with his countrymen to put down the rebellion, which had risen to such importance that the rebels, seven thousand in number, were burning buildings, rifling the mails, and insulting and abusing the Government officers. The conflict was short, and at its close Meriwether Lewis was an ensign in the first regiment of infantry. Soon he rose to the rank of first lieutenant, and then, in 1797, to that of captain. Later, under "Mad Anthony" Wayne, he served in that

general's campaigns against the Indians, and still later in Guion's expedition against the Spanish forts in Mississippi.

It was in the spring of 1801 that Thomas Jefferson, having been elevated to the Presidency of the Republic which he himself had done so much to found and fashion, looked about him for one who could serve him as a secretary. Who could be better fitted, he said, than Meriwether Lewis, the handsome, brave, distinguished young soldier, with an unbroken record of fidelity to duty and with the heroic blood of the best families of Virginia flowing through his veins? So it was that he wrote to Lewis, offering him the position, saying: "The salary is but five hundred dollars, scarcely more than an equivalent for your pay and rations in the army; but it is an easier office and would give you an opportunity to meet distinguished people, and you can board and lodge with the President's family, free of charge."

At once Lewis wrote from Pittsburg, accepting the position. And now, after two years of intimate acquaintance with him as a member of his own family, Jefferson appointed him to lead the important expedition that lay so near to his heart.

All the preliminary arrangements having been

made, two months having been spent by the young leader in Philadelphia in obtaining scientific instruction in matters that it would become his duty to observe and describe, and presents for the Indians, astronomical instruments, tents, and other equipments having been purchased, Captain Lewis was ready for the start.

A few days before he left Washington he had written to his mother, bidding her good-bye, saying that his absence would probably be for no longer than fifteen or eighteen months, and calming her fears for his safety by speaking of his abundant health and strength, and of the peaceable temper of the peoples through whose country he was to journey. Little did he know how far his prophecy was at fault. But whether or not he knew and appreciated the dangers of the expedition, his letter, breathing affection for his mother and regard for her fears, did credit to his heart.

We are told that Dolly Madison, who at that time presided over the President's household, contributed, with her own needle, to the outfit of the gallant young explorer; Rapin, the White House steward, helped him pack his belongings; Gallatin, a member of Jefferson's cabinet, contributed maps, and James Madison, Secretary of State, and aft-

erwards President of the United States, bade the young man an affectionate adieu.

Such was the auspicious beginning of the Lewis and Clark Expedition that was to bring one-half of the Continent into intimate touch and relation with the other half, and to open to the New Republic a view of its vast domains that should cause it to wonder and applaud.

A few hours after Meriwether Lewis walked out of the White House doors and turned his face to the West, he was at Harper's Ferry on the Potomac, where awaited him wagoners driving their ponderous Pennsylvania wagons laden with the purchases he had made in Philadelphia.

With shouts and a cracking of whips, the party started upon the long trail over the mountains to the little village of Pittsburg, at the headwaters of the Ohio, probably by the same route that another young man, George Washington by name, had traversed, when he went with Braddock to meet defeat at the hands of the French and the Indians at old Fort Duquesne, then, in 1803, a crumbling ruin over which the village of Pittsburg was to grow into a great city. Certain it was that over this same trail old Daniel Boone had traveled from his home in North Carolina to seek

out the hiding places of the panther, the bear, and the wolf in Kentucky. That had been thirty-four years before; and since that time hundreds of daring men inured to hardship and privation had followed over this same track, longing for the solitude and the grandeur of the wilderness.

Captain Lewis had, previous to his starting, sent messages to the frontier forts calling for men to the number allowed him by Congress, and instructing them to make ready to join him on his arrival. Among those to whom he had written was the friend of his youth, William Clark, then at his home at the falls of the Ohio, near Louisville, caring for his brother, General George Rogers Clark, who, after a life of splendid service to his country, was living a disappointed old age upon the banks of the noble river he had fought to win for the American pioneer.

At Carlisle and Fort Pitt, in Pennsylvania, were others who received the welcome message, and at Louisville and Kaskaskia were still others. Everywhere the invitation to join the hazardous enterprise was received with joy; men waited for Lewis' coming with eager impatience, that they might offer themselves for the undertaking.

These were the days of heroic daring. Men

loved danger, and courted it. Most of the pioneers were born amid it and breathed its air with every inspiration of their infant life. Children learned to use firearms while scarcely able to carry the stocks to their shoulders. Women handled the musket as they handled the broom and the distaff. Boys became hunters before they knew their alphabet, and to bring down a bear or an Indian with a rifle shot was their first ambition. Men lived in the forests. Civilization was distasteful to them. With the coming of neighbors they sold or gave away their cabins and moved farther on. They must be free—free to come and go, free to kill or be killed, free to cut down the forests, or dam the streams, free to hunt what and where they liked, free to make their own laws, and to execute them.

But bravery was not the only thing that Meriwether Lewis sought in his men. President Jefferson had said to him: “The men must have courage undaunted, firmness and perseverance of purpose which nothing but impossibilities can divert, an intimate knowledge of the Indian character, customs, and principles, experience with hunting life, honesty, sound understanding, fidelity to truth; the officers must be careful as a father to those committed to their charge, but steady in the

maintenance of order and discipline. They must be able to make exact observations of vegetable and animal life, and must be able to describe what they see.”

Not all the brave men of the frontier could meet these requirements. So it was that Captain Lewis selected most of his men in advance, either from a personal knowledge of them gained in his experience as a soldier on the frontier, or from their reputations.

In a few weeks Meriwether Lewis and his travel-begrimed wagoners entered the village of Pittsburg at the confluence of the Monongahela and the Allegheny. Lewis was no stranger there, for in the campaign against the whisky insurgents he had wintered at Fort Pitt, and there and then it was that George Shannon met the young officer and immediately made him his ideal of all that was true and manly.

At Pittsburg Captain Lewis at once set about making his preparations for the long river voyage down the Ohio to St. Louis. There were supplies and stores to be collected, ammunition to be bought, and a boat to be built. There were boatmen and river guides to be employed and, most important of all, there was to be selected the first installment

of the band of men who were to conquer the Continent.

With characteristic energy Captain Lewis went about his work, instilling his spirit into his men, and, in an incredibly short time, collecting the necessary equipment for the voyage. The building of the boat, however, was something he could not hurry. The rivermen were drunkards, working one day and carousing the next. He scolded and pleaded, but to no purpose. With his own hands he wielded the axe and the saw, and with his own arms lifted the timbers to their place. There were other boats building along the river front. These were for the pioneers going down the river to seek new homes, or for the river traders carrying the articles of civilized life to the Western communities, there to be exchanged for the trappers' furs—all eager to be off with the first freshet that should send the current high over the shoals and insure a speedy voyage.

Lewis had money to spend, but it was not his own. It was the money of his country, intrusted to his care, and he must be frugal. How little it seems to us nowadays, when Congress appropriates millions to dredge out a harbor or straighten a river's course! Two thousand five hundred dol-

lars for the exploration of a continent! True, Captain Lewis had a letter of credit on which, in case of need, he might draw, but in that wilderness to which he was going who was there to honor it?

One day, some time after Captain Lewis' arrival, as he was standing on the river bank watching the operations of the rivermen, and bargaining with a contractor for men to finish his boat, a young man approached him with a hurried stride and, stopping a few paces off, doffed his cap. Lewis looked at him twice and then extended his hand.

“George Shannon, I'm glad to see you.”

“You know me, then, Captain Lewis.” A glad smile went over the boy's face. “I did not expect that you would remember me. Much has happened with you since we met the winter of the whisky war.”

“Yes, and how about you, Shannon? Are you still at school?”

“Still at school,” echoed the boy; “but with your permission I shall quit. I want to go with you, Captain Lewis, into the West.”

Lewis looked his surprise. Then he excused himself from the contractor, and taking the boy's arm led him aside a few paces.

“ Who told you that I was going into the West? ”

“ Simon Drake.”

“ And is this the way Drake keeps a secret? Did he tell you the object of the trip? ”

“ Yes, under a promise that I would not divulge it, and I have kept my promise. I have come to ask you to take me with you, Captain Lewis.”

“ You go? I do not see how I can permit it, Shannon. You are too young. We need men, not boys;” then, seeing a cloud pass over the boy’s face, he added: “ What can you do? ”

“ I can do anything that a man can do. I will do anything for you—if need be, I will go to the ends of the earth.”

“ But I cannot take every one, Shannon. Every man who goes must be a picked man.”

“ What qualities do you need, Captain? ” asked Shannon.

“ Grit that never says die, for one thing.”

“ No man ever called George Shannon a coward,” the boy replied stoutly. “ I’m afraid of nothing. I will give you the evidence of it. On the trip down the river, put me at the hardest tasks. If there is fighting to do, put me in the front rank. If by the time you reach St. Louis I have not

proven myself brave enough, turn me off. Give me a trial, Captain Lewis." The boy's manner betrayed an earnestness that bade fair to carry everything before it.

"I need men who understand the Indians, men who know when and how to shoot—prudent men."

"And you need hunters, too, Captain—men who know the woods and can bring in the game. I am a hunter. My whole life has been a forest life save these last few years in school, and," this he said with a laugh, "it is a question whether even here I have not played the hunter more than the student."

"It is true, Shannon, we shall need hunters, but I expect to find them farther West. I need boatmen here and soldiers. My guides and hunters I can pick up at St. Louis."

"But I can manage a boat," the young man replied. "I have not lived these years on the Monongahela without learning to swing an oar. Feel that arm. Do you not think it capable of pulling a stroke? You will need strong oarsmen, too, and I am all of that."

"But what of your mother, Shannon? You used to tell me that she had often said she was willing

to eat hoe-cake to the end of her days, if necessary, to give her children an education."

"I have already written her," the boy replied, "but I cannot receive an answer in time. She wants me to go to college in Massachusetts when I have finished here. But how can I go? She has no money, nor have I—barely enough to keep soul and body together. Simon Drake tells me that your men will receive pay; that when they reach home the Government will richly reward them. When I return I can use the money the Government gives me and go to college. The money my mother is now sending me she can keep for herself and for my brothers and sisters. She will not refuse; she cannot. Think of the glory of it, Captain Lewis. Will not that appeal to her? What mother is there who would not be proud to have her son enlist in such a cause under such a leader as you?"

"Very well," replied Lewis, smiling. "Go back to your studies, talk with the schoolmaster, think the matter all over again, and come to me in a week's time. Remember, you must be prepared for unknown dangers. You must be willing to take your life in your hand and sacrifice it, if need be, to the success of our cause. I must now go and see to my boat. It is hard getting work done here at

this time of the year. The boatmen are all busy—all of them who are sober.”

At these words of Captain Lewis, Shannon's face flushed with joy. He knew he had triumphed; that he was to be one of the picked men; that he was going into the West—the West that meant so much and yet so little to even the most knowing of the pioneers of those days.

Filled with high anticipations, his heart bounding with exultant blood, the boy made his way hurriedly to the long, low building in the outskirts of the village where the principal of the Latin school—the best in all western Pennsylvania—held sway. Directly he found the master, a long, lean, angular Yankee, who had emigrated years before with his gaunt form and his few books into the untutored West to set up a school. Of such as he it was that Goldsmith wrote:

“ Yet he was kind; or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declared how much he knew;
'Twas certain he could write and cipher too,”

But this master could do more than write and cipher; he could read Latin, and this distinguished his school over all its humble contemporaries; for it prepared for college. What mattered it if his

figure was awkward, his garments badly shaped, his manners ungainly; he could read Latin. This particular master was a Yankee, and distinguished by the peculiarities of that people. He had appeared in the Pittsburg settlement with a letter of introduction and without money; but he could read Latin, and that was enough.

The men and women of that day were not unlike those of the present. They wished their children to know more than they themselves did, and so it was that men who knew little more than how to handle the rifle, and women who knew little more than how to use the spinning-wheel, toiled and saved, that their boys might go to the Latin school.

With a boldness born of anticipated freedom George Shannon went directly to the master and told him his plans. His advice he did not ask, for he had fully made up his own mind.

The master was shrewd. He knew well that with this boy, whose proud spirit he had come to know, decisions were made for keeps. Regrets he felt that George Shannon must be lost to him, but he kept these within his breast, and set about at once airing his knowledge of the Great West of which all but he, the schoolmaster, were ignorant.

He brought out a well-thumbed map and discoursed for hours, while his pupil sat open-eyed and open-mouthed, listening to the wonderful stories of the great river that flowed through the heart of the Continent. What the schoolmaster did not know about former attempts to explore the country beyond the Mississippi was not to be known. He was familiar with all the history, written, or spoken, that related to Western discovery. In glowing terms he told of Balboa's first view of the Pacific; of Cartier's exploration of the St. Lawrence; of the wanderings of De Soto, and his conquest of the great river beneath whose surface his body found its last resting-place; of the work of La Salle and Cadillac and Marquette and Hennepin.

This but fired the spirit of the boy and filled his succeeding days and nights with visions of glory. Already he saw himself crowned with the laurels of conquest and named among the pathfinders of the wilderness beyond the Mississippi.

CHAPTER III

DOWN THE OHIO

THE boat that was to convey Captain Lewis, his provisions and baggage, and the few men recruited from the Government fort at Carlisle to St. Louis was finally ready. Several days were spent in loading. Then, on the morning of August 31st, at four o'clock, the captain gave the order to shove off, and the oars sank into the water for the first pull of the near one thousand miles down the Ohio to St. Louis.

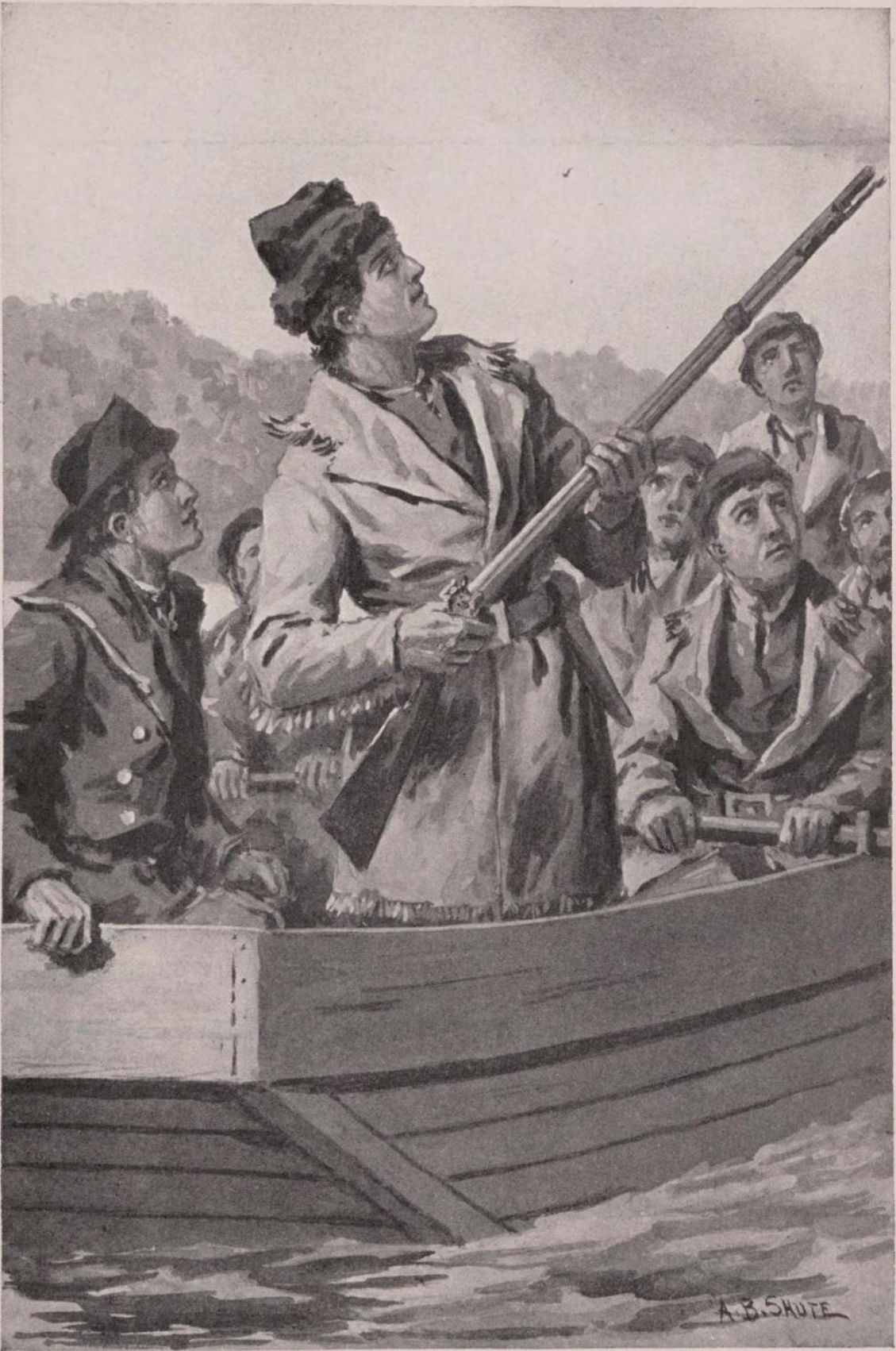
As the prow caught the current Captain Lewis stood in the bow of his boat, glad that now the labors of the first stage of his journey were over and he was at last upon the bosom of the great current that should bear him to the very doorway of the unexplored West.

At the helm, at the bow, and at the oars were strong men like himself, fired with a zeal that was to know no discouragement and no defeat. There were John Collins, George Gibson, Hugh McNeal,

John Potts, and Peter Wiser, all Pennsylvanians except the first named, who was of Maryland—recruits who had been ordered to join Lewis from Carlisle. Youngest of the company was another, the Ohio boy, George Shannon, who the evening before had bade good-bye to the master of the Latin school and to his comrades, and with a glad heart had turned his steps toward the river. Bare-headed, his curls floating in the breeze that blew from down the stream, he bent to his oar with the rest, his heart beating fast with the joy of anticipated achievement.

When the boat reached the middle of the mighty current it sped swiftly along, with an expert riverman at the helm guiding its prow out of the shallows, and away from floating logs and obstructions brought down by the mountain currents.

Buoyant and determined, the rowers kept on day after day. No signs of life greeted their eyes save flocks of wild geese that, startled on their approach, flew away to safety; the occasional flash of light from the silvery sides of fish leaping from the water; the swoop of some great bird that circled about them as if curious at the strange sight; a tiny wreath of smoke from a settler's cabin, hidden among the trees upon the banks; or a canoe,



“ Well done, lad ! ” cried the captain. — Page 37. ’

skirting the shores, half defiant, half timid-like, carrying a solitary Indian.

George Shannon, true to the instincts of the hunter, when not on duty at the oars, stood for hours in the prow of the boat, oftentimes beside his captain, watching for the wild game that came within the reach of his trusty rifle. Once an eagle swooped down upon the river and bore a fish away in its beak.

“ Shoot him, Shannon, and I will give you one of the prettiest baubles among those I have bought for the Indians.”

No sooner said than Shannon's rifle went to his shoulder, a sharp report rang out over the river, the eagle hovered a moment as if to change its course, the fish dropped from its beak, and with a broken wing the great bird floundered in the air and dropped helpless upon the shore.

“ Well done, lad! ” cried the captain, and a shout of applause went up from the oarsmen. “ It was a long shot. I did not think you could do it. You have earned the reward. We will need that steady eye and steady nerve when we get to the wilderness.”

On the approach of night, or at times when the approach of a storm or the blowing of adverse

winds made it necessary, the captain directed the helmsman to steer for the shore. Then the sail was hauled down and put up on the land for shelter, the men scattered in search of firewood, and the cook prepared supper. Glad were they then to stretch their bodies upon the green turf. At such times George Shannon shouldered his rifle and went out into the woods alone. He loved Nature and was never so happy as when alone in the forest. Shannon was a singer, and when laden with the spoils of the chase he returned to the boat from some hunting excursion, his comrades knew of his coming long before they saw him, for his voice rang out in some rollicking song, none the less clear and long-continued because of the long tramp through tangled forests.

Once he failed to appear when night fell. Some alarm was expressed for his safety. No one thought of going on without him.

“We must await his return,” said Captain Lewis, “and if he does not appear by morning we must go in search of him. I have feared the boy’s love for the forest might lead him too far away. The Indians are none too friendly since the white man has driven them from the Ohio.” But with sun-up the next morning, Shannon’s halloo, loud

and clear, rang from a distant hilltop, and soon he was among them, throwing at their feet a beautiful doe that had led him a chase for many a mile and caused him to forget everything but her beautiful eyes, her sleek sides, and her nimble limbs.

Captain Lewis had not the heart to reprimand the boy, for in the incident he saw an exhibition of the quality that was to make George Shannon one of the men of the great expedition upon whom the leaders could depend.

With hook and line they caught the pickerel and the bass that fairly swarmed in the virgin waters. With their oars they killed the turtles as they slipped from the rocks in fright, and with unerring aim they brought down the pigeons, the wild turkeys, and the wild geese that soared above them.

The journey was enlivened by the constant changes of scenery, the excitement of running over the shallows and around dangerous reefs or under caving banks of earth, the exhilaration of work in the open air amid genial companions, and the knowledge that before them lay prizes which lost nothing of their glory from being the children of their imaginations.

September 13th, nearly two weeks from the day the party bade good-bye to the village of Pitts-

burg, the boat lay opposite Marietta, at the mouth of the Muskingum, where, fifteen years before, General Rufus Putnam had settled with a little colony to found the first village in the to-day populous State of Ohio. Here a hearty welcome was given the party, and here they saw the great circles of earthworks builded by races that preceded the Indians. Moored to the bank lay a number of large flat-boats, and keel boats, fitted up for the river trade.

A few days later they passed the beautiful Blennerhassett, where a stately mansion, half hid among Lombardy poplars, looked out upon them as they passed; then Fort Washington, now the great city of Cincinnati, stood in view, and below it a few days' journey, the village of Louisville, to which their minds and hearts had long been turning.

George Rogers Clark lived at Louisville. It was he who had founded it, laid out its streets and squares, and built near it a strong fort that might stand to the hunted and harassed pioneers of Kentucky as a place of refuge and defense against the Indians and the British alike. Here General Clark's younger brother, William Clark, whom Lewis had invited to become his partner in the

hazardous enterprise in hand, was to join the party with others from the Kentucky settlements.

Every member of the little company aboard the boat, from the captain down, had heard of George Rogers Clark; indeed, there was not a man, woman, or child west of the Alleghenies, and certainly few in the colonies to the east, who had not heard his name and the story of his achievements. And now that George Shannon and the recruits from Carlisle were about to see the old hero with their own eyes, they showed the greatest interest in everything pertaining to him, and eagerly plied Captain Lewis with questions.

“Tell us all about him,” entreated Shannon, as the company sat about their campfire the evening before the day they were to reach Louisville.

Captain Lewis was nothing loath to answer, for his mind was dwelling on the subject. George Rogers Clark had ever been his ideal of a soldier, and he was never tired of singing his praises.

“General Clark,” he began, “was born in Virginia, and when a boy had a Scotchman for a teacher—the same one, by the way, who taught James Madison. General Clark and James Madison were schoolmates.”

“ James Madison, the Secretary of State? ” asked Shannon.

“ Yes, and a fine man he is. He shook my hand the day I left Washington, and I shall not soon forget his kind words. Some day he will be President of the United States, I prophesy. Well, Clark did what many another Virginia boy has done—studied surveying. You know, Washington did the same. It’s the best education a boy can get nowadays. The demand for surveyors is growing every day. Before Clark was twenty-one he was surveying on the upper Ohio. When the Shawnees rose against the settlements Clark enlisted with Governor Dunmore to fight them. Did you ever hear of the speech of Logan, the great Mingo chief? ”

“ Why, yes,” replied Shannon, “ I’ve used it for a declamation in school.”

“ So has many another boy,” said Captain Lewis. “ It will be a long time before American boys forget Logan and his speech. You remember how it goes :

“ ‘ I appeal to any white man, if ever he entered Logan’s cabin and he gave him not meat; if he ever came cold and naked, and he clothed him not. During the course of the last long and bloody war

Logan remained idle in his cabin, an advocate for peace. Such was my love for the whites that my countrymen pointed as they passed and said: "Logan is the friend of the white man." I had even thought to have lived with you but for the injuries of one man. Colonel Cresop, last spring, in cold blood, and unprovoked, murdered all the relations of Logan, not even sparing my women and children. There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature. This drove me to revenge. I have sought it; I have killed many; I have fully glutted my vengeance; for my country I rejoice at the beams of peace. But do not harbor a thought that mine is the joy of fear. Logan never felt fear. He will not turn on his heel to save his life. Who is there to mourn for Logan? Not one.'

"That speech is supposed to have been made at the time of the signing of the treaty that ended that war. Clark at that time got his first experience in fighting Indians. Afterward he went down into Kentucky and became a leader in the defense of the new settlements, so that through all that country, even so far as the Mississippi, his name became a terror to the red man, as the leader of the 'long-knives.' In 1777, at the age of twenty-

four, he was a major of militia, and the next year a lieutenant-colonel. At the age of twenty-seven he fought the battle of Vincennes, driving the British out of the Illinois territory. At twenty-nine he was a brigadier-general, giving his life and his fortune to the defense of the pioneer settlers and the building and strengthening of the western forts against the British."

"How old is he now?" asked one of the men.

"But fifty-one, if I remember correctly," answered Captain Lewis. "And yet they say he is like a broken-down old man. His career, while one of splendid service to his country, has ended in disappointment for him—a disappointment which is breaking his heart."

"How could such a life as his end in disappointment?" asked Shannon. "Is his name not revered throughout the entire country? Is he not called the Washington of the West? I am told that his old soldiers make annual pilgrimages to his home to shake his hand and talk over the days when they fought together, and that even the Indians, whom for so many years he fought, come and hold their powwows under the shade of his trees and there seek his advice and counsel. Has

he not served his country well? Certainly she will reward him."

"Yes, so it might seem; but the Colonies were so busy with their war against the British along the seacoast that they had no thought, no money, no men for George Rogers Clark, who, almost alone, was fighting the enemies of his country beyond the Alleghenies."

"But now that the war is ended, surely Congress will do him justice and give him the reward that he has earned," cried Shannon, his face flushing with indignation. "Such treatment of its heroes is unworthy of the Republic founded by Washington and Jefferson."

"True," answered Lewis, "but the fact remains that George Rogers Clark has lost health and fortune in his country's service, and now, impoverished and stricken, he is seemingly forgotten. Out of his own private fortune he has had to pay the expenses of his campaigns. His brother, William Clark, wrote me, when he consented to go with us, that one reason that led him to accept the offer was that he could sell his farm and help to pay his brother's debts. Yet these debts were made by that gallant man, not for his own gain, but that he might hold the West for his country

against its enemies—the British and the Indians. You have heard of Vincennes and how, with less than two hundred men, Clark captured it in a night, and sent General Hamilton in irons to Virginia. You must get him to tell you that story. No greater achievement will adorn the pages of our history in the years to come than Clark's expedition against Vincennes."

"Did the capture of Vincennes end the war with the British and the Indians in the West?" asked McNeal.

"No, that war could never end so long as Detroit was in the hands of the British. Detroit was the center of British influence and supplies. There the British received their re-enforcements; there they bribed the Indian tribes; there they sent out their marauding bands of redcoats and savages to scour the country from the Ohio to the Mississippi, plundering and murdering men, women, and children alike; and there they bought the scalp locks of our people as they would buy pelts. You ask me why General Clark is dying of a broken heart. Here is the chief reason: Not that he has lost his fortune in the defense of his country, but that he was unable, because of his poverty and lack of support at Washington, to take Detroit. It was

the one aim of his life, after he had captured Vincennes. He knew, as every one knew, that so long as Detroit harbored the redcoat, there could be no peace for the Ohio and Kentucky settlers. But his appeals to Washington met with no response. The Government had neither money nor men to send him. He must fight the battle alone. So long as men and money lasted he fought on, but these failed, and broken-hearted, he retired. Now, aged beyond his years, he lives with his sister and her family, and his brother William, on the banks of the Ohio at Louisville, and there he will die in obscurity. This is the man to whom Benjamin Franklin said: 'You have given an empire to the Republic.' "

"I shall get him to tell me about the battle of Vincennes," said Shannon, after a moment of silence. "When a young boy, I heard my father tell of it, and now that I am to see the great man, I shall get it from his own lips."

The whole party were curious also to see Captain William Clark, who on the morrow was to join them at his home near Louisville, for it had already been confided to them that Captain Lewis was to share the command with his old friend, the younger brother of John Rogers Clark.

“ He, too, is a Virginian,” said Captain Lewis. “ He is four years older than I am—that is, thirty-three. Many years ago his father, John Clark, moved out to Kentucky. But before that William Clark and I were boy friends together in Albemarle County, Virginia. We were comrades together, too, under General Wayne when he fought the Indians in Ohio, and were with him at the battle of Fallen Timbers. Then he became an engineer, and helped construct some of our Western forts. In 1796 he left the army and retired to his home near Louisville, where he helped to manage the affairs of his brother, the general, who was being sued on all sides by persons who had supplied him with provisions, clothing, etc., in his Illinois campaign. Knowing him to be loyal, intelligent, and brave, I selected him from among all my acquaintances as the one to divide with me the command of this expedition.”

“ Why was it necessary to have two commanders? ” ventured one of the men.

“ President Jefferson thought best,” replied the captain, “ that there be two commanders, so that in case anything happened to one there would be no question as to who should succeed. I suggested Clark, for I not only knew that he was brave, but

I knew that he was prudent, industrious, and well-informed.”

The next day Captain Lewis and his company came in sight of Fort Nelson, where it stood protecting the little group of cabins that comprised the village of Louisville. All wondered at the strength of the fortress—a wonder that increased when they knew that its walls were cannon-proof; that around it ran a moat, and surrounding that, a breastwork of log-pens filled with earth, and picketed ten feet high on top of the breastwork; that within it were mounted a six-pounder captured at Vincennes, four cannon, and eight swivels, with an abundance of shell, ball, and grapeshot. They did not wonder, when told that no enemy dared attack it, and that it was the strongest fort west of the Alleghenies.

As soon as Captain Lewis' boat came in view up the river, sentinels who had been watching for days for its coming hastened to the commandant of the fort and to the Clark home. No time was lost by Captain William Clark in donning his best attire and buckling on his sword. Then, accompanied by his negro servant, York, and by his brother, the general, he hurried to the fort.

Excitement was high in the little community, for

it had long been known that Lieutenant Clark had received a commission as a captain and was to head an expedition into the undiscovered West. His home had been sold, and all preparations had been made for his departure. Recruits, too, had been selected and were now ready to proceed at a moment's notice, as soon as the boat should come from up the river and Captain Lewis should give the word.

There were gathered on the shores all the inhabitants of Louisville—men, women, and children, huntsmen, craftsmen, rivermen, negroes, and Indians, the garrison of the fort with banners flying—all to do honor to the representative of the young Republic who had paid such signal honor to their beloved young townsman.

Captain Lewis stood in the bow of his boat as his sturdy oarsmen turned its prow toward the shore. His chapeau was in his hand, and his fine countenance beamed with pleasure at the prospect of grasping the hand of the friend of his earlier days. Scarcely had the prow touched the shore ere he sprang from the deck, and the two friends were in warm embrace.

“Welcome, Captain Lewis! Welcome to Louisville!” cried Clark, while the bugles sounded, flags

waved, and the people huzzaed and pressed about them, curious and admiring.

“It is good to see you, Captain Clark,” replied Lewis, his eyes gleaming.

Then a tall, strong form with bent shoulders, bared head, and silvered locks, at a gesture from Captain William Clark, stepped forward.

“My brother, the general.” The Clark family always called him “the general.”

Captain Lewis stepped forward with extended hand. “General George Rogers Clark,” he said, “I am proud to shake your hand. I have long wished to meet you. I need not say that your fame is as wide as that of Washington.”

The old general lifted his head proudly and murmured a word of grateful response. But to the young man who held his hand in tight embrace there seemed to flit over the old soldier’s countenance a shadow as of a great sorrow.

Captain Lewis called his men and presented each by name.

Then the officers of the fort and the principal citizens of the village came forward and paid their respects to the visitors. It was a glad and welcome experience to Captain Lewis and his men—

an auspicious ending of the first stage of the expedition.

The brief formalities of welcome over, command was quickly given and the soldiers wheeled. The veteran general and the two young captains, together with their men, took the head of the line, and the gay procession, followed by the crowd of onlookers, marched to the house of the commandant of the fort, where an ample collation was served from tables groaning with the best the land afforded. Toasts were drunk to Washington, to Jefferson, to the Republic of the United States, to General George Rogers Clark, and to Captains Meriwether Lewis, and William Clark.

Several days were spent by Captain Lewis at Louisville, during which he unfolded his plans to Captain Clark and sought the advice and counsel of his brother, the general.

The recruits that had been selected by Clark at once reported to Captain Lewis, who gave them a strict examination as to their qualifications for the work. There were nine, and all from Kentucky. There was Charles Floyd, from a pioneer family, whose father, too, had emigrated from Virginia and had fought with Daniel Boone. He was to be the first citizen soldier of the United States to

die in the great territory west of the Mississippi—the only one of the expedition who was not to return alive. There was John Ordway, perhaps the best educated man in the expedition, who was to become a sergeant and write a diary of the travels of the party that was to become an invaluable record. There was Nathaniel Pryor, a cousin of Floyd, who likewise was made a sergeant, and William Bratton, a blacksmith, and John Shields, a gunsmith, and John Colter, who had been a ranger with Simon Kenton, and Reuben and James Fields, and William Warner, and Joseph Whitehouse, all experts with the rifle.

One other there was who was not to be overlooked, and that was the negro, York, who had been William Clark's playmate when the latter was a child in Virginia, and who all through the young hero's boyhood had been his guide and protector, and was now his servant and bodyguard. York was to go, too, and the negro's joy was beyond bounds. He would as soon think of taking his master's life as of seeing him go on such an expedition without his protection.

An interpreter was needed—one who knew the Indian tongue as he knew his own. General George Rogers Clark knew the man for the position—

George Drouillard by name—but he was at St. Louis. George's father, Pierre Drouillard, was at Louisville, however, so the two captains went to see him. Pierre Drouillard had served with General Clark in his Indian campaigns, and had once saved the life of Simon Kenton. The old man readily gave them a letter to his son in St. Louis.

Many and long were the conferences held between the captains and their men. The needs of the expedition were thoroughly canvassed, and all carefully instructed in their duties.

Such of the men as were not already enlisted in the regular army were now told they must enlist, as the expedition was to be a military one, governed by military regulations. All who took part in it, save such as were engaged from time to time as guides or rivermen, or for temporary purposes only, must take the oath of allegiance and become part of the regular army.

The labor of repairing the boat and furnishing her with supplies being completed, the word was given that on the following day the expedition was to move. But George Shannon had not yet heard the story of the battle of Vincennes from the lips of its hero, and he resolved to find a way to accomplish his purpose.

CHAPTER IV

THE STORY OF VINCENNES

GETTING leave of absence from the boat on the last afternoon of the party's stay at Louisville, Shannon made his way to "Mulberry Hill," where in a fine old mansion lived General Clark. He found the old veteran sitting under the trees looking out over the river. Approaching him with cap in hand, the young soldier made known his wishes.

"You wish to learn the story of the capture of Vincennes!" he exclaimed. "Ah, that every American youth might learn it in order to know what men have suffered and endured for the sake of their homes and their country. But Vincennes will be forgotten. George Rogers Clark will be forgotten by those who will enjoy the liberties for which those sufferings were endured. An ungrateful country will erect no monument to these men. It will even forget their names, and I shall die here, penniless and obscure." The general here seemed absorbed in his sorrow and scarcely aware of the presence of his young visitor.

“ Surely, not so, General Clark. The time will come when men will remember. Men through all time will seek to know who it was that took and kept for the Republic this great West. I have heard my schoolmaster say that men are not appreciated by the people of their own generation. True, you may die here alone, in obscurity, but the time will come when these valleys, filled with millions of people, will resound with your praises. Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois will never forget General Clark.”

The old man's eyes were looking far beyond the waters of the great river. It was as if he were looking into the great future, and longing for a sight of that day when all the land should be full of peace—that peace for which he had given his life and his fortune.

“ It may be, young man. Indeed, it must be that a Republic that owes so much to its pioneers and its founders will not prove ungrateful. Yes, you shall hear the story of Vincennes. Sit here on this bench by my side.

“ It was in the winter of 1779 and the month of February. That was twenty-four years ago, and before you were born. Virginia had made claim to all the territory north of the Ohio, and I had

been commissioned a colonel, with instructions to quiet the Indians and drive out the British, who occupied several strong forts within the territory. The British Governor, Hamilton, had marched down from Detroit to Vincennes with eight hundred redcoats, and had captured it. A little later I was at Kaskaskia with not over an hundred men. Through a Frenchman who had come from Vincennes, I learned that Hamilton was sending out from that place all through the country men and ammunition to terrify the settlers and win the Indians to the support of the British. The Frenchman gave me to understand that, by reason of these parties being sent out, Vincennes itself was weakened, and that if a strong force were sent against it at once it might be taken. The project was a hazardous one. It was the middle of winter. My men were poorly clothed and poorly fed. They were at best but a band of rough frontiersmen, rangers, hunters, and the like. We had no provision for such an expedition. We had little ammunition, and no money with which to buy more. But the Frenchman who brought me the news could command money, and this he offered me to fit out the expedition. Think of it, lad! But a few more than a hundred men, ill-disciplined, without ex-

perience in warfare against trained troops such as were the British, in the midst of winter, and hundreds of miles from the point of attack, going upon an expedition against a walled fort, swarming, as was supposed, with redcoats, officered by a brave man, though a cruel one, and supplied with everything necessary to a successful defense! ”

“ But you had no fear! ” exclaimed Shannon, eagerly.

“ Yes, I had fear. But one may fear, and yet do his duty. I knew that to leave Vincennes in the hands of the British was to lose the friendship of the Indians, to endanger the life of every settler in every cabin north of the Ohio; perhaps to bring down upon our forts on the river hordes of the enemy that nothing within our power could withstand.

“ I called my men together. Never, young man, shall I forget that day, as I stood before them looking into their rugged faces and telling them of the death that awaited the settlers if we did not march immediately upon Vincennes and drive out the enemy. With a mighty shout they fell into line, and I knew from that moment that in my little command, now swelled to one hundred and seventy men, there was more courage to face danger than

in a whole battalion of British redcoats, supported by a thousand treacherous Indians, fighting for money or conquest.”

The old general paused as if overcome with emotion. Shannon dared not speak.

“ On February 5th everything was ready. The old priest of Kaskaskia blessed us, and then, crossing the Kaskaskia River, we made the start. It was cold and the low grounds were covered with several inches of water, making marching difficult and fatiguing. It was evident to me that I must keep the men in good spirits, so I let them break ranks and hunt by the way. The companies of my little command were given horses in turn, and sent out into the woods to bring in the game. Then such feats as we had around the campfire at night, with the men dancing, singing, shouting, wrestling, and running races. In all their labor and all their sports I joined as one of them, for I must not appear to lack spirit.

“ Finally we reached the Little Wabash, to find it swollen so that it spread far beyond its banks and overflowed the adjacent lowlands for miles. I had a pirogue built, and by means of it transported the baggage and provisions. Then, with my men, I plunged in. You should have heard the

poor fellows boasting of what they would do when they reached Vincennes. Men who could brave such difficulties as these icy currents presented, they said, would find no difficulty in defeating the British when once they got sight of them. Some funny things happened as we floundered through the water, sometimes shoulder high. I remember a little drummer boy who, too short to wade through the deep water, floated on his drum. Ah! even the boys had hearts of iron.

“ A few days later we reached the Wabash. There we found the low country submerged in all directions, as far as the eye could see. In places it was up to the neck. My men were now half-starved, and alarm showed on their faces. Standing on the banks of the great current that spread in all directions, I knew that it must be advance, or die where we were. To return by the way over which we had come was certain death by starvation. We were but a few miles from Vincennes, but between us and the fort was one vast flood. Pouring some water in my hand and mixing it with powder, I blackened my face, gave the war-whoop, and jumped into the stream. One by one my men followed me. Some one started a song, and finally all were shouting and cheering. So

cold was it that ice covered the water along the shore. Away beyond us lay a woods, and, though I did not know it to be a fact, I cheered my men by telling them that, reaching there, we would find dry land. At this they shouted and plunged on. The weaker men were held up by the stronger, and those not tall enough to march in the deepest water were carried on the shoulders of the others. At last despair seized upon some, so I ordered a major to fall to the rear with twenty-five men and shoot the first man who refused to advance. Think of it, lad! God grant you may never be brought to such a pass."

"But if I am," said Shannon reverently, "God help me to do my duty."

"Then," went on the general, "I ordered the pirogue with the baggage to go on, and, after unloading, to come back for the weaker of our men. We reached the woods where the men expected land, and found the water up to our shoulders. The poor fellows who had given out clung there to the trunks of trees and floated upon old logs, waiting for the pirogue to return. The strongest plunged on. But even these, as they neared the shore, fell in the shallow water from exhaustion. We captured a canoe in which some Indian squaws

were carrying a half-quarter of buffalo, some corn, tallow, and kettles. Then we made broth to strengthen us. Every one got a little, but the strong gave up theirs to the weak.

“ A little farther on we came to a point where we were in full view of the fort, some two miles distant. How our men did feast their eyes upon it! Every one forgot his suffering. Even the weakest sprang to their feet and cheered. A Frenchman hunting in the vicinity was captured, and from him we learned the British had that very day completed the wall of their fort, and that many Indians had gathered in the village. Here, then, was our situation: With less than one hundred and fifty men, half dead from fatigue and starving, we were facing a walled fort that protected a garrison of redcoats and Indians, whose numbers we could not know. To back out was impossible. Capture meant death. There was but one thing to do—march on. I at once wrote a message, directing it to the inhabitants, many of whom, particularly the French, I believed to be half friendly to us. In that message I said, and I remember it as plainly as if it were before me now:

“ ‘Being now within two miles of your village with my army, determined to take your fort this

night, and not being willing to surprise you, I take this method to request such of you as are true citizens and are willing to enjoy the liberty I bring you, to remain still in your houses; and those, if any there be, that are friends to the King, will instantly repair to the fort and join the hair-buyer general and fight like men; and if any such as do not go to the fort shall be discovered afterward, they may depend upon severe punishment. On the contrary, those that are true friends to liberty may depend on being well treated; and I once more request them to keep out of the streets; for every one I find in arms on my arrival, I shall treat as an enemy.'

“ When the messenger reached the town, I could see through my glasses that there was great commotion. The message no doubt occasioned surprise, and there were many who hesitated, not knowing what to do. In the evening when we moved toward the fort great crowds were watching us. We kept concealed as much as possible, that our numbers might not be counted. We had several flags, and these we placed on poles and held aloft. We had captured some horses in the neighborhood of the fort, and these the officers mounted bareback.

“ It was dark before we had traversed half the distance to the town, then, suddenly changing our direction, we came upon the fort from the opposite side and began firing. To our surprise we found that there was no answer to our attack. Later we found our message had not reached the fort at all and had only become known in the village; that the soldiers, having finished the fort that day, had retired early to rest, and that the first shots from our men were not noticed, as frequently drunken Indians saluted the fort by shooting off their firearms at all hours of the night. This was a great piece of good fortune to us, for it gave the friendly inhabitants of the village, among whom were nearly a hundred Indians who were well disposed toward us, a chance to join us and supply us with powder that we sorely needed. Soon we had the garrison completely surrounded and were firing upon it from every direction. The cannon of the garrison were at the angles of the fort on the upper floors of the blockhouses, so that our troops had no difficulty when within twenty or thirty yards of the walls, in keeping out of range. Thus it was that, firing in the dark at an enemy whose location they could not know, they did little damage, while our men, noting the points where the

cannon were fired, poured in their volleys and soon silenced them. A little before morning we ceased firing and I withdrew the troops.

“ A small company from the garrison commanded by a Captain Lamotte had gone out the previous day to reconnoiter, and now were hovering about to find a way to get back into the fort. Some of my men captured a few of the party, and among them Maisonville, a famous Indian. The two young fellows who captured him tied him to a post in the street and fought behind him as a breastwork. One of my officers discovered the fun the boys were having, and rescued him. I did not want Captain Lamotte and his men to escape, so I determined to give them a chance to get into the fort. I gave orders in case Lamotte should approach not to alarm him unless there was a certainty of taking the whole party. In the course of a few minutes some twenty men, and among them Lamotte, appeared at the walls of the fort and, mounting ladders that were thrown to them, ascended to the top of the wall. Immediately after they entered the firing began again on both sides, and was kept up until nine o'clock the following morning. Then I sent a letter to Governor Hamilton saying that if he would save himself he must

immediately surrender, and telling him that if he did not he might depend upon such treatment as was justly due to a murderer. I bade him beware of destroying stores of any kind, or any papers or letters that were in his possession, or hurting one house in the town, for, by heaven, if he did there should be no mercy shown him. Hamilton replied that he was not disposed to be awed into any action unworthy of a British subject.

“ Then my men wanted to storm the place, but I did not permit it. Toward evening Hamilton sent me a letter proposing a truce for three days, saying that he wished to confer with me and proposed that we speak at the gate of the fort. My reply was that I would not agree to any terms other than his surrendering himself and his garrison, and that if he wished to meet me, he might do so at the church, with Captain Helm. The church was about eighty yards from the fort. Captain Helm was one of my men whom they had captured. The meeting took place as proposed. Hamilton offered terms which I rejected, and advised him at the same time that it would be useless for him to make any proposition other than for an absolute surrender. I suggested to him that if my men were given the opportunity to storm the fort, it

would be out of my power to save a single life. But Hamilton refused to accept the terms and started back to the fort. When he had taken a few steps he turned and asked my reason for refusing the garrison the terms that he had proposed. And these are the reasons that I gave him: That I knew the greater part of the Indian allies were with him; that the cries of the widows and the fatherless on the frontiers, which they had occasioned, now required their blood from my hand; that I would rather lose fifty men than not to empower myself to execute this piece of business with propriety; that if he chose to risk the massacre of his garrison for their sakes it was for his own pleasure, and that I might take it into my head to send for some of those widows to see it executed. We then parted, but in the afternoon we met again. Then Hamilton surrendered the entire garrison and I sent him and his officers prisoners to Virginia. That is the story of Vincennes."

"How many men did you lose?" asked Shannon with breathless interest.

"Not a man killed and but one wounded," the soldier replied proudly.

"And by that victory you practically drove the British out of the West," went on the young man.

“ Detroit alone remained,” the general answered soberly—“ Detroit, the center of all the British and Indian intrigues of the day. Yes, Detroit alone remained. How I longed to march my brave little army against it. But what could I do with so few? ”

During the recital of his story the old soldier had risen to his feet, and at mention of the bravery of his men on the fearful march his eyes glistened and his form shook. Gradually as he neared the close his voice fell and when, at the boy’s question, he spoke the name, Detroit, he dropped helplessly on his seat, his form lax, and his voice a mere whisper. The interview was over. The general had fallen into the old sorrow.

“ General Clark,” said the boy, after a moment’s pause in which neither spoke, “ I am a young man. All this was before I was born. If I had lived in your day I should have wanted to be with you. I want to carry your spirit into the task before me. I shall remember this hour, General. Good-bye.”

A silent lifting of the head and a feeble gesture as of one bestowing a blessing, was the only response, and Shannon quietly withdrew.

CHAPTER V

THE STARS AND STRIPES WAVE OVER A NEW EMPIRE

THEIR numbers being increased by the nine Kentuckians who had been recruited at Louisville, and the boat being newly fitted out, the expedition was ready to proceed.

The entire population of the town and the fort were on the river bank when the boat swung out into the stream. The shrill music of the fife and drum and the shouts of the people were answered by cheers from the boat, a volley from the rifles of the men drawn up on the little deck, and the flutterings of the flag from the masthead. General Clark, tall and commanding, though bent, stood foremost among the crowd upon the shore, his deep sunken eyes filled with longing and regret. George Shannon long remembered the picture the old man made as he raised his chapeau to the little company of explorers in token of farewell.

Captain Lewis had started that morning overland to Kaskaskia by way of the Vincennes trail, there to recruit more men for the undertaking,

and Captain Clark was left in command of the boat.

At Kaskaskia Lewis received a warm welcome from Major Amos Stoddard, in command of a New Hampshire company that had recently come into the West. There also he found twenty of the soldiers eager to enlist for the expedition. Three alone seemed fit, namely, John Ordway, of New Hampshire; Robert Frazer, of Vermont, and Thomas P. Howard, of Massachusetts.

But Kaskaskia contributed one other to the little company of immortals—a brawny, fun-loving Irishman, a carpenter by trade, whom the commander of the Kaskaskia garrison could ill afford to lose; but so hard did Patrick Gass plead to go, and so much was Captain Lewis impressed with his skill as a carpenter, and with his genial Irish nature, that finally the Irishman gained permission to become one of the expedition.

On his way down the river with the boat Captain Clark enlisted at Fort Massac five others, namely, Silas Goodrich, Richard Windsor, Hugh Hall, Alexander H. Willard (who had run away from his home in New Hampshire when a boy), and John B. Thomas, a surveyor from Vincennes.

It was December when the two captains joined

their little forces in front of the old fort that stood on a hillside near the village of St. Louis. From the tower of the fort floated the flag of Spain. It was the first time George Shannon had seen the flag that ruled the great territory west of the Mississippi. He had learned from Captain Lewis that a few days before he had left Washington official information had been received by President Jefferson that Napoleon, who had long before secretly purchased the Louisiana territory from Spain, had now sold it to the United States.

No wonder the young man was puzzled on seeing the Spanish flag floating over American soil, now eight months after the date of the purchase. Others of the men expressed the same surprise.

“We shall see,” exclaimed Captain Lewis, hearing the discussion of the subject. “Perhaps the news has not reached the Spanish Governor. If not, we shall be the bearer to him of important and, perhaps, distasteful tidings.”

Now the boat was rapidly approaching the west bank of the Mississippi, in full view of the village and fort. The appearance of so formidable a craft, with the Stars and Stripes floating in the breeze and manned by officers and men, some of whom were in the somber uniform of the Amer-

ican army, caused no little consternation on the shore. So, when the boat approached the land, a squad of Spanish soldiers, with an officer at their head and surrounded by many of the inhabitants, was drawn up to meet it. With a flourish of his sword the officer directed where the boat was to land. Then a parley was held and a messenger sent to the Government House, resulting in a request from the Spanish Governor, Don Carlos De Hault De Lassus, directed to the captain of the expedition, that he repair to the Government House for a conference. Captain Lewis obeyed the summons. The governor met him with true Spanish civility, but on learning that the expedition proposed to proceed up the Missouri and winter at Charette, he distinctly informed its leader that, according to the policy of his government, the Americans could not be permitted to cross the Mississippi and enter Spanish territory.

“ But,” said Captain Lewis, “ the country has been sold to the United States. It is our own territory. Our commissioners at Paris, Robert Livingston, and James Monroe, have signed a treaty with Napoleon whereby the territory from the Mississippi to the Pacific is ours. That treaty was made last April, eight months ago.”

“ But what right had Napoleon to sell territory that was not his? ” replied the governor. “ When did Spain relinquish to the French Republic her rights here? ”

“ Surely, ” replied Captain Lewis, “ it must be known to you that three years ago Spain, by a treaty with Napoleon, ceded all this territory to him, and that the only reason why the Spanish flag still floats at New Orleans and St. Louis is that Napoleon preferred not to make the transaction known. Only nominally is the land under the Spanish flag. For over two years it has belonged to France. ”

“ And yet, ” replied the governor, “ granting that this all be true, no formal transfer of sovereignty has been made from Spain to France, and certainly none from France to the United States. Until I have received official instructions from Madrid, I can act upon no other theory than that the Louisiana Territory still belongs to my master, the King of Spain. ”

Thus ended the interview, but in a few days a messenger was on his way to St. Louis from New Orleans bringing tidings that on December 20th, in the presence of the entire population, the Spanish commissioners had formally transferred

Louisiana to France and hauled down the Spanish flag in the great square in front of the Cabildo; that, amid the shouts of the Creole population of the old French city, the tricolor of the French Republic had taken its place; that on the following day General Wilkinson, at the head of a body of American troops, had proudly entered the city with Governor Claiborne at his side, and in the same Cabildo had received from the French commissioners the transfer of the Louisiana Territory from France to the United States; that then the French tricolor had come down and the Stars and Stripes had taken its place and was now floating in the breeze to symbolize the adoption into the New Republic of the vast territory extending from the Mississippi across the stony mountains to the Pacific.

Meanwhile, at the mouth of the Dubois River, a mile below the mouth of the Missouri, and nearly opposite the village of St. Louis, the commanders had made fast their boat, disembarked, and arranged for permanent winter headquarters. Instead of passing the winter at Charette, a point far up the Missouri, the last point of settlement of the white man, where old Daniel Boone, now seventy years of age, but still rugged and hearty, was

spending his last days, they were compelled to remain on the American side of the Mississippi until such time as the Spanish flag on the fort across the river should give place to the Stars and Stripes.

How long it might be before the Spanish commander should receive instructions to hand over the territory to the French, so that by them it might be transferred to the Americans, no one could say. It might be a few weeks; it might be months; they could only wait.

Making the camp as comfortable as possible, the two captains set to work at once building boats, adding to their supplies, and getting acquainted with the inhabitants, so as to learn all they possibly could of the territory they were about to enter.

Captain Clark divided the men into squads and messes (commanded by Ordway, Pryor, and Floyd, as sergeants), and superintended a daily drill. At frequent intervals the men joined in friendly contests, wrestling, racing, and shooting at targets for prizes offered by the commanders. Strict discipline was maintained, and swift and sure punishment meted out to any who disobeyed the rules laid down for the little camp. Frequent hunting

and fishing excursions relieved the monotony of hard work and camp duties. During this time George Shannon, the boy of the party, distinguished himself on several occasions by his skill as a hunter.

One morning, having gone out early to bring in the rabbit traps that had been set in the underbrush a few hundred yards back from the river, Shannon reported that the traps had been disturbed by timber wolves, whose tracks were plainly visible in the snow.

Wolves were bigger game than rabbits, so the young hunter determined to set his traps the next night for wolves.

A number of large beaver traps were among those provided by Captain Lewis at Pittsburg for the use of the hunters, and these the boy had no difficulty in obtaining permission to use.

At nightfall, after the camp work was out of the way, Shannon set off with his traps slung across his shoulder. The moon was shining brightly when he reached the tangled thicket where the tracks of the wolves had been discovered. Carefully laying the traps in the animal runs, he fastened them to trees and covered them with snow. Before starting out he had taken the precaution

of standing for a long time in the smoke of the campfire, and in handling the traps he wore gloves of buckskin well smoked, so as to throw off the keen scent of the wily animals.

Having fixed everything to his satisfaction, he returned to camp, well satisfied that soon there would be something more interesting than rabbits to look after in his traps.

Long before the camp was astir the next morning, the eager hunter was up and off for the woods. To his delight he found, on approaching the first trap, an immense wolf crouching at the base of a tree, its tongue hanging from its mouth and its round eyes blazing with fury. At once, on seeing him, the animal gave an angry snarl, plunged to the end of the chain, and snapped together its terrific teeth with a sound that made the boy shiver with the thought of what might happen should the fastening give way. Creeping up cautiously to within striking distance, he drew a tomahawk from his belt and, lifting it high in the air, brought it down directly between the animal's eyes. With a smothered yelp it fell dead at the hunter's feet.

A hundred yards farther into the woods Shannon found that a trap had been carried off. The sapling to which it had been fastened was gnawed

in two at the base, and evidences of a terrific struggle abounded on every hand.

Forgetful of everything but the prey that had escaped him, he at once sprang upon the wolf's tracks, which for a time were easy to follow over the snow, as the long chain attached to the trap left a distinct trail behind it. "Surely it cannot run far," the boy said to himself, "for the chain will catch, or the weight of it will tire it out." At times the trail showed indistinctly. There were places where the snow had blown away, and the wolf had run over the surface of the hard ground. Where this was the case he had to search long and diligently, and only by slight scratches on the rock where the chain had rubbed over it, could he discover the course taken.

Finally, after several hours' pursuit, he pushed out from under a dense wood, to see the wolf a half a mile ahead, running with a long, swinging stride toward a precipitous bank at the river's edge. The wolf had traveled in a semicircle, much to the young hunter's joy, for it brought him back to the river at a distance not far from the camp.

When the wolf saw its pursuer it doubled its speed, changing its pace to long bounds, appar-

ently little hindered by the weight of the trap and chain that still clung to one of its hind legs.

Shannon at once suspected that the wolf intended to play him a trick, but, run fast as he might, he could not get within gunshot before the animal reached the edge of the precipice and, without a moment's hesitation, plunged some twenty feet into a thicket of tangled bushes along the water's edge and disappeared. Nothing daunted, however, the young hunter hurried as fast as his tired legs could carry him for a full half mile up the river to a point where he could clamber down the bank, and then, running along the margin of the water with rifle ready for instant use, and shouting and striking the bushes to drive the wolf from cover, sought his prey.

After proceeding a short distance, he heard a ferocious, blood-curdling snarl, and saw the bushes part immediately before him. The angry wolf, every bristle of its back pointing forward, its vicious teeth snapping like strokes of a hammer, its eyes darting fire, and its blood-red tongue lolling from its mouth, was not twenty feet away. There was scarcely time for him to lift his rifle to his shoulder but, quick as thought, he took aim, and before the animal could spring, a ball had

entered its neck just below the ear. With a baffled cry, the beast slunk back into the bushes, but only for a moment. The boy now had an empty rifle, and that could be of no further use to him, for there was no time to reload. Throwing it aside, he drew his long hunting knife from its sheath, and bracing himself waited. The wolf had been wounded badly, though not mortally. It had not lost courage. Cowardly as the wolf is under ordinary circumstances, when cornered and forced to fight it is a terrible antagonist.

The recoil of the beast after the shot was but for an instant, and then it was upon the boy. But Shannon was ready, with knife uplifted. A false stroke now meant the end of his hunting days. With a dim consciousness of a great form leaping toward him in the air and a hot breath on his face, he gave a desperate lunge with the knife, putting into it the whole strength of his arm and then, as the beast, with a horrible snapping of its great jaws, fell at his feet, he heard a cry from the bank above. It was the voice of Whitehouse who, having been sent out with McNeal to find him, had come up at the moment of his great danger, though powerless to help, and not daring to cry out.

“Bravo, Shannon!” cried Whitehouse. “You



A false stroke now meant the end of his hunting days. — Page 80.

fight like a veteran. This makes up for the run you have given us.”

Shannon responded feebly by waving his hand, his voice for the time having left him.

“ You’ve got the stuff in you, Shannon,” commented McNeal, a little later on, when they joined one another and set off for the camp. “ But the next time you go chasing wolves over the country let us know where you are going. You did not turn up for breakfast, and the captain was worrying about you. He seems to think you are a mere boy.”

“ He will know different before we are far on this journey, or my name is not George Shannon,” replied the youth doggedly.

“ He will know different when he sees this, and when we tell him how you got this fellow,” said Whitehouse, pointing to the wolf-skin that he and McNeal bore between them.

The story of Shannon’s bravery was not long in coming to the ears of all in the camp, and commanders and men joined in praising the boy for his skill and courage.

Captain Lewis spent much of his time in St. Louis during the winter, where by his official standing, the importance of his commission, his inti-

mate relations with the President of the American Republic, his handsome face and affable manners, he won the favor of all.

Among those with whom he became acquainted was one Dr. Saugrain, a chemist and physician, who had been educated in Paris. Many hours the two spent together, Lewis finding out all he could from the learned doctor about medicine and surgery, and receiving from him vials and packages of valuable remedies. From him he also obtained the secret of how to make matches by dipping tiny pieces of wood, tipped with sulphur, into prepared phosphorus, so that later it came about that in the fastnesses of the great mountains bordering on the Pacific, matches were lighted before they were known in the populous centers of the Atlantic coast.

In due time the messenger arrived from New Orleans with instructions to the Spanish Governor, De Lassus, to transfer the territory under his jurisdiction to the French. Commissioners were appointed by the French Government to receive the transfer of the territory and then, in turn, to transfer it to Major Stoddard, of Kaskaskia, who had been commissioned by Jefferson to receive it for the United States.

March 10, 1804, was an important day in the village of St. Louis. Its three little, narrow streets were gayly decorated with the colors of Spain, of France, and of the United States. The settlers gathered in from the surrounding country. The friendly Indians of the neighborhood, notified of an important happening about to take place, came in long files, painted and decorated for a gala occasion. The Spanish soldiers were early drawn up in the Place d'Armes, in front of the Government House facing the flagstaff, at the top of which floated the flag of Spain. Major Stoddard, and a detachment of American soldiers from Kaskaskia, had arrived by boat and were preparing to march to the Place d'Armes as soon as they should receive the signal. Captain Lewis and Captain Clark had crossed the river with all their men save such as were necessary to guard the camp.

At ten o'clock the Place d'Armes, in front of the Government House, was filled with a motley array of Spaniards, Frenchmen, Americans, hunters, trappers, and Indians in bright colors. From windows and housetops floated the banners of three nations. The galleries were filled with Creole and Spanish beauties, in their brightest array. Gov-

ernor De Lassus, in the presence of the assembled people, announced, in broken voice, that in the name of the King he transferred the sovereignty of the territory to the French Republic. The soldiers of Spain presented arms. The flag of Spain was lowered from the flagstaff, while De Lassus wept. Then a little company of Frenchmen hauled up the tricolor of France. St. Louis was a French city, though under Spanish rule, and a great shout went up as the flag of France, that for forty years had been supplanted by the flag of Spain, again floated in the breeze.

“Let it remain overnight,” cried the Creoles, with tears in their eyes, and so all through that afternoon, and the evening and the night that followed, it fluttered in the breeze. In the meantime the Spanish soldiers marched to the water’s edge and embarked for New Orleans, whence they sailed away, ending forever the rule of Spain in the Louisiana Territory.

The next morning the simple yet solemn ceremony of the transfer from France to the United States in the same Place d’Armes was enacted. The fleur-de-lis of France came down, and the Stars and Stripes arose amid the stirring music of fife and drum and a hearty cheer from the little

group of Americans, among whom were Captains Lewis and Clark and their men, who in that little old French village saw an empire thus added to the nation's territory.

CHAPTER VI

UP THE MUDDY MISSOURI

THERE was now nothing to prevent the expedition crossing the river and entering the Missouri—yes, there was one difficulty. It was March and the ice had broken loose in the great river. There must be still further waiting. How impatient were the members of the expedition! How tiresome became the routine of camp life! How the men longed, with the coming of spring, the budding of the trees, the singing of birds, to see their hopes blossom into fruition! Eagerly they watched the river for signs that its current was free of ice, so that they could set forth.

Wonderful stories they had heard of the boundless territory into which they were about to make their way. It had been said by men far to the east that in that undiscovered West were fierce and bloodthirsty Indians who would not admit of the passage of white men through their territory; that there were great beasts hidden in the forests, more fierce than the panther and the bear; that

the prehistoric mammoth, of which the geographies of the schoolboys contained wonderful pictures, wandered in the depths of the wilderness; that, wonder of wonders! a solid mountain of salt, eighty miles long and forty-five miles wide, was hidden away somewhere within it, glistening in the sunlight like a huge diamond; that there were springs of poisoned water arising out of the earth, and great plains filled with noisome gases that killed all animal and vegetable life; that there were impassable mountains rising thousands of feet in a sheer perpendicular, over which scarcely the eagle could fly. And yet these men longed for the day to come when they might brave all dangers and prove them to be either realities or the dreams of ignorance!

Three boats had been made ready, one a large keelboat or bateau, fifty-five feet long, drawing three feet of water and propelled by twenty-two oarsmen. A big, square sail, fixed to the mast that stood a little forward of the center, was to help in a favoring breeze. Where sails and oars could not be used, as where the wind was adverse and the water shallow, an arrangement was provided by which the boat might be hauled along by the men pulling on a long rope running from the bow

to the shore. The rope was attached to the mast near the top, brought down to the bow, where it ran through a ring, and thence extended to the shore, so that when it was necessary for the rope to pass over obstructions at the water's edge it could be loosened from the ring at the bow, pulled taut from the top of the mast, and thus lifted high. This boat had two decks, one fore and the other aft, forming a forecastle and a cabin, while the middle part was supplied with lockers covering the provisions and other stores, and so arranged that when opened they presented a defense against attack from the shore. A swivel gun stood on the bow.

The two other boats were of the style known as pirogues, shaped like flatirons, with flat bottoms and square sterns. One was painted red and the other white. They were roomy and of light draft, propelled, one by six oars, and the other by seven. Each carried a square sail, which could be used as a tent when occasion required.

In the holds of the boats were stored seven bales and one box of supplies for the journey, consisting of clothing, boots, candles, tools, firearms, powder, balls and lead for bullets, flints for the flintlock guns then in use, and provisions consisting of

corn, flour, biscuits, salt, pork, coffee, beans, and meal. In addition there were fourteen bales and one box of presents for the Indians, consisting of coats laced with gilt braid, red trousers, three grades of medals for Indian chiefs,—the largest one of which bore the face of Jefferson,—American flags, knives, colored handkerchiefs, paints, small looking-glasses, tomahawks, and many pounds of beads.

One thing the keelboat carried, of which Captain Lewis was especially proud, and that was a steel frame for a canoe which he had caused to be made at Harper's Ferry. Its weight was ninety-nine pounds, and its carrying capacity 1770 pounds. Of what service this steel frame was to be, the explorers were to learn when they came to set it up a year later at the headwaters of the Missouri.

The men who formed the little company on that day in May, when, with their long poles pressed to their shoulders, they pushed the boats out into the current of the Mississippi, were Captains Meriwether Lewis, and William Clark, Sergeants John Ordway, Nathaniel Pryor, and Charles Floyd, Privates William Bratton, John Colter, Patrick Gass, John Collins, Peter Cruzatte, Reuben Fields, Joseph Fields, Robert Frazier, George Gibson, Silas

Goodrich, Hugh Hall, Thomas P. Howard, Francis Labiche, Hugh McNeal, John Fox, George Shannon, John Shields, John B. Thompson, William Werner, John Newman, Joseph Whitehouse, M. B. Reed, Alexander Willard, Richard Windsor, Peter Wiser, and York, the negro. In addition there were a number of rivermen, guides, and interpreters, engaged to go as far as the country of the Mandans only.

Their costumes were varied, but all carried knives in belts, pistols in holsters, knapsacks, powder horns and pouches of shot, with trusty flintlock rifles or muskets. For use in hunting and in drawing the boats over shallows, two of the party were detailed to follow along the shore with horses.

Thus provisioned, uniformed and accoutered, at three o'clock on the afternoon of May 14, 1804, the expedition of Lewis and Clark entered the broad mouth of the muddy Missouri.

The start was made under happy auspices. The inhabitants of the neighboring country gathered on the banks and waved their farewells, shouting as long as the boats were within hearing, messages of encouragement and Godspeed. A light breeze filled the sails of the three boats, and the men at

the oars, eager to be off, sent the craft along at a good speed. Captain Clark, with twenty-seven of the men, and among them Shannon, was in the keelboat. The others were in the two pirogues. Those in the red one were mainly the French guides and rivermen, eight in number, who were to accompany the expedition as far as to the country of the Mandan Indians; those in the white pirogue were soldiers, numbering six.

It was the purpose of Captain Clark, who at this time was alone in command of the boats (Captain Lewis having remained in St. Louis for a few days), to go as far as St. Charles, a village of some twenty-one miles up the river, and there make a halt, and if necessary make such changes in the cargo as the experience of travel for the first few days should show to be necessary. Here Captain Lewis was to overtake him by a march across the country from St. Louis.

Although the distance to St. Charles was but twenty-one miles, it was noon of the 16th before the little village was sighted, and the boats drew up along the shore in the presence of a crowd of French and Indians who flocked to the river. The welcome extended by the four hundred and fifty inhabitants, chiefly French, was spontaneous and

heartly. The people appeared to be very poor and very lazy, and yet they did the honors with that politeness and finish that is characteristic of the French people wherever they are found and however poor they may be.

At St. Charles a complete examination of the boats was made, resulting in a shifting of the cargoes toward the bows, for it had been found that the Missouri in places was very shallow, and that great logs lay beneath the surface, so that the boats heavily laden in the stern were liable to strike these impediments and, by the bow swinging around in the current, run great danger of overturning. Three times during Tuesday, the day before reaching St. Charles, did the keelboat have narrow escapes, the marvelous skill and energy of the experienced rivermen alone preventing its capsizing; so the command was given to carry enough of the cargoes forward of the middle of the boats, so that, in going up the river, the bow, and not the stern, might meet the obstructions first.

On Wednesday a ball was given by the people of St. Charles in honor of their visitors. On Thursday a number of Kickapoo Indians paid Captain Clark a visit, and George Drouillard, the

interpreter and hunter whom Captain Lewis had engaged at St. Louis, arrived.

On Thursday it became necessary for Captain Clark to punish one of his men. John Collins had acted in an unbecoming manner at the ball the night before. He had been absent, too, from the boats without leave, and on his return had spoken disrespectfully of his commanding officer. A trial was given him by a court composed of four of the members of the party, presided over by Sergeant Ordway. The court found him guilty and sentenced him to receive fifty lashes on his naked back. In the carrying out of the sentence the entire company was drawn up in military order. In its presence the culprit was stripped and the lashes laid on good and hard by one of the soldiers commissioned by Captain Clark to administer the punishment. The inhabitants of the little village stood about, awed by the severity of the discipline, but when it was explained to them how absolutely necessary to the safety of the expedition it was that every man do his duty, they were satisfied.

The party remained at St. Charles until the following Monday when, Captain Lewis having arrived from St. Louis, the boats set out from shore amid the cheers of the entire populace.

On the day after the party left St. Charles they came upon a camp of Kickapoos, who were ninety miles away from their homes, which were to the east of the Mississippi, on a hunting expedition. They gave to the captains four deer and received in return two quarts of whisky. History faithfully records that the first present given by the agents of our Government to the Indians beyond the Mississippi was the "fire-water" that was to play so important a part in the destruction of the red men, though not so intended by those who first went among them.

On the following Wednesday the boats reached a little settlement called by the French the Tavern, situated near a large cave that provided a stopping place for travelers going up and down the river. In this little settlement of thirty or forty families, mostly Americans, old Daniel Boone had found a home. Here, the farthest removed of any American settlement from the land of civilization, the old hunter had received a grant of land from the Spanish in 1798.

Every member of the company eagerly anticipated meeting the veteran hunter, and great was their disappointment on finding that the old Kentucky backwoodsman was off on a hunting expe-

dition, and that they must leave without seeing him.

For several days the boats crept slowly up the river, pushing against its swift, muddy current, dodging the trunks of trees floating down from above, barely escaping destruction on shifting sandbars, pulling for life from under falling banks, and at times dragged over shallows by means of towlines.

The company now proceeded with military precision. The three sergeants, Floyd, Ordway, and Pryor, had command of the large boat. One of them remained continually at the helm to steer the boat and to look after the baggage and the compass; another was stationed at the bow to watch for danger, and to give and answer signals, and the third was near the center of the boat to take charge of the sail, to direct the men at the oars, to keep a good lookout for objects on shore, and to select the landing places, establish guards, and reconnoiter in the woods surrounding the camp. Each of the three, too, was required to keep a separate journal in which to note what took place during the day, and what of unusual interest he observed in the water, on the land, and in the sky.

Every day had its incidents of unusual interest. The swiftness of the current wheeled the bateau about, broke her towline and nearly upset her. Every one jumped into the water on the upper side and held her, while swimmers carried a new line to shore. The hunters brought in deer and reported seeing buffaloes. Canoes loaded with furs and skins from hundreds of miles up the river, bound for St. Louis, passed them. A raft carrying bearskins came down the river with a crew of one Frenchman, one Indian, and a squaw, who said that letters sent to the Indians up the river announcing that the country had been transferred to the Americans had been burned, and that the Indians refused to believe the report. Hunters sent out from the boats reported seeing signs of the passing of Indians, evidently on the warpath. The boats passed ledges of projecting rocks on which curious figures were painted by the Indians, all of which were explained by Drouillard, who was familiar with the river as far as to the Mandans. The camp was pitched one night in a den of rattlesnakes, and before they were destroyed several of the company were badly bitten. All these and scores of other happenings bore the charm of novelty to all the men of the expedition,

but particularly to George Shannon, the boy of the company.

Every day a detail of hunters was sent out into the country with instructions to report at noon or at night. The arrival of the hunters was always a matter of keen interest, for seldom did they return without a load of bear or deer or small game.

Among the hunters George Shannon made a record as a good shot and, being the youngest of the party and the least able to endure the fatigue of constant service at the oars, was often detailed for these hunting expeditions. He loved to go with Drouillard, who had traveled up and down the Missouri scores of times, and knew all the best places for game, as well as the habits of animals, some of which were strange to a boy reared in Ohio. Deer were plentiful. At almost any time they could be seen from the boats, standing knee-deep in the water. Buffaloes were becoming more and more numerous, and it was Shannon's great ambition to bring down one of these monarchs of the plains.

An interesting and important accession to the ranks of the little company was made about a month after the expedition started, when two rafts loaded with furs were met coming down the

river in charge of a party, one of whom was Peter Dorion, an old Frenchman who had lived for twenty years with the Sioux Indians far up the Missouri. The captains prevailed on old Dorion to join them with a view to getting some of the Sioux chiefs, when they should reach the Sioux country, to go with him on a visit to their new "Great Father," the President of the United States.

As yet few Indians had been seen. At this time of the year, June and July, they were on the prairies hunting the buffaloes. Scouts and messengers were from time to time sent out by the captains, generally under the direction of Drouillard, to visit the Indian villages, and invite the Indians to come for a conference, but always the messengers came back with the information that the villages were deserted, and that the Indians were on the prairies engaged in the hunt.

The first opportunity for a close observation of the Indians was early in August, over two months and a half after the expedition set sail. A party of Ottawas and Missouris, with a French interpreter who lived with them, numbering among them six chiefs, came to the camp one day at night-fall, bringing watermelons as presents. The next

day the captains put up their mainsail on land for an awning, and under it the Indians took their stand. Then all of the men of the expedition paraded before them, and Captain Lewis delivered a speech, telling the red men what he had set out to do, advising them of the change of government, and informing them as to how their "Great Father" wished them to conduct themselves. The chiefs then made speeches, promising to follow the advice, and saying they were happy to know their new Father was one on whom they could depend. Captain Lewis then gave the chiefs a medal and a flag and some clothes, bidding them take them to the principal chief of their nation, who had not come with them. He then gave the six chiefs lesser medals and, in addition, a canister of powder and a bottle of whisky, together with breechcloths and some paint. The captain then had the swivel gun fired, at which the eyes of the red men opened wide with astonishment.

About this time two members of the party deserted. La Liberty, a Frenchman, who had been sent to the Ottawa village to invite the Ottawas and Missouris to the conference just described, and Moses B. Reed, one of the soldiers, who had, the day after the conference with the Indians, asked

to be allowed to return to camp and get a knife he had left, and had failed to return. Captain Lewis detailed Drouillard, Bratton, Labiche, and Richard Fields to go back to the Ottawa village and find the two men, with instructions to bring them, if found, to the Omaha village farther up the river, near which the expedition was to make camp.

When within three miles of the Omaha village the expedition went into camp, and George Shannon, with four others, was sent with a flag and some tobacco into the village to invite the Indians to a conference on the next day; but the party returned, saying that the Indians were out on a buffalo hunt, and that the village was deserted.

Drouillard informed the captains that the Omahas were not greatly attached to their village, because, about four years before, hundreds of their people had been swept away by the smallpox, leading them to burn their village, put many of their wives and children to death, and take up a wandering life, but not before they had buried, sitting upright on his horse, their great chief, Blackbird, who was one of the victims of the dread disease.

While at this camp eleven of the men made a

seine out of willows and bark and, hauling it up a creek, caught three hundred and eighteen fish, including pike, bass, salmon, perch, red horse, and small cat. On another day twelve of the men caught upwards of eight hundred fish.

While here the party sent after the deserters returned with Reed, but without La Liberty, who had got away. With them came also the three principal chiefs of the Ottawas, to ask their new-found friends to help them make peace with the Omahas.

The next day the Indians and the Americans gathered together in the shade of a great tree near the boat, and Reed was put on trial. The fellow confessed that he had deserted after stealing a rifle and some powder and ball. His sentence was that he run the gauntlet three times, and that each man of the party, with nine switches, should inflict the punishment; also that, from that time on, he should not be considered as one of the members of the expedition. The three chiefs begged that the man be pardoned, but Captain Lewis explained how necessary it was that men engaged in such an important undertaking should be held to strict account. Then, in the presence of the Indians, the convicted man, stripped to the waist, three

times ran through the double line composed of all the men of the expedition.

The day following, Captain Lewis assembled the chiefs, and the nine warriors that accompanied them, under an awning and all made speeches. Then the captain gave to each chief a medal and to the others suitable presents.

On Captain Lewis' birthday, which came at this time, the whole party celebrated by engaging in a dance. After the dance Sergeant Floyd, heated by the exercise, went out and lay upon the ground to cool off, and fell asleep. The next morning he was taken seriously ill, alarming the entire company, and, in the afternoon, after asking Captain Lewis to write a letter home for him, and saying, "I am going away," he died.

Patrick Gass made a rough coffin, and, attended by the entire company, the body of this, the first white man who died in the service of his country west of the Mississippi, was carried to the top of a bluff overlooking the river and buried with all the honors of war. Over his grave was erected a cedar post, and on it was carved: "Sergeant C. Floyd, died here on the 20th of August, 1804." Captain Lewis made a speech over his grave, pointing out the good qualities of the dead soldier,

and particularly his firmness and determined resolution to worthily serve his country. Then, as a further mark of respect, he named a little river that at this point flowed into the Missouri, Floyd's River.

A little later Patrick Gass was elected by the votes of the members of the expedition to the position of Sergeant.

CHAPTER VII

LOST IN THE WILDERNESS

ON Sunday morning, August 26th, the men who had been sent out from the camp to bring in the horses came back late and reported they could not be found. The report surprised no one, for the tough little animals had a way of taking matters into their own control and straying away from the camp at night. At such times it usually became necessary for the boats to move on, leaving a searching party to look for the horses and, after finding them, to follow after. On this occasion George Shannon approached Captain Lewis and begged the privilege of being detailed to make the search.

“But not alone,” said the captain. “We are approaching the Sioux country, and must be on our guard.”

“Then may Drouillard go with me?” asked the boy.

Drouillard had made a deep impression on Shannon, as the lithe, swarthy Frenchman had

proven himself to be the keenest hunter and the most intelligent guide of the party. He seemed to know directions intuitively. Every track in the soft earth and every broken twig and blade of grass told a story to him. While he could not speak the Indian tongue as readily as many an interpreter, he was an expert in the sign language, and by his gesticulations could carry on an extended conversation with any Indian, no matter what his tribe or tongue.

Shannon had gone out with Drouillard the day before, and shot a fine bear. The boy was elated over his prize and over the compliment the Frenchman had paid him. Now, in the loss of the horses he saw another opportunity of spending a day with the swarthy hunter in the woods, and he eagerly seized it.

Captain Lewis gladly acceded to the request, for Drouillard never went into the woods without bringing back fresh meat, and it was the captain's desire not to draw upon his stores of dried meats so long as fresh meat could be obtained.

“ Very well, Shannon. You and Drouillard look for the horses. Follow the river, keep on the high ground, and join us at the camp to-night. The current is heavy at this point, and we shall make

slow progress to-day. Our camp will not be over seven miles up the river when night falls. Good-bye, and good luck to you."

Happy in the prospect of speedily finding the horses, and then of having a day's hunt, Shannon hurried to Drouillard and repeated the captain's words. The guide was as much pleased with the arrangement as was Shannon, and immediately got his gun, ammunition, and game pouch. Then, as the boats pushed out into the stream, and the rowers bent to their oars for another pull against the current, the two hunters struck off into the woods, full of pleasant anticipations for the day.

Nothing pleased the French hunter so much as a day in the woods. An hour at the oars tired him more than a day's tramp over the hills, carrying his trusty rifle and many pounds of deer or buffalo. He was glad, too, of the company of young Shannon. He liked the boy's enthusiasm, his zeal for knowledge, and his ambition to acquire skill in the hunt. Indeed, the old hunter prophesied that before the expedition was over, George Shannon would lead them all in ability to handle the rifle.

For several hours the two men gave their undivided attention to the finding of the two horses.

For a time they were able to follow their trail, but a shower having fallen in the night, it was soon lost, and not a scar upon the rocks or a broken twig gave evidence of where the animals had strayed. Starting from the point where they saw the last print of a hoof, the two hunters made incursions in every direction, intently studying the ground, but always coming back to the same point with a story of failure. Near midday they sat down to rest under the bough of a great oak. After some moments of silence Shannon turned to Drouillard and said:

“ Tell me about the Sioux. I have heard they are a powerful nation.”

“ The Sioux,” replied the hunter, pronouncing the name as if spelled See-oo, “ are divided into many families, including the Mandans, Kaws, Crows, Minnetarees, Omahas, Ottawas, and others. The family, as a whole, occupy a wide stretch of country extending from the Canadian boundary nearly to the Gulf of Mexico, and from Lake Michigan to the Rocky Mountains. Formerly the Sioux lived east of the Mississippi, but they gradually worked their way west.

“ The Sioux living on this part of the Missouri are known as the Dakotas, and number some eight

or nine thousand. They are great rovers and warriors, and are constantly fighting.

“ There is a peculiar society among them made up of brave young men who are attached to one another by a vow never to retreat before a danger or give way to an enemy. In war they never seek shelter. A little while ago, when a party of these young fellows were crossing the Missouri on the ice, they found a hole immediately in their course. They could easily have gone around it but, instead, they marched straight ahead into the water and were drowned. Another story will show you something of their foolhardiness. In a battle with the Crows on the Yellowstone River, out of twenty warriors who belonged to this society but four came out of the battle alive, and these had to be dragged away by other Indians. In camp they will not associate with the other Indians, but set up their tepees apart from them.”

“ Are the Sioux friendly to the whites? ” asked Shannon.

“ In the main they are. They like to trade with the British who come down from the lake country. The Indians in this neighborhood also carry on quite a trade with the French traders who come up the river from St. Louis. They exchange the

skins of the beaver, wolf, buffalo, bear, and deer, for guns, ammunition, and whisky. In another ten days we shall be among the Teton Sioux, who are a cunning and bloodthirsty lot. They, too, are great rovers, and it will be well to be on the look-out for them. But if we are to find those horses we must be going. Let us separate. You go up along the bluff, keeping close to the river, and I will strike farther back into the country. Be careful, and remember to meet me at the river by sundown."

The two hunters then wished each other good luck, shouldered their rifles, and struck out in opposite directions.

Drouillard continued his search without success during the remainder of the day, and at nightfall bent his steps toward the river, at the same time firing his gun at frequent intervals and hallooing to attract the attention of Shannon, whom he supposed to be, like himself, at some point on the river bank. Hearing no shot in answer to his own, he kept on up the shore, stopping from time to time with ear to the ground for the sound of a crackling branch, a shout, or the distant report of a gun. After searching for his companion through the greater part of the night, Drouillard came in

sight of the camp, where he found, with some surprise and alarm, that Shannon had not been seen since morning.

Captain Lewis was much worried when wakened and told of the non-appearance of the boy, but after closely questioning Drouillard he wrapped himself in his buffalo robe and lay down again to sleep, assured that the young hunter would turn up before daybreak.

For some hours after leaving Drouillard, Shannon wandered through the forest, keeping a keen lookout for signs of the horses, but more interested in the game that abounded on all sides. From the tops of hills he could see, grazing in the distance, countless thousands of buffaloes. Deer and antelopes sped from the bushes, startled at his approach. Rabbits and other small game sprang across his path.

Interested in everything he saw, the boy was not conscious of time till the sun had dropped down behind the hills, and night was coming on. He had not found the horses. It did not occur to him that perhaps Drouillard had found them. It would not do to return without them. His reputation with the camp was at stake. A moment's thought showed him that it was too late to make

camp, so he determined to remain out all night and in the morning renew his search. Certainly, the boats would not go far during another day, and by rapid travel he could catch up with them. He had food in his pouch, and there was no lack of wild game. So, making a fire from the dry twigs and grass on the edge of a little wood, he cooked a rabbit which, with a few dried biscuits from his pouch and grapes and plums gathered by the way, made an excellent supper. Then, laying himself down in a bed of leaves, he slept through the night, with scarcely a thought of danger.

Early the next morning, after a hasty breakfast from the remains of his supper, the young hunter started out again in search of the straying horses, following a little stream that wound its way up among low hills, lined on both sides by dense forests of oak and elm.

Scarcely had he proceeded half a mile before prints of horses' hoofs became visible in the soft turf near the water's edge. The horses had been to the stream for a drink, and then had gone up the valley following its course.

With a light heart the boy set out on a run, exultant in the thought that he, and not Drouillard, had found the animals. Already he felt the

pride that would be his when, on returning to camp, he should find Drouillard returned empty-handed, and himself the hero of the day.

A few hundred yards beyond the point at which he first found the hoof-prints, he came up with the horses, quietly grazing on the banks of the stream. Securing them, he took his way down the valley, feeling sure that the little current emptied into the Missouri, and that in a few hours, at farthest, he would be among his friends. An hour's walk brought him in sight of the great current, and there he waited, thinking he had got ahead of the boats and that they would soon come along. For several hours he amused himself examining a beaver dam and village near the mouth of the creek he had followed. Then, hitching one of the horses to a sapling, he rode back into the country to the brow of a hill, from which he knew he must get a view of the river for a long distance both up and down its course. On reaching his destination, he saw with some anxiety that not a speck appeared on the surface of the Missouri, that stretched away for miles in both directions.

It now occurred to him that he had been wasting his ammunition. With a mind sobered by the reflection that he was alone in the great wilderness

and that there was little left between him and starvation, he hurried back to the river. On the way he came upon footprints. Examining them carefully, he concluded they were the tracks of members of his own party and, as they pointed up the stream, he felt sure that the boats had passed and that, in order for him to overtake them, he must set out at once and travel with all speed. Securing the horses and mounting one of them, he pushed them into a gallop, anxious to cover as much of the distance as possible before night.

At every bend of the river he stopped and strained his eyes through the coming darkness for the light of a campfire, but none appeared. Again he must cook his own supper and bivouac before his own fire until another day should give him the opportunity to push on. That morning he had started out singing a rollicking Irish song, but now, as he laid his head upon the pillow of turf beside the dying embers of his campfire and listened to the distant howling of wolves and the queer, plaintive notes of the night birds in the branches above him, he grasped his rifle closer with a dread of impending evil. "Surely," he thought, "they will know that I have lost my way; they will send men out to find me. Drouil-

lard will not rest until he knows what has become of me." For the first time since he had left his home in Pittsburg, he realized the seriousness of the business on which he was engaged. For the first time he remembered, with a keen appreciation of her love and fidelity, his mother in her Ohio home. "But," he said to himself, "I am not lost. My friends are near. They are but a few miles away. Another day will bring me to them." Then he felt in his bullet pouch, to realize again that he had been prodigal of his ammunition and that, between him and the game necessary to stay the ravages of hunger, were but a few bullets and a mite of powder.

The morning found the lad fresh and invigorated, and, again astride of one of the horses, pushing on up the river. At times he rested beneath some great tree to give the horses a chance to nibble at the grass and to gather for himself some wild berries and take his reckoning. He had long since lost track of the footprints in the earth, but still he must keep on, for he was certain the boats had passed on up the river. Several times it occurred to him that the footprints might have been those of Indians, and yet the moccasins worn by some of the men of his own party were such as

those worn by the Indians, and the red man's manner of travel was much the same as that of the French hunter and riverman.

Another day came. With fevered spirit he urged the horses all day long to their utmost speed, and again at night he flung himself upon the ground, tired, hungry, and anxious, lest after all his comrades had forgotten him.

Another day, and his ammunition was gone. He was so weak now he could scarcely sit astride his horse. What if he should be attacked by wolves or a bear? Several times he had narrowly escaped an encounter with these savage beasts of the forest. He had yet a little of the flesh of a deer that he had killed with his last bullet. He determined to make that go as far as possible. There were wild grapes and several species of yellow and red plums in abundance. These would prevent, for a time, his starving.

Shannon was no coward, but the solitude of the forest, the strange and unusual sounds about him, the uncertainty of his own whereabouts and that of his friends, the knowledge that his ammunition was gone, the weakness of his body and the fever in his brain, filled him with fear. Then, too, the horses were giving out. One of them, in the de-

scent of a hill, had lost its footing and sprained a leg. This delayed his progress. The fourth morning found the horse's leg so swollen that the poor beast was unable to proceed, so the boy abandoned it, and pushed on with the remaining horse.

Thus, day after day, for five, six, seven days, the young pathfinder, growing weaker with every hour, and losing hope as the hours lengthened themselves into days, went on, some days covering but a few miles.

His rifle was now useless, for his bullets were gone, though a little powder remained. Scarcely could he mount his horse, so weak had he become. To make matters worse, a cold, drizzling rain set in, wetting him to the skin and freezing the little blood in his veins. His face had grown gaunt and haggard. His clothing had been torn by the briars and his moccasins cut from his feet by the sharp rocks. His remaining horse, too, was well-nigh exhausted.

At last one day he threw himself, exhausted, under a shelf of rocks. Here, crazed by the gnawings of hunger, and taunted by the gambols of the small game that ran fearlessly about him seemingly conscious of his weakness, he cut with his knife a slender piece of hardwood, pointed it

at the end and, thrusting it into the barrel of his rifle against a load of powder, rested the weapon upon a stump and took a long aim at a rabbit that sat upon his haunches a few yards away, as if inviting a shot. The boy's hands trembled, but the stick went straight to the mark. With a feeble cry of joy he struggled to his feet and rushed for his prize. Scarcely could he wait to cook it. Warming the flesh above a fire of twigs, he tore it into pieces and devoured it with the frenzy of a starving man. The next day and the next, wild grapes and berries were his only sustenance. Then, driven to despair, he decided to kill the remaining horse; but he would not do so just yet. He would wait one more day. The animal had been faithful. It was like killing a friend. No one but a crazy man could do such a deed.

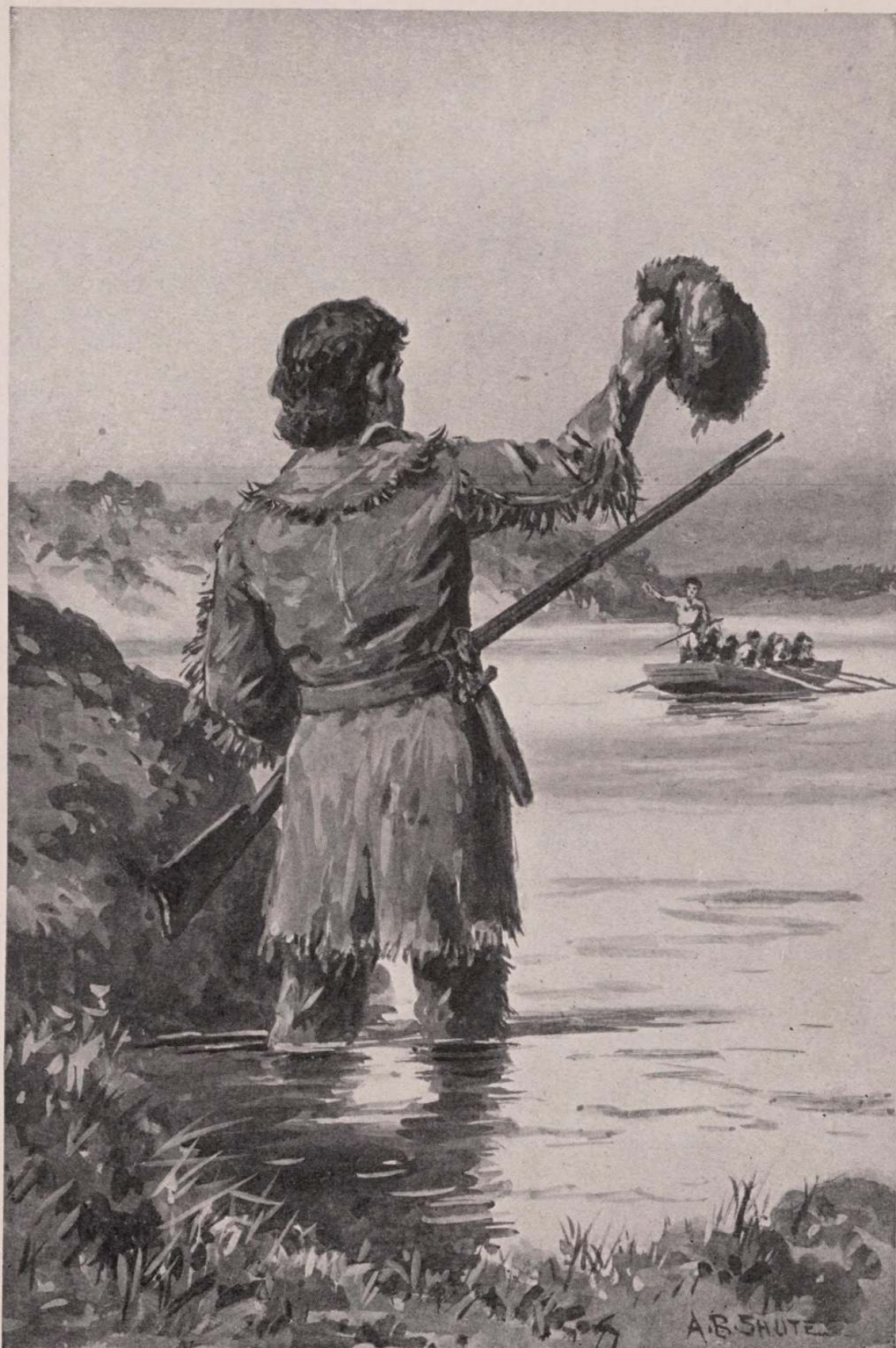
At nightfall of the sixteenth day, totally discouraged, he gave up all hopes of overtaking the boats and, dragging himself to the river bank, threw himself down to watch for the boat of some trader or Indian that might, perchance, happen by. He had been too weak to climb the hills for several days, and had made his way painfully and slowly along the water's edge, whence his view of

the river was obstructed by the bushes and the trees.

An hour he lay there, thinking of his father who had lost himself in the forest and died there alone. Was this to be his fate, too? A sound rolled over the water. It was the swivel gun! There could be no mistake! Now he knew that he was safe. Soon he would be with his friends and comrades. The little blood in his body sprang into life. He tried to call, but his voice was hollow and scarcely more than a breath. Tears welled into his eyes. His faithful comrade, his horse, was grazing quietly by his side. They were both to be saved! He staggered to his feet, and putting his arms about the neck of the faithful animal, he talked to it as he would to a brother.

He could not answer the signal gun. His rifle was useless. He could not shout. He could only wait and watch with burning eyes for the approach of the bateau with the loved flag of his country at the masthead.

At last the red pirogue, manned by the Frenchmen, rounded a bend in the river below. He had been ahead of the boats all this time! On, on came the red pirogue! The boy stood gaunt and pale, supporting himself against a ledge of rock.



He crept to the river's edge and waded knee-deep into the stream. — Page 119.

He was waving his cap like a drunken man. A shout went up from the boat. They had seen him! Weak with joy, he crept to the river's edge and waded knee-deep into the stream. The moments to him now seemed hours as the pirogue swung to the shore. He felt himself lifted by strong, loving arms. Then he knew nothing more until Captain Lewis, overcome with joy, seized him in his arms and called him by name.

The song of George Shannon floated out as usual at break of day when the following morning the sails stretched before a favoring breeze, and the boats continued their way against the Missouri's muddy current.

CHAPTER VIII

A VISIT TO THE SIOUX INDIANS

WHEN Shannon learned that during his sixteen days' absence the party had been visited by a large company of Indians, he was greatly disappointed. He felt that he had not only suffered in reputation by having lost himself in the woods, and that, too, through a disregard of the injunction of his commander, but he had missed the first opportunity of seeing a band of Indians of any importance that had presented itself in the four months since the expedition started up the Missouri.

Shannon got the story from one of the men: At four o'clock one morning, the captains ordered their men to set fire to the prairie grass as a signal to the Indians that there were persons who wanted to confer with them. Soon an Indian was seen swimming out to the boats. Captain Lewis ordered one of the pirogues to take him in. Two other Indians appeared shortly after who said that a large company of Sioux were encamped near by. Captain Lewis then sent Sergeant

Pryor and two men to invite the band to come to a conference. When the sergeant returned he was attended by five chiefs and about seventy men and boys, among them a Frenchman, the son of Peter Dorion.

After taking the men on board, the captains sent a boat with young Dorion and Sergeant Pryor to carry to the Indians a present of tobacco, corn, and kettles, and to tell them that they would speak to the chiefs the next morning. The Indian camp was some twelve miles from the river, and when Pryor reached there the Indians spread out on the ground before him a buffalo robe, indicating that they wished to carry him into the camp in state, but he refused, saying that he was not the leader of the party. Then they set before him a fat dog, already cooked, and he ate heartily of it, and said it tasted good.

The Sioux were found to live in lodges shaped like cones and covered with buffalo robes painted with various figures. Each lodge or tent was big enough for ten or fifteen persons.

The next morning the chiefs and warriors appeared, and at noon, under a large oak tree, from which a flag of the United States was set flying, Captain Lewis delivered a speech, and gave

presents. To the head chief he gave a flag, a medal, a certificate of friendship, a string of wampum, a richly laced uniform of a United States artilleryman, a cocked hat and a red feather. Suitable presents were given, also, to the inferior chiefs, and all smoked the pipe of peace. Then the chiefs retired to a little bower formed of bushes, where they divided among themselves the presents, and considered what they should say in reply to the captains. In the meantime the young men and boys shot at marks with their bows and arrows for beads which Captain Lewis offered as prizes for the best marksmanship. In the evening everybody danced to the rattling of a drum made from buffalo hide containing pebbles.

Early the following day, when all had taken their seats and smoked the pipe of peace, the head chief, whose name in English meant English Shake Hand, arose.

“ I see before me,” he said, “ my Great Father’s two sons. You see me and the rest of our chiefs and warriors. We are very poor. We have neither powder nor ball nor knives, and our women and children at the village have no clothes. I wish that as my brothers have given me a flag and a medal they would give something to those poor

people, or let them stop and trade with the first boat that comes up the river. I will bring the chiefs of the Pawnees and the Omahas together, and make peace between them; and it is better that I should do it than my Great Father's son, for they will listen to me more readily. I will also take some chiefs to your country in the spring, but before that time I cannot leave home. I went formerly to the English, and they gave me a medal and some clothes; when I went to the Spanish they gave me a medal, but nothing to keep it from my skin; now you give me a medal and clothes. But still we are poor, and I wish, brothers, you would give us something for our squaws."

When he sat down, White Crane arose.

"I have listened," said he, "to what our Great Father's words were yesterday, and I am to-day glad to see how you have dressed our old chief. I am a young man, and do not wish to talk much. My fathers have made me a chief. I had much sense before, but now I think I have more than ever. What the old chief has said I will confirm, and do whatever he and you please, but I wish that you would take pity on us, for we are very poor."

Then another chief arose:

"I am a young man and know but little. I can-

not speak well, but I have listened to what you have told the old chief, and will do whatever you agree.”

Others followed in a similar strain, promising to make peace with the Ottawas and the Missouris with whom they were then at war. All ended their speeches by telling of their distress, and begging for powder and ball and their Great Father's milk, by which they meant whisky. Then, after giving more presents and leaving with them Peter Dorion, the interpreter, who was to induce as many of the chiefs as possible to accompany him to Washington, to visit the Great Father, the President, the expedition proceeded on its way.

Shannon's curiosity was now fully aroused, and as he was led to believe that they were rapidly approaching the camp of the Teton Sioux, he spent much of his time when not on duty learning all he could of this powerful tribe.

He had not long to wait, for in a few days the soldier who was following the boats with the one horse reported that Indians had stolen the horse. It was not long before the boats came up with five Indians who were walking along the shore, and a parley took place. The white men told the Indians that they were their friends, and wished to con-

tinue so, but that they were not afraid of Indians, and that some of their young men had stolen the horse which their Great Father had sent to their great chief, and that they would not speak with their chiefs until the horse was restored. The Indians declared that they had not taken the horse, and reported that their camp was two miles up the river. The party then proceeded to land and make camp, while Captain Lewis sent Drouillard and another to the village to invite the chiefs to a conference.

On the next morning the captains raised a flag-staff upon the shore, made an awning from the sail, and here the chiefs and warriors of the Tetons to the number of sixty gathered to smoke the pipe of peace. At the same time the men in the boats, which were anchored about seventy yards out in the stream, stood ready to act if the Indians showed signs of doing any mischief.

Peter Dorion, who had acted as the Sioux interpreter, had been left with the Yankton Sioux below, so that Drouillard, who knew comparatively little of the Teton language but was an expert at the sign language, acted as interpreter. The great chief's name was Black Buffalo, and under him were many inferior chiefs. They brought as a

present great quantities of meat, some of which was spoiled, and therefore, as the Indians thought, the more acceptable.

After parading his men, and making a speech, Captain Lewis invited the chiefs on board, showed them over the boat, shot off the swivel gun, and gave to each of them a quarter of a glass of whisky. This last favor pleased them so much that they danced about in great glee, asking for more, and even sucking the empty bottle.

The captains soon found they had their hands full getting rid of their half-tipsy guests, who had now remained on board some three hours. Ordering up a pirogue, Captain Clark with five men set the Indians on shore; but no sooner had the party landed than three of the red men seized the cable of the pirogue in which were presents for the Indians, while one of the Indians jumped aboard and threw his arms about the mast. Some demanded more presents. One fellow who pretended to be drunk, staggering against Captain Clark, said: "I will not let you go. You have not given me enough."

Captain Clark replied: "You cannot prevent us; we are no squaws, but warriors. We were sent by our Great Father, and we have medicine

on board that can kill twenty such nations as you are in one day.”

“ We, too, have warriors,” answered Black Buffalo threateningly. For answer Captain Clark drew his sword, and signaled to Captain Lewis and the men in the bateau. At once, the Indians who were pressing about, drew arrows from their quivers, and were just bending their bows when the swivel gun was pointed toward them, and twelve of the boat’s best men jumped into the other pirogue and started for shore.

“ Go away,” said the great chief sternly, with a gesture directed toward the young warriors who were holding the cable of the pirogue. At this Captain Clark stepped forward, and offered his hand to the two principal chiefs, but they refused to take it. Then, turning about, he entered the pirogue, and ordered his men to push out from land. Scarcely had the boat got twenty feet away when four of the Indians, including two chiefs, plunged into the stream, and asked to be taken in. Captain Clark let them come aboard, and the pirogue proceeded a mile up the river and anchored.

The next day the Indians made excuses for their bad behavior and begged that their squaws and

children be given a chance to see the white men sent by the Great Father, and their great boat and air gun. Captain Lewis did not want the ill-will of the Tetons so, pushing on up the river, he landed before their village, where a great crowd of men, women, and children were waiting. The two captains went on shore with some of their men, Shannon among the number. Here they were met by eight young Indians, dressed in the most fantastic manner, who took up each of the captains in turn and carried him on a painted buffalo robe to a large council house, where they gave them seats by the side of the great chief.

The council room formed three-quarters of a circle. Its covering and sides were dressed skins sewed together. The two captains and their body-guard, sitting with the chiefs, faced seventy painted faces. In front of the chiefs was the pipe of peace, resting on two forked sticks a few inches from the ground, while under it was scattered the down of a swan. A Spanish and an American flag stood in the midst of the lodge. Nearby was a large fire over which some four hundred pounds of buffalo meat was cooking.

After speeches were made the great chief took some of the most delicate parts of a cooked dog

and held them up to the flag. Then he took the pipe of peace and pointed it first toward the heavens, then to north, south, east, and west, then to the earth, and, after lighting it, presented it to the visitors. The captains then made speeches and the chief addressed the people. Following came a feast of buffalo meat, dried, and mixed raw with grease, dainty bits of dog, and ground potatoes, all of which were eaten from platters by means of horn spoons.

During the feast Shannon started out for a tour of the village, followed by a crowd of women and children, among them some twenty-five women whom the band had captured some two weeks before from their enemies, the Omahas. This he reported to Captain Lewis later, and the captain made the chiefs promise to send the women back and make peace. With the greatest difficulty the boy prevented the young Indians from stealing his rifle, his knife, and his ammunition. Drouillard had told him that the Sioux were great pilferers, so he was on his guard. He found the lodges into which he peered filthy, and the Indians themselves the dirtiest lot of people he had ever seen. Making signs that he wanted a drink of water, some was offered him in the pouch of an animal which

had never been cleaned. Disgusted, he returned to the council house just as the feast was ending.

After dark everything was cleared away for a dance. A large fire burning in the center of the council gave light and heat. Twelve men made up the orchestra. The instruments were tambourines, formed of skin, stretched across a hoop, long sticks, to which were fastened hoofs of the deer, and skin bags containing pebbles or shot.

The first performance was by the women, who came in highly decorated, some with poles in their hands on which hung the scalps of their enemies, others with guns, spears, or scalplocks taken in war by the men. After arranging themselves about the fire in a dense crowd, numbering about seventy, they shuffled forward until they were in the center, when, shaking their rattles and shouting, they shuffled back to their places.

In the pauses of the dance, warriors came forward and recited stories of their brave deeds, whereupon the orchestra and the dancers took up the stories and sang them, dancing, and beating their drums and rattles all the while. After the women had concluded their dance, the men took up the performance, jumping up and down, shouting and gesticulating wildly.

One of the musicians, thinking that he had not received his share of the tobacco distributed early in the evening, got angry and broke one of the drums, threw two of them into the fire, and rushed out of the company.

At midnight the white men informed the Indians that they would not ask them to tire themselves further, and returned to their boats accompanied by four of the chiefs, who asked the privilege of remaining on board all night.

This had been Shannon's first opportunity to observe the western Indians, and the impression made upon him was unfavorable, for they were ugly and ill-shaped, with legs and arms too small for their bodies, cheekbones high, and eyes protruding. They appeared to be cunning and vicious. The men wore no hair upon their heads excepting a small tuft upon the top, which they permitted to grow long and wore in plaits over their shoulders. The chiefs and the most important of the warriors fastened into this tuft an eagle's feather. Their faces and bodies were painted with a mixture of grease and coal. Over the shoulders was worn a loose mantle of dressed buffalo skin, adorned with porcupine quills, which made a jingling noise when the warrior moved.

This mantle was painted with uncouth figures. Under it was worn a kind of shirt made of skin or cloth, covering the arms and the body. Around the loins a girdle of cloth or dressed elk-skin was worn, while the leg from the hip to the ankle was covered by leggings of dressed antelope skins with seams at the side, ornamented by little tufts of hair from scalps taken in war. This being a great occasion, each of the young men dragged after him the entire skin of a polecat fixed to the heel of one of his moccasins. Another skin of the same animal was in some cases tucked into the girdle, or carried in the hand, serving as a pouch for tobacco or what served for tobacco, the inner bark of a species of red willow.

The next day Captain Lewis and the chiefs went on shore to see a part of the tribe that had not come to the conference on the day before, and in the afternoon he returned, bringing with him four of the chiefs, and one of the leading warriors, who examined the boat with great interest. Then Captain Clark accompanied them to the lodge of the great chief where, after being joined by Captain Lewis, another dance was held.

About midnight Captain Clark took one of the chiefs and a warrior into the pirogue, and in run-

ning up to the keelboat struck the cable attached to the anchor, breaking it. The current being swift, the signal was given for all hands to spring to the oars. The noise alarmed the two Indians, who at once called out to their companions, whereupon the whole camp of two hundred warriors crowded to the shore, believing they were being attacked.

The breaking of the cable had caused the loss of the anchor, so it became necessary to fasten the keelboat by a line stretched to the shore. The next morning when about to start out several of the Indians sat on the rope and demanded before they let it go that presents be given them. Captain Lewis flung a carat of tobacco among them and called out:

“Black Buffalo, you say you are a great chief. Prove it by handing me that rope.”

The haughty chief was flattered, and the boat swung out into the current, leaving the crowd of redskins gazing half wondering, half angry, that the palefaces had escaped them so easily.

CHAPTER IX

PRAIRIE DOGS—THE RICKAREES

THE white men were not sorry at parting from the Sioux. The most troublesome experience of the more than a thousand miles they had now come had been the one encountered in dealing with these wily, treacherous redskins. Had it not been for the swivel gun, whose belching mouth roared a threat whenever the captains wanted to impress the Indians with their power, it might have gone hard with the little company, for many of the Indians possessed firearms and were skillful in their use, while their bows and arrows, in the shooting of which they had been trained from infancy, usually went true to the mark. Whisky, tobacco, paint, and trinkets, but principally the two first named, together with the swivel gun, won from the savages a sort of friendship, but it was a friendship that could easily be turned into something the direct opposite.

The bateau had lost its anchor when the pirogue struck the cable on the last night of their stay, and

an anchor was a very important thing in the navigation of a treacherous stream like the Missouri. Two heavy stones tied to the cable formed a temporary anchor, though these, at times, failed to hold the boat when, in the swift current, it became necessary to prevent its swinging under some falling bank or crashing against a submerged log.

Though freed from the main body of the Sioux, yet the party found themselves followed by some of the Indians, who ran along the shores, keeping up with the boats for miles.

One day, one of the chiefs, running out on a sandbar, begged to be taken aboard, saying that he wished to go along as far as the country of the Rickarees—a two weeks' journey up the river. The request was granted, and the chief was very happy until the boat, in a high wind, became unmanageable, struck a submerged tree-trunk and came near upsetting, and then he became so frightened he hid himself among the boxes and bales in the hold of the boat; no amount of coaxing could get him out until the wind had died down and the water had become smooth again.

The Missouri now for some days presented numerous obstacles to the easy passage of the

boats. The water was shallow, oftentimes spreading out over a great area. Here it was with the utmost difficulty the channel could be found, the bateau again and again running aground upon sandbars. Then it became necessary to fall back down the river and take some other course.

High, black bluffs skirted the river on one side for a long distance, while the ground on the opposite side sloped gradually away into a beautiful prairie. These bluffs alternated on the two sides of the river, being now on the north and now on the south, sometimes rising directly from the water, at other times looming up far back into the country, showing that at some time the river had spread over the intervening area of low, swampy land.

Venturesome Indians frequently called from the shore, but seldom did the captains respond, save to throw them small quantities of tobacco, which usually had no other effect than to make them eager for more.

The land and the water during these days were prolific in game of all kinds. At times the hunters returned in the evening to report having seen from some high ground herd after herd of buffaloes, countless in number, roaming over the plains.

Deer and antelope sprang away from the water's edge and hid themselves among the trees at their approach. Herds of goats, at times, were seen swimming the river ahead of them, and often the pirogues came so close upon them that the men were able to kill them with their oars. Coyotes and wolves, with all manner of night birds, made the music to which they went to sleep about the camp fires.

One evening the hunter who had been out during the day reported having seen a colony of queer little animals that looked like squirrels, but differed from them in many ways.

“Prairie dogs,” said one of the guides.

“More like prairie rats, I should say,” replied the hunter.

“We shall go out to-morrow and see for ourselves,” said Captain Lewis, always on the lookout for a new species of animal.

“You'll not catch one unless you are quicker than I am, Captain,” said the hunter, shaking his head doubtfully. “They are the slyest critters I ever saw, and I've seen every animal that crawls t'other side the Mississippi.”

“Fast runners, eh!” mused the captain.

“Runners! No, they're divers.”

“ Oh, water rats they are! ” exclaimed the captain.

“ No, sir, they’re land divers. A rifle bullet is not quicker than their movements in diving into their holes.”

“ Well, we’ll get one anyway, or my eye has lost its cunning. The President must have a prairie dog with the rest of the wonders we’ll send him when the bateau goes back in the spring.”

The next morning, before the boats pushed out, a party started for the prairie-dog village, which the hunter of the day before had reported to be half a mile up the river. A short, brisk tramp brought them to the neighborhood of the village, and at once the men separated, intending to come upon the colony from different directions and prevent their escape. One or two of the Frenchmen in the party who had hunted and tramped on the Missouri laughed at the maneuver, but it seemed the natural way to do it—to surround them and take them by surprise.

The company had not been separated long ere a curious barking, as from an hundred little throats, struck their ears, and peering over the bushes and little hillocks behind which they were concealed, the hunters saw the objects of their search.

There, scattered over many acres of gently rolling ground were numberless little mounds of earth, like watchtowers, on which, sitting upon their haunches like so many pygmy preachers in their pulpits, were scores of little yellowish brown animals, with tiny ears, fat little pouches, and stubby tails, for all the world like diminutive dogs, all barking as if they would burst their throats. "Pop" went a rifle and in a fraction of a second not a sign of a hair appeared. The earth seemed to swallow up the little creatures. Then of a sudden their little noses peeped out again, and a second time they were gone. The first man to show himself was Sergeant Gass.

"Faith, and now ye see thim, and now ye don't," he cried, as with his gun still smoking he rushed forward expecting to find his prize. "Holy mither! What's that!" he shouted, jumping into the air and cavorting around as if a bee had stung him. At the same time a big rattlesnake that had been enjoying his morning peep at the sun slid noiselessly into a hole behind one of the little mounds. "And ye kape house with thim dogs, do yez!" exclaimed Patrick. "Bad luck to yez both, I say."

By this time the entire party gathered about,

minutely examining the little mounds of earth, many of which were nearly two feet high, though having only a small diameter at the base, and poking their ramrods into the holes that in every case led into the earth at the base of a mound.

“ Well, Captain,” asked the hunter of the day before with a grin, “ did you get your prairie dog for the President? ”

“ I would have had one if Gass hadn't got excited,” replied Lewis, laughing.

At the same time another party ran across a rattler, which at once made its escape into one of the burrows.

“ Is it possible these animals live together? ” asked the captain of Drouillard, who was one of the party.

“ Wherever you find prairie dogs you find rattlers,” answered the guide. “ They enter the prairie dogs' home and eat the young, and then turn the old folks out. After a good nap they get hungry again, then out they come to choose some other burrow and repeat their deviltry. Owls, too, make free to take possession of deserted burrows. There are three kinds of people in a prairie-dog village,—rattlers, owls, and the dogs themselves.”

“ This is interesting and something new,” replied the captain, making mental note of what the guide was saying in order to write it in his book that night on returning to the boats. “ But I must have one of these fellows, dead or alive. Here, Shannon, go and get me the longest stick you can cut from that tree yonder. We’ll see what poking will do.”

Shannon did as ordered, and soon the captain was ramming the holes, now this one, now that, but never with success. The end of the stick when withdrawn showed no evidence of striking game.

“ May I suggest,” said Shannon, “ that we try drowning them out? ”

“ To be sure! Why did I not think of that? Go back to camp, some of you men, and, if the boats have not left, fill every kettle and bucket with water and bring them. We’ll see what Missouri river water will do.”

In a half hour the men returned with a great variety of utensils brimful of water. Then selecting one hole that gave evidence of having an occupant, Captain Lewis himself poured the contents of one after another of the vessels into it.

“ It has no bottom! ” exclaimed the captain,

when the last drop had disappeared, and still the hole seemed to yawn for more.

“ You can't fetch them that way, Captain,” said Drouillard.

“ Then I must get a shot at one.”

“ But not in this village. You'll stay here till the river freezes over before you'll get another chance. Even now some little fourfooted sentinel is sitting some place around here ready to give the alarm if any of his fellow townsmen should be foolish enough to stick his nose out.” Then seeing the captain's incredulous look, he added: “ Oh, they have their guards and sentinels. Look there!” Drouillard pointed to a little mound at some distance to the west. None but a practiced eye could have seen the tiny little figure perched upon it, and none but a practiced ear have heard the little “ tweet, tweet,” the sentinel was sounding.

Lewis's rifle was at his shoulder. He drew it down slowly till the sight covered the creature's body and then he fired.

“ I have him,” he shouted, running ahead, followed by the entire party. There was a little trail of red on the hard packed ground leading into the burrow and that was all.

“Lost!” exclaimed the captain. “This is exasperating.”

“I’d like to have all the lead that’s been wasted on them pesky fellows,” commented Drouillard as the party returned to the boats.

But Shannon did not return with the party. He and another had orders to spend the day in hunting and join the boat at nightfall. Not satisfied with the failure of the party to get one of the strange little animals for a “specimen,” which the captain wanted, Shannon scouted for an hour about the prairie-dog village, but without so much as hearing a sound or getting a glimpse of the wily inhabitants. But when about to leave he saw ahead of him a reptile crawling toward a burrow with what appeared to be a prairie dog in its mouth. Oblivious to danger he ran forward and planted himself before the snake. In an instant the fellow dropped his victim, erected himself on his coil and sounded his rattles, while his forked tongue played in and out with lightning swiftness.

Leveling his rifle, Shannon fired and the rattler’s head flew from its body. Then picking up the prairie dog, he examined it closely, put it in his game pouch and congratulated himself that he was able to present to the captain a specimen of

their discovery. It was the skin and the skeleton of this prairie dog that the explorers sent to Washington the following spring from the Mandan settlements far up the Missouri, along with many other new and wonderful objects of interest discovered on the upper Missouri.

That evening, again, there was a long discussion over prairie dogs for the benefit of Captain Lewis, who was making notes for his diary. Drouillard was principal spokesman:

“Prairie dogs are of different kinds,” he said. “The ones in the southern plains have brown tails, but the ones in the north have white ones and not so long. Some have the entrance to their houses in the tops or sides of their mounds, others at the base, like the ones we saw to-day.”

“Where do they get the dirt for those mounds?” asked one of the men.

“Out of the hole, of course. They dig and carry it out; then pile it up before the door as nice as a human could do it. The prairie dog belongs to the same family as the ground squirrel and the woodchuck that every boy east of the Mississippi knows about.”

“What do they eat?” asked Captain Clark, who was an interested listener.

“ The roots of grasses mostly, and berries, and seeds. Do you see these pouches? ” The speaker pointed to the little bags that hung from the animal’s cheeks. “ Some say they fill these with food for the winter. I don’t believe it. The Indians believe they sleep all winter like the snake. You noticed those we saw to-day barked. There is another kind that whistles. The French call them ‘siffleurs,’ or whistlers.”

The party were to become very familiar with these little denizens of the prairie now that they were in the prairie region, and the antics of the little fellows never ceased to amuse and interest them.

In a few days the party were in the country of the Rickarees who, Drouillard explained, were a tribe of Indians that had lived at one time away to the north and east, in the neighborhood of Lake Winnipeg.

They had been driven from their homes in the north by the fierce Sioux who, migrating westward, made war on every tribe they met in their advance. Backing, inch by inch, the Rickarees had slowly moved up the Missouri, stopping now and then to build their fortified villages, only later to be driven farther up the river. Some of their

deserted villages were seen by the explorers soon after they left the Teton Sioux behind them.

On October 10, 1805, the expedition reached the neighborhood of the first of the Rickaree villages. It consisted of some sixty lodges, constructed in a manner peculiar to the tribe. Sixteen forked poles, five or six feet high, were set into the ground in a circle, with poles laid from one fork to another. Against these poles other poles were placed slanting to the ground. In the middle of the area four large forks fifteen feet high and ten feet apart were set up. From the tops of these center poles to the tops of the side poles, other poles or beams were laid to hold the roof. Over these were laid willow branches and clay. The sides were covered in the same way. A hole was left for an entrance, over which was stretched a buffalo skin.

The Rickarees were the finest-looking Indians the party had yet seen, being tall and of fine proportions. In disposition they were kind and generous, and were not such beggars as were the Sioux, though they did steal an ax from the camp the first night it was pitched on shore. The women of the tribe were fine-looking and lively, though to them fell all the work, even to the build-

ing of the lodges. The dress of the men consisted of moccasins, leggings, a loin cloth, and a buffalo robe thrown over the shoulders. Their hair, arms, and ears were profusely decorated. The women wore moccasins, leggings, a long shirt made of goatskin of a dirty white color and fringed, and a buffalo robe.

Unlike the Sioux, the Rickarees cultivated the soil, raising Indian corn, beans, watermelons, squashes, pumpkins, and a peculiar kind of tobacco. Unlike the Sioux, too, they did not drink the white man's whisky, and considered it an insult to be offered that which caused them to make fools of themselves. This was strange, for the Rickarees were great traders. Among them at all times were traders from the Canadian country, who offered in exchange for peltries the articles of civilization, but chiefly red paint, the most highly prized article among the Rickarees. A Rickaree would often part with everything he had to spare, for a little paint. Their ideas of value were curious. Shannon gave to a chief a hook made out of a pin and received in return a fine pair of moccasins.

This chief told Shannon an interesting story about three curious stones the party had seen, two

of which resembled human figures, and the third looked like a dog. A young man, he said, who deeply loved a girl was unable to obtain the consent of her parents to their marriage, whereupon he went out into the fields to mourn, and with him went his faithful dog. The young woman, through sympathy, followed her lover. Wandering together, the three, with nothing to live on but grapes, were at last converted into stone. The Rickarees worshipped these stones, and never passed them without making offerings.

That the Rickarees were a kindly people was shown by an incident that happened during the party's stay in the village. It became necessary while there for the captains to court-martial one of the soldiers by compelling him to run the gauntlet. So much did this affect old Eagle Feather, one of the chiefs, that he cried aloud during the punishment.

Great amusement was afforded, during the two or three days spent by the party with these well-disposed Indians, by the antics of Captain Clark's servant, York. York was a big, stout negro with a very black skin, and kinky hair. He was the first negro the Indians had ever seen, so that he was the hero of the day. Everywhere he went he was

followed by a crowd of Indians, but they took good care not to go too near him. Particularly interesting was he to the women and children. Every time he would roll his big eyes in their direction, they would scamper away as if fearful that he was about to pounce upon them.

York took advantage of the sensation he was making. Through an interpreter he told the curious Indians that he had once been a wild animal; and, that he had been captured by Captain Clark, and had only recently become tame. Then he would execute some fantastic dance, and roll his eyes or show some wonderful feat of strength to prove that he was more than human. The Indians looked upon him with much awe and admiration, and believed him to be a god.

After liberally decorating the chiefs with medals and flags and uniforms and distributing, with as little show of partiality as possible, a great variety of presents among the warriors and their squaws, the expedition again boarded the boats and set off for the country of the Mandans, where it was the purpose of the captains to go into winter quarters.

It was now near the middle of October, and cold weather was already upon them. They must

hurry, since, at the rate they had been going, it would require several weeks to reach the Mandan nation where, sixteen hundred miles from the point at which they started, and at the farthest point on the Missouri reached by the traders, they had determined to build houses and pass the long winter months.

CHAPTER X

A BUFFALO HUNT

As yet the party had not enjoyed a great buffalo hunt. True, several hunters of the party, singly or in pairs, had brought in buffalo meat which had been served up by the cooks in appetizing style; but as yet no day had been spent in a grand round-up in which all could enjoy the sport together in true Indian fashion. The captains had promised that when they were beyond danger from unfriendly tribes of Indians they should have a grand hunt. Now the prairies were dotted everywhere with shaggy herds, and the expedition had reached a friendly country, so that nothing stood in the way of the long-looked-for sport.

Drouillard, who knew the country well, chose the ground for the hunt. He knew a place where the Missouri took a great sweep around the arc of a circle, and where, with a favoring breeze, the boats could make fair progress with small crews. By landing the buffalo hunters here he could proceed with them into the interior and, by taking a

course across the country, in twenty-four hours could come out again upon the river many miles up the stream, before the boats could reach there. A good hunt could be had on the way.

So the announcement was made one evening that the next morning the boats were to proceed with a small crew, and that some twenty of the men under Captain Lewis were to land and spend a day in hunting buffaloes.

George Shannon had never killed a buffalo. Many a wild turkey and deer and antelope he had brought into camp. He had killed his bear and several wolves; but as yet he had never had the good fortune to bring down one of the monarchs of the plains. For this some of his comrades had joked him, so his heart burned to get a chance to mend his reputation. Then, too, nearly every other one of the crew, who had any skill at all as a hunter, had not only killed his buffalo, but had skinned it, and now boasted of his own buffalo robe.

Hence, Shannon's delight was unbounded, when the names of the hunters were called off by the captain, to find his own among them.

The evening was spent in examining weapons, filling powder-horns and shot-pouches, sharpening

knives, and putting everything in readiness, for the start was to be made at daybreak.

Some half a dozen of the French hunters and rivermen on board had engaged in buffalo hunts, and they had to answer many queries as to the method of stalking buffaloes, the habits and tricks of the animal when in droves, the best distance at which to shoot, the best part to aim at, and how to skin and jerk the meat, so that it was along toward midnight before sleep closed the eyes of the eager men.

At daybreak the pirogues set the little company, fully accoutered for the chase, on the shore. There were three horses attached to the expedition at this time, which had been obtained in trade from the Rickarees. They were stout little Mexican ponies, which the Indians had gotten from the Spaniards who at times came up from the south to trade.

Captain Lewis took one of the horses, gave one to Drouillard, and ordered the remainder of the company to cast lots to determine who should have the third. It fell to Shannon's good fortune to win it.

For some hours the party proceeded Indian file, as is the manner of western hunters, copied

presumably from the Indians, Drouillard in the lead. All were in high spirits. The morning was fine, the air abounding with life and vigor, the woods and the long prairie grass laden with the perfumes that excite the zeal of the ardent hunter. They were making for the great, black bluffs that ran parallel with the shore at this point and several miles back from it. Drouillard had promised that on the tablelands beyond the bluffs the big game would be plentiful.

After a laborious climb, the party with a shout gained the summit and stood for a moment to rest while their eyes swept the horizon on all sides. Below them lay the dense growth of cottonwood, through which they had come, and beyond it the high swamp grass reaching to the river's edge. There was the broad, muddy ribbon of the Missouri itself, sweeping away in a great curve to the north and west, and on its bosom, like faint specks, floated their little fleet, the Stars and Stripes at the masthead scarcely discernible to the eye.

In the opposite direction, the great upland prairie swept in undulating waves as far to the north as the eye could reach. Little black patches were seen here and there, looking like clumps of trees; these Drouillard said were herds of buf-

faloes. The hunters would be unable to approach them, however, from the direction in which they were moving, he said, as the wind was blowing from them toward the buffaloes, so that the animals would learn of the approach of their enemy before the latter could get within striking distance. At the guide's suggestion, therefore, the hunters moved off to the left, and followed the line of the bluff, intending, after making a wide detour, to come upon the animals from the north and west.

Several hours' tramp brought them into a favorable position; then scattering, the men threw themselves upon the ground, keeping, as far as possible, amid the high grass and in the hollows into which the prairie was much broken.

It was Drouillard's orders that no shot should be fired until he should whistle a signal, as the incautious firing of a gun by an over-anxious hunter would cause the herd to take fright and scamper out of harm's way. The three horsemen tied their horses together in a deep hollow, and joined the others, who were now crawling as rapidly as the grass would permit toward a herd numbering countless thousands.

Only once did Shannon permit himself to lift

his head high enough to see through the grass the force of the enemy. The sight made him tremble, strong and brave as he was. Lying flat upon his breast with both arms extended, his gun ahead of him, and his head slightly raised above the level of the ground, the big animals, now not over a hundred yards away, seemed to him magnified into very monsters. Some were quietly grazing, others were lying peacefully, chewing their cud, others tossing their manes in the air, and sniffing the breeze, while here and there two were at play, or, locking their horns and bellowing and pawing the earth, were engaged in fierce combat.

One old bull had drawn apart from the herd. He had been disgraced and driven out of the company. He had once doubtless been a leader, but, as old age had come on, his place had been taken by a younger bull, who, aided by his followers, had driven the old fellow out of the company. His mane was brown and shaggy and his skin scarred with the wounds of many battles. His eyes, nearly concealed by a coarse tuft of brown hair, had lost their fire. Shannon picked him out as a "foeman worthy of his steel." Young at buffalo hunting, he did not know that he had selected a beast worthless as to his flesh and hide, fit only to die and be-

come food for the buffalo-wolves that even now could be seen circling about the great herd, watching with sneaking eyes the opportunity to attack some feeble member of the band, or feast upon some one of their number killed in a combat with others, or fallen from old age.

With his heart up in his throat, Shannon clutched his rifle, and pulled himself along, not daring again to lift his head until, thinking himself within easy shooting distance, he lay still, waiting, every muscle tense and every nerve vibrating with excitement. Why did not the signal come? The suspense was something awful. He could stand it no longer, so slowly raising his head, his gun-barrel pointing straight ahead, he aimed as best his trembling arms would permit, straight between the eyes of the big bull.

A shrill whistle! It was the signal! The big bull lifted his head and his eyes glistened. Shannon raised the barrel of his gun a trifle and a bullet went crashing on its way. A moment later the young hunter sprang to his feet. To his horror the whole herd, taking alarm, were plunging like an angry sea straight toward him. There was no time to note the effect of his shot. The bull buffalo was nothing to him now. To run, and

that, too, with all the speed that was in him was needed to save his life. Without looking behind him, but dimly conscious of a tremendous tramping that sounded like the rolling of angry thunder, he sped like an arrow back over the ground he had come at right angles to the course he assumed the buffaloes were taking. Not a hundred yards ahead amid the high grass, stood the tall, lithe form of Drouillard. If he could reach the side of the Frenchman he felt that he would be safe. His cap had fallen at his first leap, and his gun lay in the hollow where in the first moment of his consternation he had dropped it.

“Run, ye spalpeen,” cried a voice directly behind him, followed by a peal of laughter.

It was the irrepressible Irishman, Patrick Gass. Drouillard was pointing off to the left and, stopping, the boy turned to see that the herd had circled and were running in a direction away from him. His fright, then, had been uncalled for!

Crestfallen he returned for his rifle and his cap and then joined the others, who were examining several buffaloes that lay prostrate on the plains, one of them being his old bull, which had fallen shot through the brain.

The fact that he was one of the few out of the

whole party who had killed his buffalo was some salve to the boy's injured feelings, but his pride in this was humbled when Drouillard informed him that his prize was not worth the picking and that it should be left for the buffalo-wolves.

“ Hereafter, young man, select a black buffalo; they are the young ones. Brown, shaggy hair means an old buffalo. There is not enough fat on this bull to make a meal for a crow, and a naked Indian would not take his hide as a present. But you made a fine shot! There is not one hunter out of a thousand that can find the brain of a buffalo under that shaggy topknot. An old buffalo hunter does not shoot at the head. Had you failed to find the right spot between those two eyes, your life would have paid the forfeit, for a wounded buffalo, except to an expert hunter on a good horse that knows its business, is a dangerous animal.”

It took but a short time to skin the other buffaloes that lay dead in the grass, and cut the meat off the bones into narrow strips, roll these in the hide and strap all on the back of one of the ponies.

“ You have learned something to-day, Shannon, about buffalo hunting that will stand you in good stead,” said Captain Lewis as they rode away be-

hind Drouillard, who had pointed his pony's nose toward the west.

Shannon smiled feebly, for, to tell the truth, he was not proud of his first buffalo experience, though he had shot his buffalo.

Further success in getting within shooting distance of the now thoroughly frightened herd being out of the question, the party took its way rapidly toward a point on the river where the boats expected to come to anchor and await them. But when they reached the edge of the bluff again they could see nothing of the boats, and they found the descent so precipitous it was necessary to halt and send scouts in several directions to find a pathway. Looking far off to the west, beyond the course of the river, the keen eyes of one of the Frenchmen of the party saw small specks dotting the prairie that spread away from the farther bank of the river.

“Buffaloes,” he cried.

Then every man, shading his eyes with his hands, for the sun hung low in the west, looked at the strange sight. True, the plain across the river was fairly carpeted with moving objects—thousands of them.

“They are coming this way,” remarked Drouillard.

At once Captain Lewis announced that on the following morning the party should cross the river and have another day's sport. But now it was necessary to get down off the bluff and make camp near the river, for during the whole day they had had no water, and both men and animals were suffering from thirst.

Soon one of the scouts returned to say that he had discovered a buffalo path leading down the side of a bluff some two miles away. It was growing dark rapidly, so the party set off at once at a rapid pace in the direction indicated. In another hour they were on the river bank, had chosen a place for camp, and preparations had been made for spending the night.

Horses and men were refreshed by the first drink of the day, fires were made, and buffalo steak was soon sizzling over the flames, sending out ravishing odors.

Tired from the long day's tramp, the men, soon after a hearty supper, were stretched upon the ground around the campfire asleep,—all but one who, on the bank of the river, lying flat upon his chest, with arms extended and chin resting upon his hands in the true fashion of the frontier guard, was keeping watch for night prowlers in

the shape of beasts or men, his gun within easy reach.

About ten o'clock the camp was awakened by a sound as of distant thunder. Men rubbed their eyes and said, "We shall have a storm." Drouillard, the half-breed hunter, knew better, and with an anxious look in his eyes he awakened the captain and told him the buffaloes were on the march and evidently coming toward the river.

"If these animals take it into their heads to cross the river there is no telling what may become of us," he said earnestly. "There are thousands of them. It is a spread of a mile across their front. It means death to anything in their pathway."

Soon the guard came rushing in, terror-stricken, calling out that the buffaloes were fording the river and that, from the bellowing of the bulls, the lowing of the cows, and the tremendous splashing of the water, it seemed to him that there could be no escape for the camp.

"Build a fire," cried Drouillard. "Bring driftwood, branches of trees, and dry grass—anything that will burn. Pile it here on the bank and set it afire. That may cause them to turn and give us a wide berth."

No sooner said than done. Every man of the

company, from Captain Lewis down, joined in the work of searching amid the darkness for dry stuff to build a great bonfire. Then Drouillard poured several handfuls of powder beneath it, and Captain Lewis set it afire with the wonder matches he had brought from St. Louis.

The leaves and dry grass caught the flame, and soon there was a furious crackling and a light that illumined half the river.

Peering out over the waters with anxious eyes, the men could see the frantic efforts of the great beasts to change their course, for buffaloes, like other wild animals of the plains, are afraid of fire.

The din now became terrific. It chilled the very blood of the watchers. Hour after hour the great mass plunged through the water and up the banks to the right of the little band, the near flank of the oncoming hordes being distinctly seen on the edges of the light thrown out by the great fire.

At last the main army had passed and the stragglers had clambered up the banks; then, thankful for their escape, the company lay down again upon the ground and fell asleep to the low rumble of the retreating hosts that, among the forests lining the base of the bluff, were following their leaders to the prairie tablelands above.

At dawn of the next day, after a hasty breakfast, the horses were saddled, girths made tight, weapons examined, and everything put in readiness for another hunt. Every man was eager to get a sight of the great army of shaggy-coated monsters that no doubt had halted on the upland and were now quietly grazing on the rich grass that formed its carpet. It was not difficult to find the trail. It was as if a million men had trampled the leaves and grass and fallen branches of trees. For several miles the broad path wound its way up the banks of the river and then climbed zigzag up the steep bluff.

Eager for the first view, the men rushed pell-mell along the beaten path until, on the summit, they paused and scanned the prairie. A mile away was the rear guard of the great army, and beyond, stretching as far as the eye could reach, was the main body.

Drouillard led the attack. Shannon still rode the pony that had been his from the start. Perhaps no one in the company was so eager for the fray as he. He had determined not only to shoot a buffalo, but to get one of which even Drouillard would be proud. He would select one with a black skin this time. He would show his older comrades that

he was not afraid of the fiercest of the species, and that he knew a good buffalo when he saw one.

Selecting a deep hollow that circled off to the left, Drouillard led the men by a long two hours' tramp, the horsemen leading their horses, until they had got to leeward of a detached portion of the great herd, and then, telling the men they had reached a point the nearest to their prey that they could hope to get, he bade them scatter, select their victims, and make sure in their shooting to aim at a vital part.

No sooner had the word been given than Shannon threw himself forward on his pony, dug his heels into its flanks and shouted. At once the animal plunged forward, directly into the face of a hundred buffaloes who at the first sound lifted their heads, then, tossing their tails in the air, snorted viciously and took to their heels, raising a mighty cloud of dust. The pony was a buffalo hunter and knew better than did his master what was before him. With long, swinging strides he settled down to his work as if for the race of his life. Shannon had but to give him rein. After a few minutes' chase a cow, as beautiful an animal as a buffalo hunter ever saw, suddenly plunged off at an angle and separated herself from the rest.

With scarcely the touch of a rein Shannon's pony wheeled and made after her. The direction the buffalo had taken brought her in a moment within range of the rifle of one of the party who was on foot and concealed in a little hollow. A shot rang out, but it missed. Shannon's heart gave a leap. Now he had the race all to himself. He yelled encouragement to his faithful pony, then clutching the reins tight in his left hand and throwing the barrel of his gun over his left arm, he waited while every bound lessened the distance between pursuer and pursued. Soon the pony was opposite the flanks of the cow. The boy raised the muzzle of his gun, took quick aim and fired. The cow tossed her head as if in defiance, and without slackening her pace turned off to the left. The pony did the same, scarcely losing a foot of ground in the turn. Shannon's rifle was now empty. Grabbing his pistol from its holster he shouted in a frenzy of excitement and bent far out over the pony's neck. Pony and rider seemed one, and both animated by the one desire. They were within ten feet of the buffalo's head when suddenly it turned, and with a terrific snort, blowing foam from its mouth and nostrils, plunged directly upon the horse. Quick as a flash the little animal sprang into the air,



"Crack!" went Shannon's pistol. — Page 167.

escaping the infuriated monster by the margin of scarce an inch. At the same moment "Crack!" went Shannon's pistol, and in a twinkling he was thrown from his rearing horse to the ground. On his feet in an instant, he tore from his belt his long hunting knife, and with a rush, born of a desperate purpose to kill or be killed in the one plunge, he drove the blade deep into the buffalo's lungs. Throwing back her head and pawing the earth, with a dying bellow, she fell heavily to the ground, staggered halfway to her feet again, then dropped dead.

Drouillard, who had seen the boy's plight, was galloping toward him with all speed.

"Well done, Shannon, but a narrow escape. Had you failed to strike just right, it was all over with you."

The boy had not realized his danger.

"What will they say, now?" he asked, pride and exultation mingled in his look.

"That you have beaten us all," answered Drouillard. "Others of us have killed our buffaloes, but yours is the best of the lot. That skin will make a robe of which you may well be proud. Captain Lewis wants a fine one to send to the President. He may want this one."

But there was no time for further conversation. Drouillard had other work to do. He must cut up his buffalo, so, bidding Shannon follow the directions he had given him as to how to take off the skin without marring it, he turned his horse and was off at a canter.

No sooner had Drouillard gone than the boy set to work with his knife to cut off the skin. First he cut around the legs near the body; then he made a clean cut about the neck near the shoulder, and after that a long cut from the neck, between the fore legs and down the entire length of the belly. Then, grasping the skin at the shoulder, inch by inch, he tore it loose from the flesh until all one side was free to the backbone. Endeavoring to turn the buffalo over to get at the other side, he found, try hard as he might, he could not lift its immense weight alone; so, obtaining the assistance of another of the party, he soon finished the job, and had the beautiful dark skin spread upon the earth. Then, following the example of the buffalo hunters he had watched the day before, he cut the fleshy parts of the carcass into long, narrow strips.

There remained yet the tongue, the most delicate part of the buffalo for eating. He knew that he would be laughed at if he did not bring the tongue

to camp, but how to get at it was more than he knew. Taking hold of the immense jaws he tried to open them but could not. Then, inserting his knife as a pry, he found this unavailing, and left the point of the knife broken between the animal's set teeth. Labiche, the Frenchman who had helped him turn the body over, was not far away engaged in skinning his victim. He would ask Labiche, or rather he would watch Labiche, and then return and do as he had seen Labiche do it. Luckily Labiche was about to cut out the tongue of his capture when he sauntered up. Shannon saw him cut a hole in the animal's throat, insert his hands and pull the tongue back through the aperture and cut it off at the base. Secretly glad that he had learned to do the trick without asking information, Shannon returned to his own buffalo, and soon the work was entirely finished and to his satisfaction. Then wrapping the tongue and the ribbons of meat in the skin, he caught his pony, which was quietly grazing nearby, and with his bundle before him on the saddle he rode away to join his comrades, who were now gathering for their return to camp.

The juiciest of buffalo steak made a right royal feast for the merry party that gathered about the

campfire that night. Proudly the hunters exhibited their spoils to their comrades who had arrived from down the river during their absence. George Shannon afterwards declared it was one of the happiest days of his life.

So much buffalo meat had been taken that the hunters proceeded to jerk it. The process was new to Shannon. One of the cooks explained it to him.

“ There are several ways, but the best is this,” said he. “ A frame of light poles is held from the ground by forked posts planted in the earth. The frame is often twenty or thirty feet long by six to ten feet wide. Under the middle of the frame a trench is made and filled with anything which when set afire will make a smoke. The ribbons of meat, each about two inches wide and three-quarters of an inch thick and as long as possible, are laid on the frame, after having been dipped into a camp kettle full of boiling brine. The wood in the trench is then set on fire and kept burning until the dryness of the prairie air and the heat of the sun have cured the meat. The fire is for the purpose of making a smoke to keep away insects and flies and of lessening the cold and the damp. You will often see Indians curing their meat by hang-

ing these ribbons on a bough in the hot sun and turning it from time to time, but it attracts flies, insects, and ants, unless a fire is built underneath."

The jerking of the meat killed by the buffalo hunters on this occasion was easily accomplished on board the bateau, and enough was cured to last for many days.

CHAPTER XI

WINTER AMONG THE MANDAN INDIANS

LATE in October word was given out that the captains were looking for a site for a winter camp. The news was grateful to the men who for five long months had labored at the oars, or dragged the heavy towlines, or waded breast-high the chilling currents, much of the time enfeebled by sickness and all of the time harassed by ills and misfortunes against which no human foresight could have guarded them.

The winter was now fast coming on. Biting winds from the north and west found their clothing worn to tatters. Snow fell at intervals and ice formed along the margins of the river. Still uncomplainingly they kept on. They must reach the Mandan villages where, at this very farthest point on the Missouri to which the venturesome white traders carried their packs, Drouillard led them to expect opportunities of trade with the natives and a friendly welcome.

“ How far have we come, Captain? ” ventured Shannon one day, as Captain Clark was taking observations of latitude and longitude with his instruments.

“ Over sixteen hundred miles, ” he replied.

“ Then we have not averaged more than ten or twelve miles a day in the entire five months, ” said Shannon, after a pause. “ At this rate how long before we shall reach the ocean? ”

The captain thought he detected a note of despair in the boy’s voice.

“ If you will tell me, ” he said solemnly, “ how long it would take a blind man to feel his way out of an interminable forest, I will tell you how long we shall be in reaching the mountains, then how long we shall be in finding a way across their unexplored heights, and then how long we shall be in finding the waters that empty into the Columbia and then into the ocean. No man has ever measured the distance. Men have tried it; but none have succeeded. All have come back disheartened, discouraged, beaten. But there is one thing sure: Captain Lewis will find a path to the Pacific, or his bones and ours will whiten on the sides of the mountains. There will be no failure with Meriwether Lewis. ”

“ There will be no failure,” replied the boy resolutely.

“ I am sure of that,” replied Clark. “ But this freezing wind that blows ice into the very skin tries one’s loyalty. We must make camp soon or we shall all die before we see the mountains. How the enemies of President Jefferson would gloat over such a signal failure of his plans. They have prophesied that our expedition would end disastrously.”

“ A winter in camp will not be ungrateful to some of the men,” said Shannon.

“ Indeed, not to any of us,” replied the captain. “ I am living in imagination the days and nights to come when we shall have stout houses of logs, and roaring fires, and enough to eat, and Cruzatte’s fiddle, and your songs, Shannon. You have not sung much lately. Your voice is frozen up, eh? You are not losing spirit, I hope.”

“ No, not losing spirit, but it’s hard to sing, with feet you can scarcely walk on for the pain of the bruises, and a carbuncle as big as a walnut on your neck.”

Clark laughed outright.

“ That ought to teach you to quit eating so much meat. Why don’t you eat pie and cake? Do you

know, I was dreaming the other night I was home in Kentucky and in my old home in Louisville. My sister had just set before me a whole plum pudding, and I was to eat it all. The joy of it wakened me up."

Both men laughed heartily.

"But," went on Clark, "I thought Captain Lewis lanced that boil for you last Sunday."

"He did," replied Shannon, "but this is another one."

"Another one! Are you trying to rival Whitehouse? He's had eight in as many weeks."

And thus the two, commander and man, laughed and joked while disease and privation, danger and death itself, like specters, grim and ghastly, hovered over them.

One morning a few days later a Mandan Indian was taken aboard. All manner of questions were asked him by the captains as to the country farther up the river, and particularly as to a good location for a camp. Guided by the information thus obtained, the boats made for an island a short distance above the first Mandan village. On arriving it was found that the timber was small and scraggy, so the boats dropped back half a mile below the village to a point where a level tract of

country covered with cottonwoods offered an attractive site for a camp.

The captains found they had halted none too soon, for as they disembarked a freezing rain was falling that later turned to blinding sleet and snow. Hastily putting up temporary shelter, the captains at once sent messengers to the village inviting the chiefs to a conference. There came, in answer to the invitation, the principal chiefs of the Mandans; Black Moccasin, chief of the Minnetarees, and White Buffalo Robe Unfolded, chief of the Annahaways. These came prepared to smoke the pipe of peace, followed by their women, who carried upon their backs great quantities of fresh meat as a present to their paleface visitors. The conference that followed was not unlike that held on previous occasions with other tribes. The mainsail of the bateau was spread for a covering; the American flag was hoisted to a treetop; the men were paraded; the swivel gun was fired; the captains and chiefs exchanged speeches and presents.

Although the winter had set in, as indicated by snow flurries, the frozen earth, the ice in the river, the sweep of great flocks of birds to the south, yet many of the Indians came scantily dressed, some nearly naked. The poverty of these people was so

evident that as soon as the boxes and bales were carried from the boats to the shore Captain Lewis began a generous distribution of clothing. Most acceptable of all the presents given was an iron corn mill. As the labor of grinding the corn fell to the women, the sight of the grain disappearing into the mill and coming out as meal was to them an object of never-ceasing wonder and joy. From that moment the white men became the trusted friends of the Mandan women.

At once the men, under the lead of Gass, began building their cabins and fort. The lodges of the Mandans in the village nearby were closely grouped together at an angle of the river bank. They were built entirely of dirt. The floors were dirt, packed hard and polished by use so they almost shone. Round poles lashed together with thongs and covered by buffalo skins made their rude beds. Buffalo robes served as pillows and blankets. Buffalo- or deer-skins, painted with fanciful designs and ornamented with porcupine quills, hung before the beds as screens.

The cabins built by Lewis and Clark were more pretentious, consisting of four rooms each, with a loft and a sloping roof. They were made of logs and were set end to end, in two rows, an inclosure

being thus formed to serve as a protection in case of attack.

By Christmas day the cabins and fort were completed, and to celebrate the end of their labors flour, dried apples, pepper, and other articles of luxury were distributed among the men to help furnish a Christmas dinner.

Christmas morning was ushered in by two shots from the swivel gun and a volley from the rifles of the whole company. The American flag was then hoisted and one of the rooms cleared out for a dance. At two in the afternoon another gun was fired, and the fun began. Cruzatte was the fiddler. None of the natives were present excepting three squaws, the wives of the interpreters, as, by the command of the officers, none were permitted in the fort on that day. A jolly time was had by the men, dancing to the music of the fiddle until eight o'clock, when the merrymaking was over.

New Year's day, 1805, was likewise ushered in by the firing of the swivel gun. By permission of the captains, the men then went up to the Indian village, where during the greater part of the day they entertained themselves and the Indians alike by dancing, and where York amused them immensely with his songs and dances and grimaces.

The weather was now extremely cold, the mercury standing in Captain Lewis's thermometer at times as much as sixty degrees below the freezing point, but all were happy and contented. There was hunting, and work in repairing clothing and moccasins and mending tools and making rope of strips of hide, and there was much visiting with the Indians.

Traders from the Canadian border, representing the two great Canadian fur companies, the Hudson Bay Company and the Northwest Company, came during the winter, and among them René Jes-saume, who drove his teams of Esquimaux dogs hitched to sled loads of goods all the way from Fort Assiniboin. So intelligent and so familiar with the language and customs of the Indians was he that the captains at once engaged him as an interpreter during their stay among the Mandans.

Early in the winter Chaboneau, another Frenchman, strolled into the camp, followed by his two squaws—one an old, weatherbeaten woman of the tribe of the Minnetarees; the other, a younger woman who years before had been taken captive in her home among the Rockies by the Minnetarees, then at war with her people, the Shoshones, and had been carried far to the east, and finally sold

to the French trapper, Chaboneau. Her name was Sacajawea (Bird Woman). Captain Clark was anxious to find some one who, when the expedition should reach the country untrod by the white man, might act as guide and interpreter among the Indians of the mountains. The young wife of Chaboneau was just the one. She was a Shoshone, one of the Snake family of Indians at the headwaters of the Missouri. If the Shoshones should prove unfriendly, Sacajawea could intercede for them. So Chaboneau and the young Bird Woman were forthwith employed.

No matter how cold the weather, there was no cessation of the hunt. There were the wild goats that abounded in the neighboring country. The Indians taught the white men how to take them in great numbers. They built a strong pen or fence of bushes in the shape of two sides of a triangle, interweaving branches in such a way as to make the fence almost impassable. The base of the triangle was left open. Hundreds of Indians then scoured the country and drove the goats into the mouth of the big pen when, rushing forward, they closed its mouth and held the animals at their mercy.

The Mandans hunted the buffalo much after the

manner of other Indians of the plains, stalking them as long as possible, then with wild whoops driving their ponies directly against the sides of the great herd, at the same time shooting their arrows at their vital parts until their quivers were empty, their horses exhausted, and scores of the monster beasts lay dead upon the plains.

The Mandans practiced another method of hunting the buffaloes. One of the Indians, dressed to resemble a buffalo by holding before his face a buffalo head and covering his body with a buffalo robe, approached as near as possible to the animals as they grazed on some upland. The remainder of the Indians at the same time went to the other side of the herd. At a signal these rushed upon the herd from every direction save that where stood the buffalo Indian. Immediately taking to his heels, the make-believe buffalo rushed for the precipice, the whole herd following. The daring Indian, reaching the precipice, threw himself behind a projecting rock or into a hole prepared in advance, and after him came the multitudes of galloping, snorting animals, crowding and pushing. Unable to stop at the brink of the precipice, pressed on by the thousands behind them, they plunged over, falling in great heaps at the bottom.

It was then the work of the squaws who followed the hunters to skin and dress the game and carry the spoils into camp, leaving the carcasses as feasts for the buffalo-wolves who ever lurked in the wake of the great herds.

Two men of the expedition proved their great usefulness during the long winter. These were William Bratton and John Shields, the former a gunsmith and the latter a blacksmith. No men in the camp worked harder than they. The Indians prized above all else articles of iron. An old sheet-iron stove that had been used on the bateau was about ready to fall to pieces. Shields cut up the sheet iron into bits four inches square. Each one of these pieces he traded to the Indians for seven to eight gallons of corn. Then he made from these spearheads, arrowheads, knives, and other things suited to the savage fancy.

On February 11th Sacajawea gave birth to a fine boy who, strapped to his mother's back, was destined to make the fearful journey that the expedition had yet to cover before it reached the ocean.

In March the ice in the Missouri began to break up, and all was excitement in the Indian villages and at the white men's camp.

Every day the Indians lined the banks of the

stream, armed with bows and arrows, spears tipped with iron fastened by Shields at his forge, and in rare cases a fusil gun, watching the floating ice for signs of buffalo, bear, or deer. Every spring scores of these animals, in trying to cross the rapidly rotting ice, broke through and were drowned. Others, attempting a crossing, were caught in the break-up of the ice and borne down alive, perched upon the glassy cakes, in constant danger of slipping into the water or being crushed and drowned in the ever-changing mass.

As soon as one of the unfortunate animals came within view the watchful redskins leaped upon the ice and ran, with marvelous skill and daring, from cake to cake, oftentimes barely touching with their feet the surface of the uncertain path, until the fleetest of them, reaching the side of some defenseless animal, shot it dead, and with the aid of others hauled it to the shore with ropes of hide.

At times the dead bodies of these animals, some in a state of putrefaction, floated down on the masses of ice. Just as eager were the savages for these horrid prizes as for those that came alive within their reach, for with the Mandans, as with other savage tribes of Indians, spoiled meat was a luxury. Indeed, the Mandans often buried the

flesh of buffalo and deer until putrefaction set in, before eating it.

The breaking up of the ice also brought joyful anticipations to the hearts of the captains and their men. The winter had been long and cruel. There had been no news, of course, from the outside world, save such as had been brought in by traders from the Canadian country, and this had been meager and of little moment. There was no novelty now in their situation. There was nothing to break the monotony, aside from hunting in a temperature forty, fifty, and even sixty degrees below the freezing point, the cutting down of the cottonwood trees and the splitting of them into timbers for the building of their cabins and fort,—an occupation that kept them busy until Christmas,—the dressing of skins and the making of clothing, the repairing of the bateau and the pirogues, and the making of new oars and paddles and masts, and finally the long search for trees of a sufficient size for the building of new canoes, and now and then at long intervals a dance to the accompaniment of Cruzatte's fiddle.

But the men were not homesick. They were built of stuff too stern for such sentiment. True, they often recalled in conversation and in thought

the names and forms of friends and relatives, and lived over again in imagination and in story their life in the civilization nearly three thousand miles away toward the rising sun. But when, with the first appearance of the wild geese sweeping up from the south, Captain Lewis asked who of the men wanted to return, and suggested that as soon as the river was free from ice he would put a crew on board the bateau and send it back down the Missouri with letters to the President and to friends at home, together with notes of the trip and specimens of animals discovered, not one voice was lifted to say, "I'll go."

"Would you not rather be back in school at Pittsburg?" asked Captain Lewis of George Shannon.

The boy of the expedition, grown in the year to be a strong, sturdy man, with bronzed and weather-beaten face, but with the same clear, honest eye, replied: "I am not the kind to quit, Captain. When I volunteered I told you that I would follow you to the ends of the earth, and I meant it."

"But you did not anticipate frozen feet, a starved stomach, and bruised hands. You did not expect to sleep amid rattlesnakes and have your eyes blinded with alkali dust. You knew nothing

of the wild beasts that, worse than Indians, would dispute your way. Does it not frighten you to know that within a few days after we start we shall be in a land the white man has never trod; that we shall meet tribes of Indians whose habits and dispositions no explorer has ever reported, and shall scale mountain heights and navigate currents yet untried by white men? ”

“ These dangers, Captain, only lend pleasure to the prospect. It is the life I have always craved, and I count myself most fortunate that I have the honor to serve my country in a position so much to my liking and under the leadership of such men as you and Captain Clark.”

Captain Lewis smiled. He had expected no other answer from Shannon. Narrowly he had watched the boy from the moment he had set sail with him on that day two years before from the Pittsburg wharf bound down the Ohio, and never for one instant had he regretted that he had given him permission to accompany the expedition. True, Shannon had given him more than one cause for alarm, for, unlike the most of the members of the party, he was without experience in exploration and was young in years. But Shannon had learned rapidly, and now that the captains were

to start upon the last stage of their expedition—the severest of all—they would have as soon thought of parting with Sergeant Gass, the good-humored Irishman, who had made himself indispensable, not only as a carpenter but as an officer, or with Drouillard, the expert guide and interpreter, as with Shannon.

But some of the men must return. The large bateau would soon become useless in the upper Missouri, with its ever narrowing current. To leave it with the Mandans until their return would be to find it destroyed. Then, too, it were folly to think of carrying farther the large stores of skins, robes, skeletons, and specimens of minerals, plants, and animals that had been collected on the way. President Jefferson, who had been from the start severely criticised by his enemies for his “fool-hardy” project of sending an expedition into the wilderness to die, would be anxious to hear from them, as would their friends and relatives in the States.

So the bateau which had been injured by the ice was repaired and fitted with a new sail made of elk-skins, and turned for the first time in a year with its prow pointing down stream.

With some difficulty the captains selected the

men to accompany the boat and its precious cargo, as every member of the expedition pleaded his desire and his fitness for going on. No one volunteered, so the captains must select. It was an anxious day for all when Captain Lewis announced he was ready to assign the men to the disagreeable duty of going back, but finally Corporal Warfington was selected to command, with a crew under him of six soldiers and two French rivermen as pilots and interpreters. In addition, Brave Raven, an Indian chief, with three of his warriors, volunteered to make the trip to Washington to visit the Great Father.

During the long nights that immediately preceded Sunday, April 7th, the men sat in the light of their campfires writing letters to their friends and relatives at home, copying maps and papers, and listing the specimens to be sent to the President.

Captain Lewis wrote a long letter to the President, giving a full account of his experiences, breathing in every word enthusiastic hopes and expectations for the future. Captain Clark wrote to his brother, the old general, at the Falls of the Ohio. Shannon wrote to the schoolmaster at Pittsburg and to his mother and his brothers and sisters

in the little Ohio settlement. Their letters were all full of kindly memories, and expressions of eager hope for the future. There was not one word of the pains and the toils they knew must be before them. Not one word of discouragement or fear. Not one word of questioning or doubt. To those at home it would seem more as if these men were on a holiday excursion than as if, moment by moment, for weeks and months, they were to look death in the face in a hundred hideous forms.

Thirty-two persons now comprised the expedition, four of them important additions in the persons of Lepage, a French trader and trapper, who had years before traveled up the Missouri beyond the Mandan settlements for many miles; Chaboneau, the French voyageur; his sixteen-year-old wife, Sacajawea, the Bird Woman, and her papoose.

April 7, 1805, at five o'clock in the evening, saw the bateau, with Corporal Warfington in the bow, weigh anchor slowly and move out into the current. At the same time the two pirogues and six canoes, with the American flag in the prow of the foremost, turned their noses against the Missouri's muddy current.

There had been regrets at parting. The strong

men who had suffered and toiled together had held one another in long embrace and had whispered messages of counsel and encouragement with full hearts, but now that the boats turned into the stream, one bound for home and the others for the mysterious unknown, with the Canadian traders and Indians on the bank cheering and waving their adieus, every man felt that it was one of the happiest as well as one of the saddest moments of his life.

As long as the bateau remained within hailing distance they shouted their messages, as if they had not already repeated them over and over again.

“Take good care of our letters,” shouted Lewis. “Look out for the Sioux,” shouted Clark. “Tell our friends at St. Louis to look for us sure next summer,” shouted Lewis. “We depend upon you, Warfington,” shouted Clark, and the answer came back, “We’ll do it or die.”

At last the bateau swung around a bend in the river. Captain Lewis himself fired the parting salute from the swivel gun in the bow of the red pirogue, and the daring explorers again settled to their Herculean task against the icy current of the swift-flowing Missouri.

CHAPTER XII

GRIZZLY BEARS DISPUTE THE WAY

FOR days after leaving their winter camp the experiences of the explorers were a repetition of those of the preceding fall; but soon the Missouri became more hostile, the shallows more frequent, the head winds more severe, the sand banks and rapids more treacherous, the alkali dust that blew in clouds from off the plains, stopping the running of their double-cased watches, and the swarms of mosquitoes, more unendurable.

The landscape was fast becoming weird and forbidding. Out of the plains rose fantastic buttes. Hills were becoming mountains and taking on a peculiar grandeur of outline. Somber cliffs were lifting their heads hundreds of feet above them, with no signs of life save now and then a mountain goat that clambered along some dizzy height, safe from every enemy. Sulphurous odors filled the air, emitted from veins of coal that streaked the bare faces of the rocks, where lurked fires that had smoldered perhaps for centuries.

Then, for a time after passing beyond this rugged scenery, the boats forced their way against a current that swept amid broad plains upon which still lay patches of the winter's snow. A week, two weeks later, vegetation took on a summer green, birds filled the air with their music, white and gray brant, wild Canadian geese, and bald eagles swept over their heads. Roses, honeysuckles, wild hops, morning-glories, lilies carpeted the prairie. Strawberries, blackberries, raspberries blossomed on the river banks. Hundreds of carcasses of drowned buffaloes came down with the current, while thousands upon thousands in great herds could be seen wandering over the face of the prairies. Deer and antelope and beaver and prairie chickens and bears sprang up at every turn, while all night long there was the music of night birds, the croaking of frogs, and the howling of wolves.

The farther into the wilderness they went the more prodigal did nature appear. So tame became the antelope, the buffalo, and the beaver, that at times the hunters could approach near enough to strike them with sticks and stones. Hunters had never before appeared among them to frighten them. To them man was more an object of curiosity than of fear.

Though field and sky did their utmost to make music for their ears and pictures for their eyes and luscious morsels for their palates, the old Missouri was doing her level best to hinder their progress. It was as if she were jealous of their coming into what, since creation began, had been her sole and undisputed possession. At times she poured her angry torrent through narrow channels, worn through walls of solid rock. Here oars and paddles and sails were useless, and only by carrying the towline up and along the face of the almost perpendicular cliffs, with imminent danger of the men who tugged at the rope being dragged headlong over precipices into the boiling current, could progress be made. At times the river spread over a wide expanse with a depth so shallow that the men must throw themselves into the icy current and, stumbling over concealed rocks, sharp pointed so as to cut their double-soled moccasins, or rounded to give no foothold, drag by main force, and inch by inch, the heavily laden boats. At times head winds drove them back over the course they had come or swung them under falling banks of earth or drove them fast upon hidden sandbars.

Yet no man mutinied, no man complained, no

man sought to evade his duty. Marvelous the courage and fidelity of these pioneer explorers!

Scarcely a man among them but was suffering from bruises and wounds, or from boils and carbuncles caused by their eating too freely of the meat the hunters brought in abundance, or from the stings of strange insects, or from soreness of the eyes blinded by the alkali dust that filled the air, or from blisters on hands and feet, or from the pricks of the cactus and prickly pear.

Yet about the campfires at night they made merry with songs, and even danced at times to the music of Cruzatte's fiddle. Thus they drowned the remembrance of the terrors of the day that was past and their fears for the morrow yet to come.

For weeks no sign of Indians had appeared. Then they approached the hunting grounds of the crafty, cruel Assiniboins—that tribe among the Indians who, most of all the natives of the plains and mountains, had been spoiled by the white man's whisky. Far to the north these Indians were accustomed to journey with their packs of skins to exchange for the whisky of the Canadian traders, and then to return to their camps on the upper Missouri and spend weeks in a long debauch.

Fortunately the Assiniboins were off hunting.

Remains of their villages were found along the river. One day tracks were discovered a few days old, and that night a little black Indian dog wandered into camp, was adopted by Captain Lewis, and became thereafter his constant companion. No member of the expedition became of greater service than this little dog, for at night no sentry or guard was so watchful as it. Many a time its barking aroused the camp to some new danger, while its tricks and antics furnished amusement during many a long hour.

One afternoon Chaboneau and Lapage announced to the captains that the expedition had reached the farthest point on the Missouri ever reached by white men. They did not know, however, that some years before an intrepid French voyageur had gone many miles farther up, to find the Indians of the mountains at war, and to return disheartened with his failure to find a path across the rocky barrier. Chaboneau and Lepage had come up to this point in their trapping expeditions, but no one of the company had ever seen the river beyond, excepting Sacajawea, the Bird Woman, whose people lived far up in the mountains, where the Missouri was but a tiny rivulet, whence she had been carried captive by the Minnetarees five years

before. So, from now on, Sacajawea was to be the guide and the interpreter.

It was about this time that Shannon, when on a hunting expedition a few miles from the river, came suddenly upon a platform of boughs that had fallen from its upright posts, carrying with it to the ground the corpse of an Indian woman wrapped about with elk-skins. At its side lay the dead body of an Indian dog. On returning to the boat and reporting his discovery, Lepage explained that this was the method of burial among the Assiniboins. The dog had belonged to the dead woman; it had drawn a rude sledge bearing the body to the place of burial, and there, the Indians having performed their rites, and deposited the body high above the ground out of the reach of wolves, the dog had given up its life that its spirit might go with the spirit of the Indian woman into the happy hunting grounds, there to remain her companion, her protector, and her burden-bearer. The body, said Lepage, must have fallen but a short time before its discovery by Shannon; otherwise the wolves would have devoured it. This circumstance and the discovery of tracks from time to time indicated that the dreaded Assiniboins were in the neighborhood; but by the rare good fortune that had at-

tended the party from the start, not once between the Mandan settlements and the very headwaters of the Missouri during nearly three months of their progress did an Indian make his appearance.

At length the expedition reached the mouth of a great river that flowed into the Missouri from the south. Its waters and the rocks along its shores were of a peculiar yellow color, and the Frenchmen of the party called it Roche Jaune—yellow rock. Captain Lewis called it the Yellowstone, and Joseph Shields, sent by Captain Lewis on a day's journey up its banks, was its first explorer.

Three days afterwards an incident took place that came near changing the history of the expedition. Immediately after breakfast Captain Lewis said to Shannon:

“Shannon, you will hunt with me to-day.”

The announcement brought joy to the boy, for to hunt with Captain Lewis was an honor. Usually the captain took with him Drouillard or Chaboneau, or some of the more expert hunters of the party.

On setting out the two followed the left bank of the Missouri, their eyes alert for game. After going about a mile they rounded a little promon-

tory that jutted out into the river, and there suddenly came face to face with two grizzly bears—the first of the kind, perhaps, a white man had ever seen. The animals had evidently been taking a morning bath in the river; their yellowish brown sides were dripping with water. It took but a glance for the hunters to see they had no easy prey, for the bears were immense, ferocious-looking creatures, larger than any the men had ever before seen. Shannon had killed the black bear of the Eastern States, and so had Lewis, but here were monsters that made the bears of the Alleghenies look like kittens. They had been told by Chaboneau of the “white bear,” as he called it, of the “Stony Mountains,” and had been warned against it. And now they stood face to face with two.

“They are the fiercest animals on the continent,” Lepage had said, “and are the only beasts the Indians fear. They will not go out to attack them, save in parties of six or eight, and only then after putting on their war paint and performing solemn rites. It is hard to shoot a grizzly so as to kill him. His brain is so covered with muscle that a rifle ball can scarcely reach it, and with the arrows and bad guns the Indians use it is almost im-

possible for them to reach the head or heart in a way to kill. A wounded grizzly is the most terrible of animals. He has been known to live for hours with a bullet through his lungs or in his brain. He can run faster than a man, and will stop at nothing when once enraged."

All this flashed through Captain Lewis's mind as he and his companion found themselves standing transfixed with wonder in the presence of the two great monsters that stood before them, eyes black and piercing, and attitude and manner ferocious and defiant.

"An Indian will run from a white bear," Le-page had said. But with good rifles in their hands neither the captain nor Shannon thought for a moment of flight. In an instant their weapons came to their shoulders and two bullets went speeding on their way. Both shots struck their mark, then howls so fierce went up that the two men stood terrified, empty rifles in their hands, not knowing whether to advance or retreat. In the moment of their hesitation one bear turned and fled into a near-by thicket, while the other, with a roar that seemed to shake the earth, came with long strides, his eyes blazing, his head thrashing from side to side, directly at the hunters. Quick

as the motions could be made the men reloaded their rifles, pouring in the powder with trembling hands, following it with wads and then with bullets. Resolute, they stood their ground until the shaggy beast was close upon them; then, at a word from Lewis, both rifles cracked in unison, the bear reared upon his haunches, fell on his side, rose again, took a few lumbering steps forward, and tumbled headlong in a heap.

Elated with their success, but with eyes keenly on the watch for the possible approach of the other bear, the two men ran forward to examine their prize.

“To us, my boy, falls the honor of killing the first white bear,” exclaimed the captain enthusiastically. “What will our Frenchmen say to this?”

Carefully they examined the great head and powerful jaws, the long, shaggy, yellowish brown hair, and the fierce claws.

“That fellow can make a track eleven inches long and seven and a quarter wide, without measuring the claws,” said Captain Lewis, taking from his pocket a measure and applying it to the great feet.

“What shall we do with him?” asked Shannon,

after the prize had been minutely looked over by the captain and mental notes taken for his journal.

“ We have had enough hunting for one day,” replied the captain. “ We will wait here for the boats to come up, and let Chaboneau cut him up.”

In the course of an hour the canoes came in sight. Captain Lewis hailed them, and soon the entire party had disembarked and were examining the hunters' big game. Chaboneau and Lepage set to work to skin the bear and take the meat.

“ We shall have eight gallons of oil from this fellow,” said Lepage, “ and enough bear's meat to last for some time. You have done good work, Captain. A shot through the lungs did the work, but I have known a grizzly to run a mile with a shot lodged there, and you are mighty lucky, Captain.”

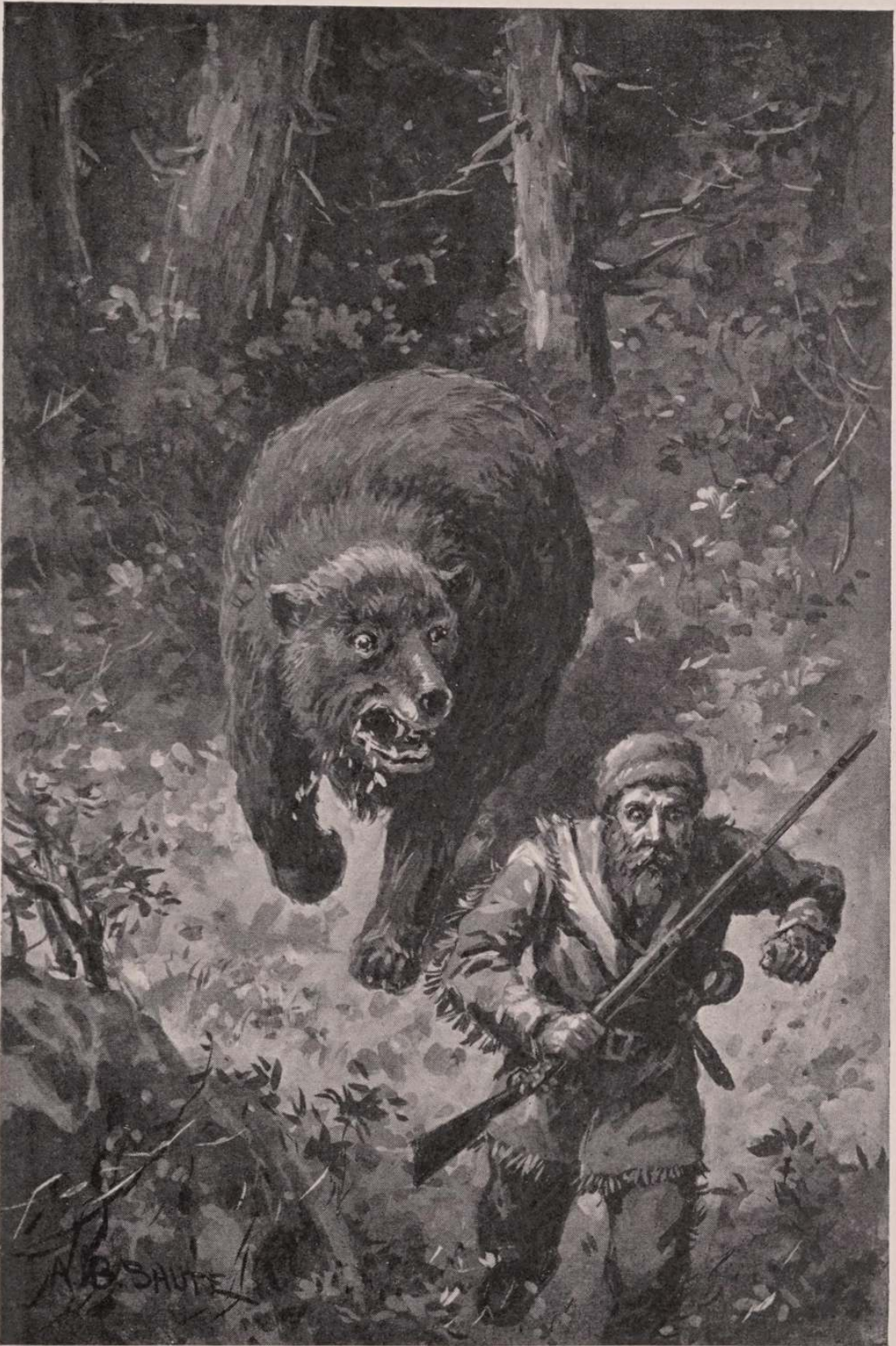
“ I give a good part of the credit to Shannon,” said the captain. “ Had he not been with me, I think I should have turned tail and run. I have been in every conceivable kind of danger, but the first time I ever trembled was when face to face with that fellow.”

Nothing would do but that Captain Clark, who now felt that his associate had gotten the better of him, should follow the wounded bear, whose track

was easily discernible from splotches of blood on the grass and rocks. But after a chase of nearly a mile he returned empty-handed.

Some ten days later the expedition reached the mouth of a tributary of the Missouri, whose waters, being of a peculiar whiteness, they named the Milk River, and the following day discovered the bed of a large river that had recently run dry, to which they gave the name Dry River.

Just beyond the mouth of the Dry River, while Bratton, who had been suffering so much from boils that he had been relieved from duty, was walking along the shore, he was attacked by an immense grizzly. A shot from the man's rifle wounded him and in an instant the animal showed fight. Not stopping to try conclusions with his bearship at close range, and having no time to reload, Bratton started on the dead run for the boats that were a mile and a half up the river. Though the bear had been shot through the lung, the wound had the effect only of slightly lessening his speed, but he was still able to give the hunter a lively chase. As soon as the frightened man came in sight of those on board the hindmost canoe he set up such a howling as would have done credit to a starving wolf. The men in the canoe acted



Bratton started on the dead run for the boats. — *Page 202.*

quickly and, heading for shore, reached shallow water just in time to rescue the fugitive, who was all out of breath from fear and exertion, and gasping like a dying fish.

The bear, seeing his enemy out of reach, gave a terrific growl, turned about, and set off slowly over the track he had come. The other boats, being hailed, came about, and Captain Lewis, with seven of his best hunters, well armed, disembarked and took up the trail that was easily followed from the blood-marks on the ground. After proceeding for a mile they found the trail leading into a clump of thick brushwood. Here they were certain they would find their prey. Carefully deploying so as to throw a circle about the bushes, the men crept in, rifles in hand, ready at the first sight of the enemy to give battle. From the amount of blood spilled upon the ground, they knew the bear must be greatly weakened in strength; but still, as Le-page remarked, there was probably enough fight left in him to keep any number of men busy unless he could be taken unawares. Captain Lewis's orders were that in approaching the thick brush the men should proceed with the greatest caution. It fell to the captain himself, with Chaboneau at his side, to get the first glimpse of the wounded

monster. Peering through the brush the sight that met their eyes was a strange one. The wounded bear had cleared out the brushwood and roots for quite a space, and with his great claws had dug a bed in the earth two feet deep and five feet long, in which he now lay still alive, his great eyes like two balls of fire blazing from beneath a mass of shaggy hair, his great jaws parted and his tongue lolling.

“ Shall we give him a chance for his life? ” asked the captain.

“ It is his life, or the life of some one or more of us, ” whispered Chaboneau. “ Let us both shoot. ”

“ Here goes, ” whispered the captain.

Two rifles came to the shoulder. A quick aim, two sharp reports, and the bear lay dead with two bullets in his brain.

“ He is not so big a one, Captain, as the one you got two weeks ago, but he is a male, and fiercer and stronger than the other. ”

“ He is big enough for all practical purposes, ” replied Lewis, breathing now with greater freedom.

The work of skinning the bear was soon completed, and so big and heavy was the skin, with its great coat of yellowish brown hair, it was all two

men could do to carry it between them to the boats. From that time on the hunters and men had frequent encounters with these monarchs of the Western mountains. Only three days after Bratton's experience the men in the hindmost canoe discovered a big grizzly on the shore. At once, on rounding a bend above where they had seen him, six good hunters, including Shannon, with Captain Clark at their head, disembarked and by a detour over a hill succeeded in concealing themselves until within about forty paces of the bear. Four of the men fired at the same moment, each shot taking effect, two of them in the lungs. At once the bear sprang at his assailants, open-mouthed. For a moment all stood their ground, until the two men who had purposely reserved their fire had discharged their rifles and sent two more bullets into the animal's thick hide. Still the bear continued to live and, strange to relate, every moment seemed to increase his strength and ferocity. Their rifles now being empty the six men rushed for the river, the bear close at their heels. Run fast as they might, however, the wounded bear rapidly gained on them. When they reached the river's edge only two had time to jump into the canoe and push off, while the four others, scattering, concealed themselves in

the willows that lined the bank. Here they started to reload their rifles as best they could before their enemy could decide which of them to attack. Two of the men had run together into a little clump of bushes. Before these two could reload the great beast was upon them, tearing and trampling the bushes under his feet as if they were mere straws. Throwing away their guns and their pouches, the two men jumped from their hiding places, ran to a cliff that near by overlooked the current of the river, and threw themselves twenty feet into the water. But even then they were not safe, for the crazed animal, pausing but a moment on the edge of the cliff, with a mighty roar leaped after them. The two men left on the shore, seeing the predicament in which their comrades were placed, and having reloaded their rifles, discharged them just as the bear was about to grasp in his powerful jaws one of the men who, not being a good swimmer, was making slow progress toward the boats. By rare good fortune one of the shots struck the bear full in the face. With a dying roar he leaped nearly out of the water, then fell dead in the stream.

The men in the canoes soon got a rope about the animal's neck and hauled him ashore. An exami-

nation showed that the brute had eight balls in him, two of them through his lungs and two in his head; and yet, until the last shot was fired, he seemed to have still the strength of an ox and the ferocious spirit of a lion unabated.

While all this was happening a storm had been brewing, unnoticed by those who had been taking part in the exciting adventure. Hurrying on to overtake the others, the hunters caught sight of one of the pirogues just as a squall struck her. The mast bent, the sail dipped toward the water, and men were shouting and scrambling for safety. The seriousness of the situation at once appealed to Captain Clark, but so far away was he that he could render no assistance. This pirogue contained all the papers, instruments, medicines, and much of the provisions. Should the boat upset and these be lost the damage would be irreparable.

The squall had struck the sail of the pirogue obliquely. Chaboneau, the worst steersman of the party, was at the helm, and Cruzatte at the bow. Chaboneau, who was afraid of neither wild men nor wild beasts, was an arrant coward on the water. As soon as the blow struck the sail he let go the rudder, and throwing his hands in the air, yelled, "Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!" Cruzatte, who

saw that the helmsman had lost his head, shouted: "Take hold of that rudder and do your duty, or I'll shoot you!"

At this the frightened Chaboneau grasped the tiller, but not until the boat had careened on its side and become half filled with water, wetting and damaging much of the cargo and sending afloat everything on the decks that was movable. Here Sacajawea showed the courage and presence of mind that throughout the entire expedition distinguished her. With herself and her baby to save from drowning, she clung with one hand to the gunwale of the boat and with the other grabbed the articles that floated within her reach, many of which were of great value.

Chaboneau, instead of putting the boat before the wind when the sudden squall struck her, had luffed her up into it. This forced the brace of the sail out of the hand of the man who was attending to it, and only by the resistance of the awning on the deck was the boat prevented from upsetting. It was the last time that Chaboneau took the place of a riverman at the helm. The incident served to show the captains the necessity of better protecting the most precious part of the cargo by the employment as steersmen of their most skilled men.

CHAPTER XIII

“THE SHINING MOUNTAINS” AND THE FALLS OF THE MISSOURI

EVERY day now increased the difficulties that confronted the brave explorers. The precipitous cliffs arose on either side, sometimes for two hundred or three hundred feet, leaving scarcely a footing for the men, who during the greater part of the time were compelled to drag the boats by towline through narrows and along the face of rocks by ways never before trod.

On May 26th Captain Lewis, who was on foot with some of the men, obtained from a high cliff his first view of the Rocky Mountains. Gazing at the snow-clad peaks, he felt that he had reached the fulfillment of one great desire. First of all white men he had looked upon the “Shining Mountains” from the east.

Surrounded by his men, he gazed long and earnestly on the splendid panorama that spread itself away toward the Western sun. How many

miles away were the giant peaks, he could not know. It was to him as if he had already conquered all difficulties, though before him, as he well knew, were weeks and months of toil and suffering, ere he could scale that lofty barrier and find the westward-flowing rivers whose currents should carry him to the ocean. His heart rejoiced over the good fortune that had brought him thus far, and promised success at last. In that moment of exultation he recalled with a grateful heart that his men were loyal and true and were ready to follow their leaders, whatever might be awaiting them in the mysterious regions beyond.

The entire party rejoiced with the captain on his return to camp that night in the early prospect of soon assailing the mountain barriers that lay between them and the fulfillment of their hopes. The next morning they were up bright and early and at work with a spirit born of the consciousness that, though the severest test of their bravery might be close at hand, they were prepared for it with nerves alert and courage and muscles trained by the severest discipline.

June 2d found the expedition in a quandary. They had reached a point in the river where two streams united to form it, one coming in from the

north and the other from the southwest. Nobody could tell which of the two was the Missouri. Lepage and Chaboneau were in a country as strange to them as it was to any other member of the expedition. Even the Indian woman could not say, though down one or the other, she knew not which, she had been carried by her Minnetaree captors. The northern branch was narrow and deeper and had the color of the Missouri, while the other was shallow and clear and gave less promise of being the main stream.

Pitching camp here, three men were sent up each stream in a canoe with orders to observe the depth and character of the waters and return at night with a report, while others were sent by land to the tops of the highest hills to observe, if possible, the direction of the streams.

On the return of the various parties a consultation was held which resulted only in divided counsels, some having one opinion, others the opposite. It was finally determined to make a more thorough exploration, so Captain Lewis, taking with him six men, went up the north branch, while Captain Clark, taking five others, went up the south branch. In the course of four days the two parties met again at the camp, Captain Clark having been gone

two days and Captain Lewis four. Two days had been sufficient to warrant the former in deciding that the north branch was not the main river. He had gone forty-five miles, and after many encounters with a fierce current and numerous grizzly bears, returned fully convinced that the stream led too far to the north. Lewis had gone fifty-nine miles, most of the way wading with his men in the ice-cold current, while they dragged their boats over stones and through narrow gorges, well-nigh impassable.

It was on this trip that Lewis and one of his men, Windsor, nearly lost their lives. Leaving a few of the men to look after the boat, the remainder sought to pass along a narrow ledge nearly one hundred feet above the water. Having scarcely room for a foothold, Captain Lewis slipped, but by thrusting his spontoon into the earth, caught himself just in time to prevent his falling to the rocks below. No sooner had he recovered himself than a cry of despair arose from some one behind him.

“ Good God, Captain, what shall I do? ”

Turning quickly, the captain beheld Windsor, who had slipped to the very edge of the precipice, lying with his right arm and right leg hanging

over the edge and holding to a tuft of bushes with his left hand.

"There is no danger, Windsor," cried the captain, knowing that the man's safety depended upon his keeping his nerve. "Take your knife and cut a hole for your foot. Steady, now. You are safe, if you mind what I say. Keep cool."

The unfortunate man with his free right hand worked his knife from his belt and, pegging away at the hard rock beneath him until he had cut a foothold, placed his right foot in it and raised himself to his hands and knees.

"Steady now. Crawl up here," said the captain firmly, "till I can reach you."

By a superhuman effort the man drew gradually away from the edge of the cliff. Then, at the captain's suggestion, he cut his moccasins from his feet and crawled on hands and feet between the captains and their men. Every one just started on the perilous path stood transfixed with fear for their comrades.

"Go back," shouted Captain Lewis, "and come up through the river."

Although the current was breast-high and cold as ice, coming as it did from the caverns and canyons of the mountains, the men obeyed, cutting

their feet upon the sharp rocks and barely escaping being torn from their footing and hurled into the seething torrent.

When the two exploring parties met again at the junction of the two rivers a consultation was held between the captains and their men. Every one was asked to give an opinion. Strange to say, both captains agreed that the southern branch was the true Missouri, while every member of the party, including the Frenchmen and the Indian woman, argued for the northern branch.

The captains persisted in their opinions and gave orders to take the southern branch. Before starting, however, it was determined to bury here some of the supplies, as it was evident they could not transport all they now carried by the way of the rapidly narrowing current, and that it would be wise to leave provisions and supplies here to await their return the following summer.

The question of how to conceal the stuff so as not to make its hiding place known to the Indians gave the captains some concern. Chaboneau was equal to the occasion and was at once given the superintendence of the work. He had seen the Indians conceal their stores when about to go upon the warpath, and their method he proposed to use.

“ You must cut,” said he, “ a circle of sod about two feet across, and remove it as nearly whole as you can, so it can be put back. Dig down straight for a foot or two, then widen out the hole to a depth of six or seven feet. The hole will then look like the inside of a big kettle. Every bit of the dirt taken out must be dumped into the river, so that no trace of it will remain. In the hole make a floor of dry sticks and cover it with green grass, and over that a covering of skins, and again a layer of dirt. Line the hole with dry branches and grass. Now put in your supplies and cover them with skins. Pack in the dirt and cover the mouth with sod. In this way you have a secure, dry cache that not even the lynx-eyed Indian can discover.”

The captain at once saw the advantage of the plan and proceeded to carry it out. Some of the men went to work unloading the pirogues and canoes, while others dug two holes as described by Chaboneau, one (the larger one) for the corn, pork, flour, powder, and lead for bullets—a thousand pounds' weight in all—and the other and smaller one for tools and specimens collected along the way.

After caching everything that could be spared

the earth was packed in, the sod replaced, and every sign of the work obliterated.

It would be unnecessary, with their diminished cargo, to take farther both pirogues. The red one had given the most trouble, so it was drawn up in the middle of a small island near the confluence of the two streams, fastened to trees by its cable and left, with the hope that on the return of the party it might still be there and in condition for use on the trip home down the Missouri. Then, christening the north branch Maria's River, they proceeded with the white pirogue and the six canoes down the south branch, which the captains had decided was the true Missouri.

They were now coming into the country of the devils of the prairies and mountains—the Blackfeet, whose continual wars with the Flatheads and the Crows of the upper Missouri, and the Snake Indians up in the mountains at the sources of the Missouri, made them a most ferocious and dangerous neighbor.

“Why,” asked Shannon of Chaboneau, “are they called the Blackfeet? Are they like York?”

Chaboneau laughed.

“No man knows the reason,” he said. “It is the story that when they were first seen in this

region it was after they had tramped for miles over charred prairie grass, which blackened their feet. No better reason," said he, "can be given for the names of many other of the Indian tribes of this Western country. You can search for days among the Flatheads to find an Indian whose head is any flatter than that of the Indian of any other nation. The Nez Percé, or Pierced Noses, do not wear rings in their noses or have holes bored in them, as you might think. You will find as many slim Indians among the Grosventres, or Big Bel-lies, as there are among other nations."

"Then how do they get their names?" asked Shannon, perplexed.

"By some incident or circumstance that may have happened long years ago in their history as a tribe," replied the guide. "Names are given among the Indians often for fanciful reasons, and oftentimes they themselves cannot tell you how or where they originated."

It was now about the first of June. Rapidly the scenery was taking on a grandeur that impressed every member of the company, excepting the stolid Indian woman, with solemn thoughts of all that must be undergone before they could hope to see the triumph of their hopes. It was evi-

dent that very soon even the canoes must be abandoned.

Sacajawea had informed the captains that at the headwaters of the Missouri lived her people, the Shoshones. She said they possessed many horses and that she would prevail upon them to trade with the white men, so that they could obtain means for transporting their goods across the mountains, and into some stream that, flowing into the great western river, would bear them to the ocean.

On June 13th, after a six days' tramp, during which the hunters killed some deer and buffalo, which were now becoming scarce, and hung them by the river's side for the use of the party in the canoes as they came along, Captain Lewis, who was one of their number, heard a murmur as of the falling of water in the distance. Pressing on, hopeful that they were approaching the great falls which Sacajawea had told him they must pass before they should reach the country of the Shoshones, he beheld columns of spray rising above the plain, cloudlike and sparkling in the sun, and at the same time heard with joy unspeakable the music of roaring waters, which seemed to come from the very bowels of the earth.

Though tired and footsore with days of tramping over the mountains, he called to his companions, "Come, men, 'tis the falls," and ran toward the river, which was some seven miles away. At every step the spray seemed to shoot higher into the heavens and the roar from out the earth to grow in depth and volume. At last, arriving at the summit of a steep mountain that bordered the river a half mile below the lowest of the great cataracts, they ran tumultuously down it, shouting in their joy, now that they knew they were at the falls of the Missouri and not many days' travel from the land of the Shoshones.

No more grand and inspiring sight ever met the eye of man than that which here met the eyes of white men for the first time. Seating themselves on a rock beneath the first cataract, they beheld the great river, three hundred yards in width, running between cliffs a hundred feet high and a mile long, toppling over a precipice eighty-seven feet into a dark cavern whose walls echoed and re-echoed its roar and sent its spray in flying columns with all the colors of the rainbow high to the heavens.

"Shields," said Captain Lewis, after they had sat for a full hour drinking in the beauty of the

scene, "go down the river and tell Clark to make haste. Tell him we have reached the falls of the Missouri. Say that I will go on for a few days to discover a route by which we may take the canoes and baggage overland. Tell him I will join him here as soon as I have gone above the falls and found water that our canoes may navigate. I shall hunt here for two days so that Captain Clark may have provisions when he arrives, and then I shall push on."

So Shields went away and Lewis and his men set about providing the humps, tongues, and marrowbones of the buffalo, and fishing the river for whitefish and trout that sported among the rocks in wanton abundance.

Then leaving a note for Captain Clark tacked to a pole at the edge of the water advising him where he should find the provisions, he pushed up the river to discover new surprises in a series of beautiful falls and cataracts extending for ten miles, the measurement of whose total fall he took at four hundred and twelve and one-half feet.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LONG PORTAGE—THE KING OF WHITE BEAR ISLAND—WOLVES

At this time Captain Lewis seemed to bear a charmed life. Every day brought its measure of danger, and every day an overruling Providence held his life in sacred keeping. The country about the falls was alive with giant grizzlies that frequented the shores to watch for the dead bodies of buffaloes that came down over the falls, an easy prey to their savage and hungry enemy. Great herds of buffaloes at the upper end of the falls were met by Captain Lewis, in some cases so tame that he often walked unnoticed to within rifle shot, and scarcely did the shot of a rifle frighten them into running.

One day death seemed close upon the captain's heels. He had shot a buffalo that was among a herd of over one thousand, near the banks of the river. While he stood watching it fall a grizzly arose on its haunches not twenty steps away. The captain's rifle was empty. He turned and the bear

started for him. Running to the river he jumped in, the bear close at his heels. When he had reached a depth of water that prevented his going farther without swimming, he turned and met the bear with his lifted spoutoon. At once the beast turned and slunk away into the bushes. Within an hour after meeting with this adventure a mountain lion crouched in his path, prepared to spring upon him. He was saved by a quick retreat only to find himself chased by three buffalo bulls. That night he slept alone under the stars and awakened to find a huge rattlesnake poised on a limb above him, its tongue darting angrily, and its body coiled ready to strike.

In a few days Captain Lewis had established a camp above the falls on an island, called by him White Bear Island, because its possession was disputed by a ferocious grizzly, and had started back to meet Clark, who, with the boats, was awaiting him below the falls.

Eleven days, from June 21st to July 2d, the entire party worked at the transportation of the canoes and their cargoes by land to White Bear Island, a distance of seventeen and three-quarter miles. Perhaps no period of the entire journey from the Mississippi to the ocean was more trying

to the spirits and bodies of the men than this. Every obstacle that nature could impose stood in their way. The ground was covered with sharp stones and prickly pears that cut the moccasins of the men and pierced their feet. Wild beasts on every hand disputed their progress. Clouds of mosquitoes made life a burden. Stripped to the waist, storms of sleet and hail beat upon and bruised their naked backs. Sickness invaded the company. As if to put a climax to their troubles, Sacajawea lay upon a bed of skins stricken with a raging fever. For a time her life was despaired of. To lose the Bird Woman was to lose her upon whom the captains pinned their hope of assistance when they should arrive in the country of the Shoshones and the baggage and provisions must be carried from the headwaters of the Missouri across to the headwaters of the Columbia. They had depended upon her to aid them in obtaining from her people, whom she reported as being rich in horses, the means by which to pass this critical point in their journey. Twice a day the captains visited the young squaw, and every means known to the Indian and the white man was used to restore her to health. The waters of a sulphur stream near by were found to give relief, and great

was the rejoicing when the Bird Woman left her couch of buffalo skins and, with her papoose strapped to her back, again trudged along behind her husband.

Three camps were used during the portage, one just below the falls, over which Captain Clark presided; another nearly eighteen miles away, above the falls, at White Bear Island, superintended by Captain Lewis, and one midway between the two. The canoes were too heavy to be dragged or carried, so wagons had to be made. Sergeant Gass, with six men, tramped miles to find cottonwood trees two feet in diameter from whose trunks they could cut solid wheels. With holes hewn through the centers of these, axles made from the masts of the white pirogue, and a rude frame of poles, vehicles were constructed on which the canoes and much of the baggage were loaded and then dragged over the rough and stony ground. Time and time again the axles broke and others had to be supplied. As some went in search of the material for these, others fell asleep in their tracks, exhausted by their pain and labor. It was while they were thus groaning under the burden of their great loads that a sudden hailstorm, such as frequently visits the mountains, broke upon them, wounding

and bruising their naked flesh with icy stones over an inch in diameter and ounces in weight.

Before beginning the portage, miscellaneous supplies, including a writing desk belonging to Captain Lewis, a grindstone brought from Harper's Ferry, specimens, a map, and the swivel gun were hidden in a cache under the rocks below the falls. Here, too, the white pirogue was left in a copse of willows.

During these eleven days Captain Clark nearly lost his life, as did others of the party. With Chaboneau, Sacajawea, and the negro, York, he was overtaken by a sudden storm of wind and rain and took refuge in a deep ravine, where he awaited its passage. Suddenly, with a tremendous roar and crash, the waters rushed down the ravine, carrying trees and rocks in a great flood. Clark shouted to his comrades a warning of their danger and was at once breast-high in the raging torrent. Sacajawea snatched her infant from its bed of netting, and lifting it high in the air, placed it in the hands of Chaboneau on a shelving rock above, then, helped by Clark, she scrambled to a point of safety. Following, Captain Clark by superhuman efforts leaped from the angry torrent, losing his rifle, his knife, and his compass.

At last the portage was completed and all stood upon the banks of White Bear Island.

“ I shall not leave this spot,” said Captain Clark, “ until the grizzly that has given us so much trouble here is conquered. We will organize an army and move upon him to-day, and to the man who kills the rascal I will give the best knife among our stores.”

Twelve of the best hunters in the party joined Captain Clark in the search, and among them Shannon.

White Bear Island, where the hunt was to take place, was a small island of some three acres in extent, located in the middle of the river, thickly covered with trees and dense underbrush. Its surface was broken and rocky, making it an ideal home for the grizzly.

The big bear that held dominion over this little island had driven off several small parties who had landed to search for cottonwoods big enough for the making of canoes. All attempts to dislodge him having met with failure, and now the work of transporting the cargo around the falls having been accomplished, it was suggested that the hunters turn their attention to the surly monarch who had so stubbornly stood in their way. The pro-

posal was eagerly agreed to and the men selected for the enterprise set out in the highest spirits.

Two canoes carried the hunters across the current that separated the island from the mainland, and shortly after sunrise the search was begun. Captain Clark disposed his men so that in the advance across the island they could sweep every foot of the territory and be sure to come upon the enemy sooner or later. In the arrangement of the men Shannon found himself at one end of the line, his nearest neighbor being Lepage, some fifty yards away. The advance through the jumble of rocks, bushes, and fallen timbers was slow and laborious, and it was not long before the line which at first advanced with military precision was broken, and Shannon found himself pushing on alone. The situation was not a pleasant one, but it brought no fear to the boy's heart. He knew that, unaided and alone, he was no match for the monstrous grizzly they were hunting. But he also knew that the crack of his rifle could be heard by at least three or four of his comrades, and that if relief were needed it was within reach.

Pushing his way through the tangled underbrush, he stopped from time to time to listen and to peer among the rocks and bushes for some sound

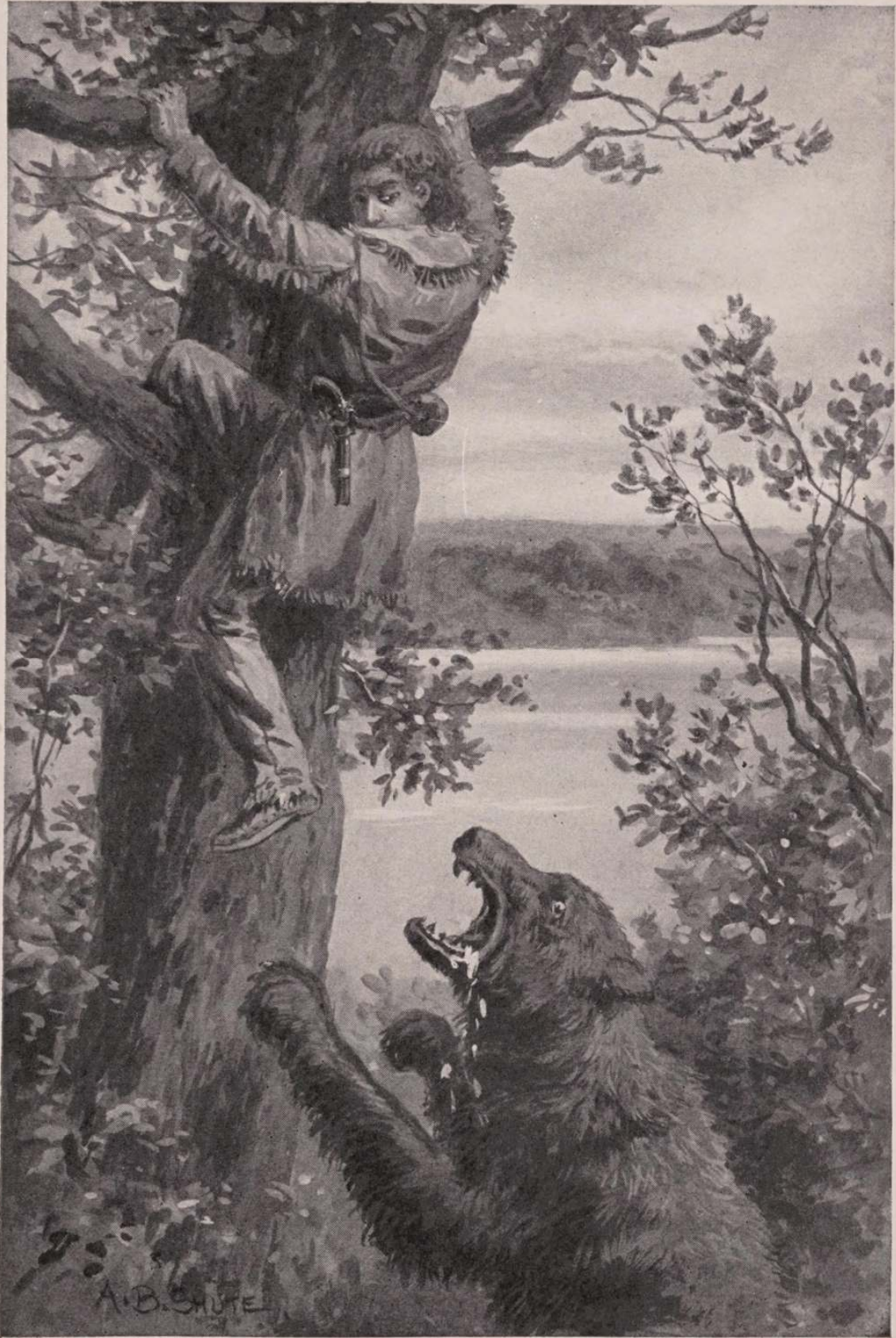
or sight that might indicate the presence of the enemy. Bruised by rocks that cut through the soles of his moccasins, and hemmed in by the mass of underbrush, he stopped for a moment, bewildered. Suddenly he heard a heavy trampling of the bushes not twenty yards away. Putting aside the underbrush, he saw before him the most startling display of animal strength and ferocity he had ever seen. He was face to face with the grizzled king of White Bear Island. Reared on its haunches the bear was pawing the air with his big fore claws, his jaws wide open and his teeth glistening. Dull as is the scent of a bear, he had discovered the proximity of an enemy. At once the boy's rifle was at his shoulder and the ball went tearing its way directly to the animal's skull. The wound was not mortal. It sank into the tough muscle, struck the frontal bone, and glancing up, went harmless into the air. At once the beast came down upon all fours with a growl of rage and defiance that fairly shook the earth. For Shannon to stand his ground and await the attack was for him to commit suicide, so, turning, the young hunter plunged into the thicket, striking the bushes aside with his arms, stumbling, leaping, and crawling over the rocks, trying as best he could, at the

same time, to reload his gun. His thought was of the river. If he could but reach the stream he might, with the aid of a canoe, save himself. With this purpose in view he plunged wildly on, conscious at every bound that the bear was gaining upon him. At last, an opening through the trees gave him a glimpse of the water, and a moment later he stood upon the bank—but the boats had gone! The boatmen had been instructed to take the boats around to the other side of the island. They were far on their way when the now thoroughly frightened hunter made his appearance. What should he do? There was little time to plan. A tree stood on the very edge of the river's bank. Under the bank lay heaps of jagged rocks. If he could but reach that tree. A grizzly cannot climb any distance. If he could but reach the first branch he might escape those terrible claws. These thoughts rushing through his mind lent wings to his feet. It took but a moment to reach the foot of the tree where, standing on tiptoe and laying his gun across two friendly branches, he drew himself quickly up and out of harm's way, but not without having left a moccasin in the cruel teeth of the monster and feeling the warm blood trickling from his ankle.

From the lowest branch it was an easy ascent to the one above. Reaching this, for the first time he dared to look down. The bear had risen on his hind legs and had gotten his fore paws over the first limb and was slowly drawing himself up. Quickly Shannon drew a pistol from his belt. Taking quick aim between the two round, burning eyes that glared up at him, he fired, and upon that shot rested the issue of the strife. Peering through the smoke the boy heard what caused his heart to leap. A heavy, jolting sound among the rocks beneath told the story. Stunned by the bullet, the beast had lost its hold and, falling headlong from the bank, had dashed out its brains on the jagged edge of a great rock.

The shot in the thicket a few minutes before had been heard by several of the other hunters, who now came bounding out of the woods, to find Shannon clambering out of the tree and pointing exultingly at the great, shaggy beast that lay stretched upon the ground at the edge of the water, dead.

“The prize is yours, Shannon,” said Captain Clark, who was the first of the men to reach him. “You have beaten us all, but if some one other than myself had to bag the game, I do not know of any one I would rather see do it than yourself.”



The bear had risen on his hind legs. — Page 230.

“ I couldn't help it, Captain; it was either his life or mine,” replied Shannon, laughing.

While the work of skinning the animal and cutting up the meat was in progress the remainder of the party, who had not heard the signal and had crossed the island, were seen returning with the boats.

At nightfall juicy bear steaks were sizzling over the fire at White Bear Island camp. Shannon's health was drunk in bumpers of clear water and he was voted the best hunter of the expedition, the sentiment being proposed by Captain Lewis himself.

Captain Lewis had determined that before going farther the iron frame of the boat he had brought all the way from Harper's Ferry should be covered with skins and put into service. So he and the others who had not joined in the hunt had remained behind to finish up the boat and launch it.

For days the hunters had been seeking elk-skins with which to cover the sides and bottom. Twenty-eight of these, with four buffalo skins, had been carefully dried, scraped of their hair and sewed together, so that they were now ready to be stretched on to the frame.

Captain Lewis's eagerness had lent enthusiasm

to their efforts, and speedily the boat was made ready for launching. With great expectations they now pushed it into the water. Proudly did Captain Lewis note that she floated as if in her native element. That day was July 9th, the day of the hunt; on the next they were to set out.

“ I christen her *The Experiment*,” said Lewis, as she slid into the water, and many were the congratulations he received from Clark and the returning hunters when they found the beautiful craft, thirty-six feet in length, four and a half in width, and two and a sixth in depth, riding upon the surface of the river as gracefully as a swan.

The next morning preparations were early begun for the start, but great was the consternation of all when those who had gone to look after *The Experiment*, returned with the report that she was full of water.

An examination showed that the mixture of charcoal, beeswax, and buffalo tallow that had been used to smear the seams and make her watertight had, on drying, cracked and fallen away, leaving great openings into which the water had found its way. Captain Lewis's disappointment knew no bounds. Under his own superintendence the great iron frame had been constructed at

Harper's Ferry. With infinite difficulty and pains it had been carried from there across the Alleghenies to Pittsburg, down the Ohio to St. Louis, and thence by the Missouri to the heart of the Rockies, only to prove useless because tar had not been provided and nothing could serve to take its place.

No other course remained, therefore, but for Clark and ten of his men to search for timber with which to make two additional canoes. Tramping up the river for many miles, they finally found the cottonwoods of a sufficient size for the new boats, and on July 15th the expedition was again prepared for the advance.

In a few days the party found themselves out of the buffalo country, and the question of fresh meat fast becoming a vital one. Each day the camp required for its existence four deer, or an elk and a deer, or one buffalo, and now days passed without the sight of elk, deer, buffalo, or bear. Rapidly, too, the river was narrowing and the crags coming nearer and nearer to the margin of the water. For days at a time scarcely could there be found room on the shores for a camp.

Now they began to look for the Shoshones. On July 28th they reached a point where three streams

united to form the Missouri. This, Sacajawea announced, was the place where she had been taken prisoner by the Minnetarees. She told the story. Here her people erected their huts. One night, attacked by a superior force of the Minnetarees, they were driven three miles up the southwestern branch where, concealing themselves in the woods, they sought to escape. The men among her people, mounted on swift horses, all succeeded in leaving their enemies behind, excepting four who fell, with as many women and a number of boys. The women and children, having no horses, scattered at the first attack, hiding themselves in the bushes and among the rocks. Sacajawea, then but twelve years of age, attempted to ford the river, but, before she was halfway across, a Minnetaree warrior, jumping in after her, made her his prisoner. Then, in company with other women of her tribe and many children, she was carried far down the Missouri until, at last, in the country of the Mandans, she was sold to Chaboneau, the French trapper and adventurer.

Yet even now, though in the midst of scenes familiar to her as the home of her people, and with the recollection pressing upon her of the death of her kinsmen and the defeat of her tribe, she dis-

played no emotion, seeming perfectly satisfied with enough to eat and all the trinkets she wished to wear.

“ We are now three thousand miles from the mouth of the Missouri,” said Captain Lewis, as the men conferred together as to which of the three branches they should ascend. “ Another ten days and we ought to drink of the spring out of which it flows. Let us name the southwest fork the Jefferson, after him who has made this expedition possible; the middle branch we will call Madison, after the Secretary of State, and the third Gallatin, after the Secretary of the Treasury. I cast my vote for going up the Jefferson.”

“ Agreed,” said Clark; “ the Jefferson, by all means. We have had good luck in our choice of southwest branches. But what says Sacajawea? ”

The Indian woman threw her vote with that of the captains, and that settled it.

Another week brought them to another juncture of three streams, one of which they called Wisdom, another Philanthropy, and the third, which flowed in between the other two, Jefferson. A short distance below they had passed the mouth of another small river which they called Philosophy.

It being determined now to direct the course of

the expedition up the Wisdom River, Shannon was sent out to hunt, with instructions to join the party at nightfall. It was a glorious day and the boy was in the best of spirits. After reaching the ridge above the river he set off across a rolling plain, bounded at its far edge by a clump of trees. After a half hour's tramp, during which he scanned the prairie with keen eyes for signs of life, he saw at a distance a number of animals not much bigger than jackrabbits. On drawing nearer them he saw they were antelopes. An antelope steak had been a rare dish in camp for some days. Here was a chance to cheer the hearts of the men. Approaching the animals by creeping along close to the earth, he finally reached a point where they could plainly see him. Then taking from his neck a colored handkerchief, he prepared to flag them. Tying two corners of the handkerchief to his ramrod, he crept up over a little ridge of rising ground and planted his flag. The breeze caught it at once and in a moment a score of curious eyes were watching it narrowly. Then the animals trotted forward a few yards and abruptly stopped. Another moment and they turned and ran away, only to stop again and look back. Again they faced the flag and came towards it, and again they retreated.

This performance they repeated a third time, the last time coming within forty rods of Shannon's rifle. They were now close enough. The rifle was at the boy's shoulder as he lay in the grass, his head just on the edge of the little ridge. Taking aim at the breast of a fine doe, he pulled the trigger. The dust flew in clouds and the pack scampered away; but, bounding to his feet, Shannon saw that his aim had been true. A fine, fat antelope lay stretched upon the grass. Then, having skinned and cut up his prize, he trudged into the woods and down into a rough, broken tract of country where were many promises of game.

By the middle of the afternoon the young hunter had killed two deer and, his pack having become heavy, he set out to return to the boats. Walking for an hour toward the river, as he thought, he found the country growing wilder and becoming more and more unfamiliar. Was he then going in the wrong direction? The sun was hidden behind dense clouds and he could not determine the way by it. The woods were thin and well exposed to the sun on all sides, so he could not tell from the length of the branches. Again he was lost. He remembered the time when, for sixteen days, he had been lost in the forest and how near he came then

to starving. He examined his ammunition and felt that there was little occasion this time for fear on that score. The woods were full of game, but to be lost in this part of the world, with no hope of meeting with friendly Indians and a thousand miles from the habitation of a white man, was no pleasant prospect. He was fearful, too, that after this second experience the captains would lose faith in him entirely. Then he tried to retrace his steps, but when night came he found himself in a little ravine that looked unfamiliar in the gathering gloom. Here he determined to spend the night; so, lighting a fire, he cut some ribbons of antelope haunch, set them over the fire, and watched them as they sizzled and sputtered. There was no need of a fork. Fingers were good enough for a hungry hunter, when aided by a big hunting knife. An antelope steak, some hard biscuits, and a draught from a little pool that caught the drops that fell from a shelf of rocks overhead made a good supper, and served to steady his nerves and dispel the fear that at times forced itself upon him. He planted two forked sticks in the ground some six feet apart, and on these laid a third; against this cross-piece he laid branches until he had a sort of tent; then, renewing his fire, which was

smoldering near the entrance of his make-believe hut, he crawled in and lay down to sleep. The wind was whistling through the trees, but he was used to that. Many such a night he had slept in the Ohio woods. The night cries of the mountains soon swelled into an hundred-part chorus. He grasped his gun the tighter and lay peering through the covering of his leafy tent. The fire burned low, and he thought he heard stealthy footsteps as of an animal slowly making its way in a circle about him. He crept from his bed and replenished the fire. As the flames sprang up he thought he saw a pair of sharp eyes glaring out from under a bush. Picking up a burning brand he hurled it at the two fiery spots, and a crackling of the leaves and branches and a surly growl told him that the intruder had slunk away.

A little later he again heard some animal making the circuit of his camp.

“The old rascal nas returned,” he said to himself. “He will not be satisfied until he has a dose of cold lead.”

But, try as he might, he could not get his eyes on the disturber of his dreams. He could see only a shadowy form slip by just out of the edge of the light. He lay still, following the sound as best he

could, hoping that the wolf—for now he knew it must be one of these night prowlers—would come squarely into view so that he could get a shot. Suddenly from up the ravine he heard the cry of another wolf, followed by that of still another.

“They are going to give me a chorus! Very well, I’ll add a note or two of my own to their serenade.”

Then he sat up, got a support for the barrel of his gun, and waited. Ere long a score of weird forms were trailing in a circle about him.

“It only lacks Cruzatte and his fiddle to make a dance,” thought Shannon, smiling grimly.

The fire had now died down. To fetch more fuel meant exposure to danger, so the boy waited. With the dying out of ember after ember, the crawling circle narrowed perceptibly. At times the beasts grew bold, and one showed himself in the open, gaunt and grizzled; but Shannon held his fire. He would not waste ammunition, but make every shot tell. At last the danger of his position stirred him to action. The fire had nearly gone out. A few moments more and he would be in darkness. The wolves were snarling all about him. They could scent him and the fresh meat in his pack, but they could not see him. Suddenly it

occurred to him that he must in some way keep the fire burning. Springing up suddenly, he threw his covering of leaves and boughs onto the smoldering ashes. The action was so sudden that the wolves leaped away snarling and snapping at one another in their anger. But the boughs did not catch, for they were mostly green and the embers were too feeble. The wolves now returned to the attack. Shannon's rifle swept the circle, but he could not make sure of his aim. "In another moment," he thought, "they will be upon me." Grasping his pouch he threw a large ribbon of meat far over their heads. The whole pack, scenting the morsel, sprang after it and a terrible fight ensued. The taste of the raw flesh rendered the beasts more ferocious, but it gave the boy a moment to look after his fire. Hastily kicking together some dry leaves and throwing them over the coals, at the same time blowing gently, he saw the leaves catch, and then the twigs, and a moment later a blaze two feet high crackled and snapped. Then springing forward toward the struggling, savage mass, the boy took deliberate aim and fired. One of the animals bounded into the air, but scarce had it reached the earth ere its companions leaped upon it and tore it into a thousand shreds.

“Now is my time,” cried Shannon, and after quickly reloading he ran for more fuel, this time piling the fire high with dry and decaying branches, into which the flames shot greedily, sending sparks to the very tree-tops. Then standing, his back to the crackling fire, he cried, “Come on, I can keep this up all night.” And they did come on, for the taste of blood added to their fierce hunger. Crack! went the boy’s rifle at a pair of glowing eyes, followed by another bloody scramble. Again and again the beasts returned to the attack, until half a dozen of their number had fallen, and then the remainder, gluttoned by their feast, slunk away.

But there was no more sleep for the hunter. All night he sat with his back to the fire, watching intently every movement of the branches and listening to the hoot of the owls overhead, while his thoughts wandered away to his comrades sleeping snugly about their campfire by the river’s side, safe under the watchful eye of a keen sentinel.

At the first break of day, without waiting for breakfast, he started off down the ravine, arguing that it must empty its little stream into the Wisdom River, on whose surface somewhere floated the boats.

The young hunter was right in his reasoning, for after an hour's walk he came to the banks of the Wisdom. "But the boats could not come this far. It is so shallow they never can have passed here," he said to himself. Then he made a careful search for evidences of a towline being dragged through the bushes that lined both banks, but none could be found.

"The boats are below," he said, and at once set off.

For some hours Shannon trudged wearily down the stream, carrying his load of skins and meat. At last he reached the forks of the Wisdom and Jefferson, and there, tacked to a tree, he found an explanation of the mystery. The captains had found the Wisdom unnavigable and had returned and gone up the Jefferson. Another night and another day passed; then he came up with the hindmost canoe, and his halloo was answered by a cheer from his anxious comrades on board.

Captain Lewis had been worrying over the young man's safety and welcomed him with no upbraiding, for the change in the course of the boats had been mostly to blame for the misadventure.

CHAPTER XV

CHIEF CAMEAHWAIT AND THE SHOSHONES

At the Bird Woman's suggestion men were now sent out every day to look for Indians.

“ There is the summer home of the Shoshones,” said she, pointing to a jutting point of the high plain which looked for all the world like a beaver's head.

So for several days the hunters kept a keen lookout for signs of the red men. Never during the entire course of the expedition were the captains more anxious than now, for the least false step or the least suspicious circumstance might arouse the fears of the Shoshones, upon whom everything depended for the safe-conduct of the party from the source of the Missouri, now scarcely ten miles away, to the headwaters of the Columbia, from which the Bird Woman informed them they were distant not over forty miles.

On August 9th Captain Lewis chose Drouillard, Shields, and McNeal, and set out over the mountains ahead of the boats, asserting stoutly that he

would not return until he had seen the Indians. For two days they traveled over difficult mountain passes, and on the third discovered an Indian trail, but it was many days old; a large party had passed over the ground on horseback. Encouraged, however, by this sign, they pushed along the trail, eagerly scanning the country round about for signs of Indians. By arrangement the men separated as they proceeded, so as to cover as wide an extent of country as possible, but keeping within hailing distance.

In a few hours after they struck the trail Captain Lewis, sweeping the country before him with his glass, saw a figure approaching on horseback. It was fully two miles away. Concealing himself and keeping his eye to his glass, he soon discovered that the object was an Indian and that he belonged to a different nation from any the party had yet seen. He was astride a splendid horse, rode without saddle and, as Captain Lewis learned later, guided the animal by means of a rope of buffalo hair twisted together. One end was tied around the horse's neck in a knot, then brought down to the under jaw, around which it formed a noose passing through the mouth, and then was drawn up on the right side and held by the rider in the

left hand. The end of the bridle or halter hung nearly to the ground. The horse's ears were cut to a point, and its mane and tail, which were long and sweeping, were decorated with feathers of birds, while hanging from its breast by a cord were eagles' talons, bears' claws, and other ornaments. The Indian's weapons were a long bow and a quiver full of arrows.

Captain Lewis's first anxiety was lest he should alarm the Indian, for to do this would probably be for the Indian to turn and, galloping with all speed back over the trail, spread news that might bring down upon him and his little party a multitude of hostile savages.

The brave explorer was now in a country where a white man had never before been seen. He must act with great prudence, or not only his own life but the lives of all in the party might pay the penalty.

By some means he must inform his three companions, whom he could see approaching at a distance behind him, of the state of affairs, and induce them to halt and conceal themselves, while he alone advanced to make friends with the stranger. If the Indian should see four men approaching, it would surely be more than his nerves could stand.

But every effort of the captain to get the attention of his men failed. He dared not shout to the men, so he concluded to proceed without regard to them. Boldly presenting himself in the middle of the trail, he walked slowly toward the advancing horseman. When within a mile of the Indian the latter pulled up his horse, bent low over its neck, and seemed to be watching, with every sense alert, the figure approaching him. Captain Lewis felt that it was time to act, so stopping, he drew from his knapsack a colored blanket, held it by two of its corners, shook it in the air, and made a motion as if to spread it on the ground. Again he made the motion, and a third time. Among Indians generally this act is recognized as a sign of friendship and hospitality. All the time the other white men were coming on. The captain motioned to them to stop, but it was too late. The Indian had seen them. Two of the men at last caught the signal, but Shields, not understanding it, continued to approach.

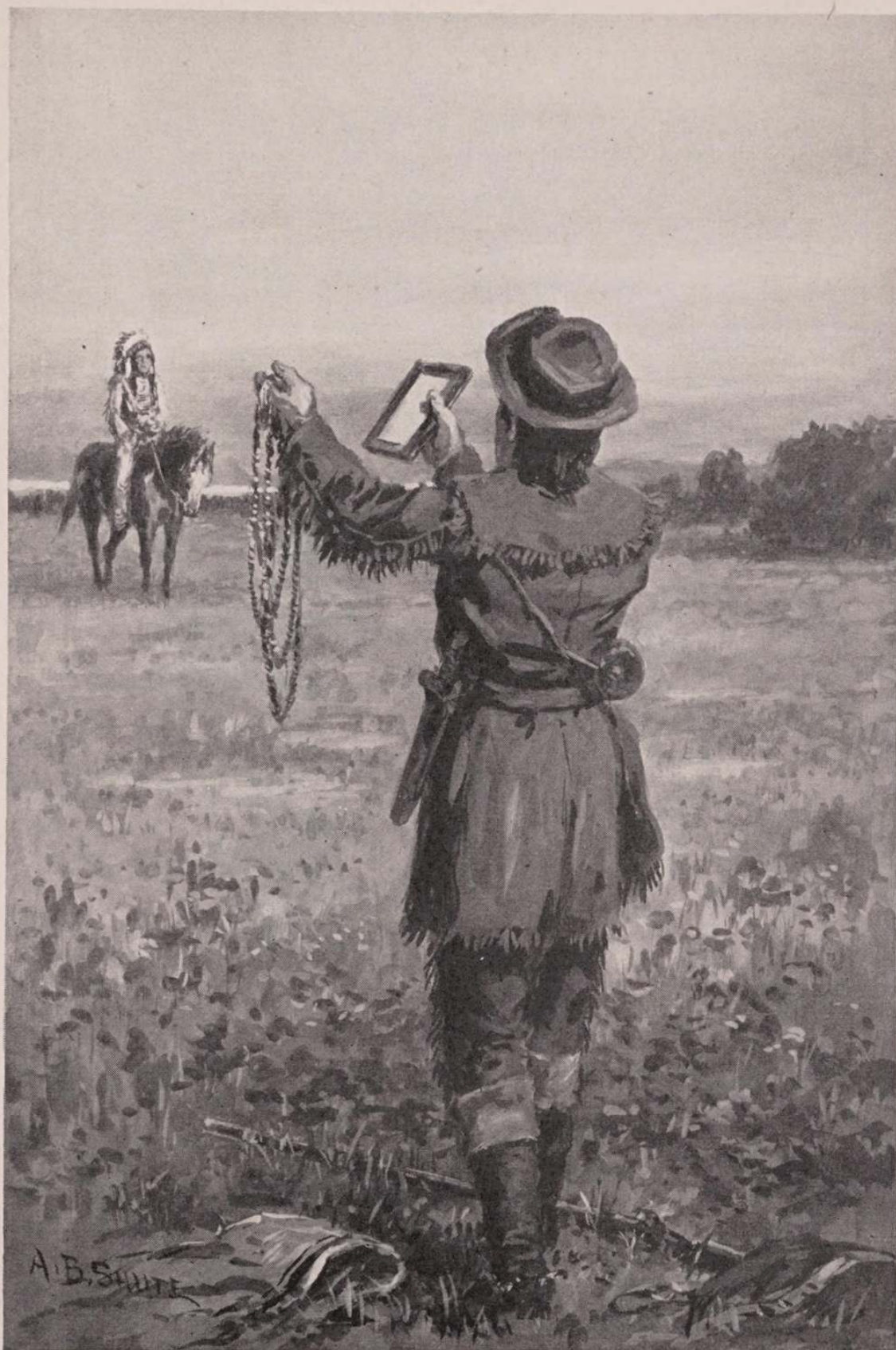
The Indian, meanwhile, held his ground. The act of friendship on the part of the captain, however, had not produced the effect desired, due no doubt to the appearance of the other men. Lewis then produced from his knapsack a quantity of

beads, a looking-glass, and some trinkets. With much show of ceremony he laid his gun down on the grass and advanced, holding the articles out at arm's length before him. The Indian remained immovable until the captain had reached a point not two hundred yards away from him, and then, turning his horse, he slowly rode away, all the time looking back over his shoulder, as if uncertain what course to pursue.

“Tabba bone! Tabba bone!” cried Lewis, meaning “White man.”

“Tabba bone! Tabba bone!” he repeated, holding the presents before him, as if earnestly entreating the Indian to take them. Shields was still advancing, and by so doing was playing the mischief; but a little later, coming within sound of the captain's voice, he stopped. At the same time the Indian, who was now at a distance of one hundred and fifty paces from Lewis, turned about.

“Tabba bone! Tabba bone!” repeated Lewis, rolling up his sleeves and showing the color of his skin, which, bronzed by exposure, was scarcely lighter than an Indian's. Then again he held up the trinkets. He advanced now with a rapid stride, but, no, the Indian would not have it so, and when the two were not over an hundred paces apart, he



He advanced, holding the articles out at arm's length.— *Page 248.*

bent over his horse, gave him a cut with the end of the halter, jumped it over a creek, and in a moment was hidden from view.

The captain's disappointment was grievous. He felt now that, having failed to make a friend of the stranger, the latter would doubtless spread the alarm and before nightfall would either be back with great numbers of others, prepared for war, or would be scores of miles away in the mountains. All hope of a successful alliance with the Shoshones and a successful passage of the mountains seemed to him at that moment lost. He could not but feel that his men were to blame for the situation. So, to make sure that no further failure should come about by their imprudence, he gave them a reprimand and advised them to be more careful in the future. Then, hoisting a flag on a pole, the four proceeded down the trail following the path of the fleeing Indian toward a line of hills that stretched away some three miles toward the west. Soon they reached a little eminence, where they halted for breakfast and set to work making up an assortment of beads, awls, paint, looking-glasses, and trinkets which, when completed, they placed on a little platform on top of a pole fastened in the earth. Then they built a huge fire out of dry

grass and brush to attract the attention of any Indians who might be in the neighborhood. A wait of an hour producing no result, they took up the trail again, hopeful that by night the curiosity of the Indian and that of others whom he might inform of the adventure would lead him to return. By evening, however, they found their hopes cast to the ground and the trail obliterated by rain that had fallen during the afternoon; so with heavy hearts they looked for a place to pitch their camp for the night.

The place chosen for their evening meal was by the side of a little rivulet which Captain Lewis declared he believed to be the source of the Missouri. At this McNeal planted one foot upon its north bank and the other upon its south, and exclaimed, "Thank God, I have lived to bestride the Missouri." Then all drank deep of its pure, cold water, ate sparingly of their scanty provisions and, despite the disappointments of the day, stretched themselves out, their feet to the fire, and fell asleep.

The next morning they had not gone far before they struck an Indian road that led up and over the highest point of the range of mountains they had been climbing. Standing here and looking to

the west they saw the peaks of the farthest range of the snow-clad Rockies and, later in the day, on the western slope, but a few miles beyond where they had drunk the water of the tiny spring which they guessed was the highest source of the great Missouri, they camped for the night beside another spring whose waters, cold and clear, flowed to the west. They were then at the source of the great Columbia, whose waters flowed a thousand miles into the Western sea. That night they went almost supperless to bed.

Game had disappeared. Buffaloes they had not seen since they left the falls of the Missouri. Deer and antelope had gone and the rocky ridges seemed devoid of all life. They had husbanded carefully their little store of parched meal, and this, with a few berries, was all with which to celebrate the crossing of the Great Divide. They did not dare to fire a salute in honor of the occasion, for the Shoshones might be lurking among the rocks.

The next morning the little party moved on, still following the plainly marked Indian road. An hour after starting, on turning a sharp point of rocks into a ravine, they came in sight of two women, a man, and some dogs. The women at once scampered away, while the man for a few

moments held his ground, and the dogs frisked and barked about their heels.

Captain Lewis at once ordered his men to halt, and with a flag unfurled and his knapsack and rifle thrown aside, himself advanced toward the Indian. But when the captain had come to within about one hundred yards of him, notwithstanding he kept repeating "Tabba bone" and showing his trinkets, the redskin took to his heels. The captain now bethought himself of a way to make use of the dogs. He would catch them and tie handkerchiefs and trinkets to their necks. This would be a sign to their masters that he meant to be friendly; but the dogs would not have it so; they refused to act as go-betweens.

A mile farther on, turning into a little ravine, the party came suddenly into the presence of three females—an elderly woman, a young woman, and a little girl. The young woman at once ran away, while the other two sat down upon the ground, cross-legged, and lowered their heads. Captain Lewis understood the meaning of their posture, for among all Indians, as well as among the natives of Egypt and many Asiatic countries, this is a sign of expectation of death. Here again Captain Lewis put down his rifle. Then, stepping forward,

he took the old woman by the hand and raised her up, at the same time stripping up his shirt sleeve and saying to her, "Tabba bone."

At the captain's order Drouillard made signs to her that she should recall the younger woman, but first he selected from his pack a liberal supply of beads, awls, pewter mirrors, and paint, for he realized well that if he could gain the friendly cooperation of this woman he could be reasonably sure of meeting her people.

The old woman's poverty was evident. Her matted and tangled hair fell loosely over her face and down her shoulders. Her skin was a dirty brown, and every feature indicated hunger and want. Her hungry eyes sparkled at the sight of so much riches. The few trinkets placed in her hands and the string of beads given to the little girl were wealth undreamed of. On Drouillard signifying to the old woman that they wished the young woman to return, she sped away over the hill, and in a few moments was back with her companion, both out of breath with their running. Then Captain Lewis gave trinkets to the younger woman and, taking some vermilion paint, with his own fingers smeared it upon the cheeks of the three, a ceremony which Sacajawea had told him

was held among the Shoshones as a pledge of friendship.

“ Tell them we wish to be taken to their camp,” said Lewis to Drouillard, and, on the latter complying, the old woman indicated her willingness, and at once set off at a rapid pace down the trail.

The party had gone about two miles when a cloud of dust was seen in the distance, and later the clatter of horses' hoofs was heard upon the beaten trail. Lewis stopped. Did it mean an attack? Then there sprang to view a company of sixty warriors on fine horses, riding at full speed and taking a course directly toward them.

Every rider bent far over the neck of his horse and held his bow and arrow ready for instant use. The sight was not a pleasant one to the little party of white men, for what could they do, even though armed with the best of rifles and a supply of ammunition, against so large a company of savages mounted on swift horses, armed with bows and arrows, in the use of which they were expert, and protected by shields of antelope hide?

On seeing the white men accompanied by the Indian women the warriors checked their horses. The white men laid their guns upon the ground. Captain Lewis, holding a flag above him, advanced

some fifty paces and, stopping, indicated by word and gesture his friendly intentions. The chief of the red men, with two of the warriors who rode with him at the front, spoke to the women apart, then leaping from their horses, advanced to the captain and embraced him by throwing their left arms over his right shoulder and pressing their left cheeks to his right.

“ Ah hi e! Ah hi e! ” exclaimed the chief.

To Captain Lewis the words were meaningless, but the manner of the Indians made him sure it meant welcome. No sooner had the chief and his two companions gone through with this ceremony of welcome than every one of the warriors who followed jumped from his horse and followed suit, much to the captain's disgust, for the cheeks rubbed against his own were thick with paint and grease, and much of it in the proceeding was transferred to his own.

No one of the white men could hold a conversation with the Indians for, though Drouillard had spent the greater part of his life among the Indians of the lower Missouri, the language of the Shoshones bore little resemblance to anything he had ever heard.

Knowing that the custom of smoking the pipe of

peace was universal among the Indians east of the mountains, Captain Lewis lighted his pipe and offered it to the chief. But before the latter would accept it he saw that all the Indians present had seated themselves in a circle upon the ground and had pulled off their moccasins as a token that they would go barefoot forever if their friendship was not sincere. Then followed the smoking of the pipe and the giving of a few presents which the captain's knapsack, now pretty well depleted, still contained.

It soon appeared that the chief, Cameahwait by name, had a special liking for blue beads and vermilion paint. So the old fellow's friendship was quickly cemented.

Through the sign language, in which Drouillard was an expert, the captain conveyed to the chief an outline of his purpose and plans, and these the chief in his turn delivered in a short speech to his warriors.

Through Sacajawea Captain Lewis had learned that the chiefs of the Shoshones did not rule by right of birth, or even by right of election; that only such among the tribe as won distinction by some conspicuous act of bravery became thereby a leader—such an act, for instance, as killing a

grizzly unaided, or the taking of the scalp of an enemy. Chief Cameahwait had been a great warrior and hunter, and this alone gave him precedence in the tribe. But even he had no authority to command obedience. He could only advise with the expectation that his advice would be heeded before that of any other. So that it was necessary on this occasion that not only should Cameahwait become convinced of the peaceable intentions of the white men, but that the warriors themselves should be satisfied.

The Shoshones were poor, for they lived the greater part of the year in a country where game was scarce. Only at certain seasons did they dare venture down the eastern slopes of the Rockies to hunt for the buffalo, and when they did it was with an eye ever watchful lest the Blackfeet or the Minnetarees should attack them, as had happened on the occasion when Sacajawea, five years before, had been carried away captive. Their summer home at the sources of the Columbia was the only place where they felt secure, as no tribe cared to visit a country where buffaloes were seldom seen and where only the scrawniest antelope browsed among the barren rocks. Here, living upon the dry buffalo meat they had saved from a season's

hunt, or the few salmon caught in the streams, and a sort of bread made from dried berries mixed with sunflower seed and buffalo grease, they starved.

Hunger and poverty displayed itself in their clothing and their features. Captain Lewis therefore guessed that the easiest way to win their hearts was to promise that clothing and provisions were coming by boats. But the warriors were suspicious. They believed that Lewis and his men had come to lead them into some ambuscade and betray them to their enemies. Chief Cameahwait, with all the eloquence he could command, urged upon his people that they show hospitality and receive the white men as friends. Half reluctantly they seemed to accede to their chief's wishes.

Then Captain Lewis gave to Cameahwait an American flag and indicated to him that he wished to go to their camp. Again speaking to his warriors, Cameahwait signified assent, and they started, the chief in advance, followed by Lewis and his men, and last of all, the warriors riding single file, alert and fearful. After going a mile the chief halted and said something to some of the Indians, whereupon six or eight of them stuck

their heels into their horses' flanks and sped away down the trail ahead.

Three miles more and they reached the village, where they found the young men who had gone before had set up an old leather tent for a council house. Going directly to this, the entire party seated themselves on green boughs and antelope skins spread upon the earth. Some of the warriors pulled up the grass in the middle of the lodge, laying bare a circle of earth two feet in diameter, in which they kindled a fire. The inevitable pipe and a sort of tobacco were then produced, the white men and the Indians again pulled off their moccasins, and the solemn ceremonial so universal among the Indians for pledging friendship and good will was again enacted.

The old chief lighted his pipe at the fire within the circle, and made a speech which none of the white men understood; then, pointing the stem of the pipe to the four points of the compass, offered it to Lewis. The captain reached out his hand to take it, when the chief withdrew it and again pointed it to the north, south, east, and west. Again he offered it to Lewis, and again withdrew it. A third time he repeated the ceremony, after which he pointed the stem towards the heavens

and afterwards to the fire, took three whiffs and handed it to the captain, this time evidently intending that he should take it. Lewis, having puffed a few times, the chief took it and handed it to each of the other white men in turn, and then to each of the warriors.

Again Captain Lewis explained through Drouillard as best he could the purpose of his visit, indicating that he wished to go toward the setting sun to where the white man lived beside the sea; that he wished to get horses to enable him to carry the baggage and provisions that were coming by boats overland from the headwaters of the Missouri to the headwaters of the Columbia.

Chief Cameahwait replied that his people were poor, but that they would do what they could, indicating that they had many horses. This Captain Lewis could easily see, for hitched to stakes near each lodge in the village were from one to three horses and mules, the finest he had seen in all his experience with the Indians.

Most of all, Cameahwait tried to impress upon his visitors that the Indians were hungry, and that if they did not get food soon they would die of starvation. Captain Lewis promised that he would stay with them and send his men out with their

guns to hunt for antelope and buffalo, and that they should soon have enough to eat. In the meantime he offered to divide with the chief the little that remained of his parched grain, an offer that Cameahwait accepted without hesitation and with every protestation of gratitude. That night the Indians held a dance which lasted until near morning.

It was Captain Lewis's intention to remain with the Indians until he could get all the information possible regarding the streams that flowed to the west and until the boats should come as far up the Missouri as possible.

The information he received regarding the river was very disheartening. The Indians all told him that there was no timber for many miles out of which to build canoes, and that even if canoes could be built the stream was impassable for many hundred miles. In addition to this they reported that it would be impossible to transport baggage and provisions by land, as the only route to the west was over well-nigh impassable mountains and amid dangers from men and beasts that would effectually prevent their passage. Captain Lewis believed that, while in the main these reports might be true, Cameahwait wanted to keep the white men

with him, hoping that their reports as to their having provisions on the way might prove true and that his people might profit by having these men as permanent members of their community.

Early the next morning Drouillard and Shields borrowed horses of the Indians and went out to hunt with a number of the young warriors. They had not been gone long ere they ran across some deer, and the Indians at once gave pursuit, frightening the animals so that they were soon out of range of the white men's guns and were hidden in the brush, where the bows and arrows of the young hunters could not reach them. A little later a small herd of antelopes was found browsing off the short grass of a little plain. At once the Indians, each astride a horse, separated into eight or ten squads and circled around the herd. Then a small party rode swiftly toward the antelopes, who immediately took to their heels and ran until they found their course interrupted by the appearance of Indians in their front, when they turned and ran in some other direction, only again to meet with armed horsemen. Thus, driven from side to side, everywhere harassed by their enemies, they received a perfect rain of arrows from every quarter. To the astonishment of the white men, who had

scarcely been able to get a shot because of the swift and confused movement of the animals and the danger of shooting some of the Indian hunters, the antelopes all escaped with the exception of one which fell with as many as twenty arrows in his body. Forty or fifty Indians had hunted for half a day with this meager result. The white men returned with nothing.

The next day Captain Lewis asked that his men might be permitted to go out for a hunt alone, but Chief Cameahwait was suspicious. He feared that it was only a ruse and that, instead of the men wishing to hunt, they would return to the Minnetarees and tell them of the whereabouts of the Shoshones. It had been suggested by several of the Indians at the conference the day before that the captain and his men were in league with the Minnetarees, and so fearful were these people of their long-time enemies that every little circumstance that was unusual gave rise to suspicion and fear.

CHAPTER XVI

SACAJAWEA FINDS HER PEOPLE

AT last Captain Lewis had obtained all the information he could hope to get, so he persuaded Cameahwait to ask the Indians to accompany him to the forks of the Jefferson with some thirty horses, in order to bring the baggage from the canoes to the Indian village, where he promised to remain for some time and liberally reward all who should help in the undertaking.

“ Help us,” said Captain Lewis, “ and we will plan together how the people of your Great Father at Washington may come to visit you and bring you clothing and food, and trade with you, and may give you guns with which to fight your enemies, the Minnetarees.”

“ I will speak to my warriors,” said Cameahwait, after a moment’s reflection.

In an hour and a half the chief returned to the captain, who awaited the answer with great anxiety, for he felt that upon the decision of the Indians now depended the fate of the expedition.

“ When the sun rises we will go with you,” said Cameahwait. “ My people are afraid. I have made two speeches to them. They think you have come from our enemies. They say there are no white men on the Missouri. They are afraid you will lead them back where the Minnetarees will kill them.”

Lewis looked serious, as he replied:

“ Your people do not understand. The white man thinks it a disgrace to lie. If you think we deceive you, no white men will ever come to trade with you. You will never have guns with which to fight your enemies. The Minnetarees get guns from the white men. The Spaniards who come from the south, you say, will not sell you guns, for fear you will not know how to use them. You must be friends with us if you want guns. But what if there is danger? Are the Shoshones cowards? Are they afraid to die? But I tell you there is no danger. We are your friends. We have clothing and food and other things with which to reward you if you will help us. We are going on to the great lake that the Indians far down the Columbia have told you about. We shall speak to the white men there and shall tell them of your kindness. Next spring we shall come back up the

Columbia and we will visit you again. We will go to our great Father and tell him that of all the Indians, the Shoshones are the bravest."

"Cameahwait is no coward," said the chief, springing to his horse. "Follow me," he cried, turning to the warriors who stood about listening intently. "Cameahwait is not afraid to die."

Upon this six or eight of the young warriors mounted their horses, and joined their chief. The remainder looked sullen, while the women and the children set up a wailing cry, in which they called upon the Great Spirit to protect their warriors, who were going out to die.

Lighting his pipe, Captain Lewis took a few whiffs, and passed it to the Indians who had joined him, and thus their compact was complete. But six or eight Indians, with as many horses, were not enough. "Yet," thought Captain Lewis, "if I can prevail upon these to make the trip, they will learn that I have told them the truth, and they will return and tell the others, and we can get the assistance of all."

The white men on foot, and the few Indians astride their horses, filed out of the camp amid the cries of the entire village. They had not gone far, however, when a party of ten or twelve others came

galloping their steeds up the road and, cheerful and happy, joined the company. A little farther on all the remaining men of the camp, together with a number of women on foot, came up with them as they were stopping to rest. That night the entire party went supperless to bed.

Without breakfast the next morning the journey was resumed. Captain Clark sent two of his men ahead to hunt, at the same time asking that the Indians should not go, saying that when they accompanied his hunters, they invariably alarmed the game. This suggestion on the part of the captain was unfortunate, for it again aroused the suspicions of the red men. It could mean nothing else, thought the Indians, than that the two hunters were desirous of notifying their enemies of their approach. Chief Cameahwait, led mostly by hunger, finally granted the permission asked, but Captain Lewis noticed that the hunters had not been gone more than a few minutes, before two small parties of Indians sneaked away by different routes with the evident purpose of following the hunters to see on what errand they were bound. At the same time a number of Indians turned their horses about, and returned to their village, leaving twenty-eight warriors in all to continue the march.

After several hours, one of the spies who had followed the hunters, was seen coming toward them with all speed, lashing his horse at every jump. At once Chief Cameahwait and the whole band reined up their horses. Every Indian looked the fear he felt. At the same time Captain Lewis's heart sank within him. What had happened? An imprudent act on the part of one of the hunters might easily have spoiled his plans and sent the whole band flying back toward the camp. Lewis could make no explanation, and dared not try. All out of breath, the flying Indian, as soon as he could be heard, announced that one of the hunters had killed a deer. At once, with a shout, the entire company lashed their horses, and shot ahead with the speed of so many arrows. Captain Lewis and an Indian on ahead of him were riding double. This method of riding was a novel experience to the white man. The Indian, to whom he clung for safety, was beating his horse fearfully, so that at the pace the animal was going, Lewis's breath was being jolted out of him.

“ Stop, you brute! ” he yelled, at the same time reaching forward and grabbing the halter.

But the Indian had no intention of getting left in the race, so checking his horse a little, he jumped

from his back while still on the run, and with a speed almost as great as that of his steed, ran ahead with the crazy desire to get his part of the feast that awaited.

When the foremost of the Indians had reached the spot where the deer lay, Drouillard had already begun to cut up the animal, and had thrown the intestines aside. Tumbling over one another, the savages grabbed for the nasty mess, and devoured it with every sign of satisfaction and delight. But they did not touch the body of the deer until at the captain's order a quarter was cut off for himself and his white comrades, and the rest turned over to the chief to be divided among his warriors. Immediately the savages devoured their portions without cooking, and Cameahwait, by signs, declared that it was the best meal he had had in many suns. A little farther on Drouillard killed a second deer, and the same performance was again enacted, the Indians eating every part of the animal, even to the soft part of the hoof.

After enjoying a breakfast of juicy steak, cooked over a fire by McNeal, during the eating of which Drouillard brought in a third deer, the party again took up the march.

Soon they approached the place where Captain

Lewis had told the Indians they should find the boats. Here Cameahwait called a halt with great ceremony, put tippets or necklaces around the necks of the white men, whether for ornament or for disguise, Captain Lewis did not know, and in return for the presumed compliment, Lewis took off his cocked hat, in which was a feather, and put it on the head of the chief, his men following his example. When this had been done, the white men, bronzed to an Indian redness, their uncut hair falling upon their shoulders, and their clothing like to that worn by the Indians, could scarcely be distinguished from the savages themselves. Then the white men and Indians, with Chief Cameahwait, and a warrior carrying a flag, marched in solemn procession in the direction of the forks where, if Captain Lewis's calculations were not wrong, Captain Clark must ere this time have arrived.

To the dismay of the gallant leader, when from the top of an eminence near the river the forks came in view, no canoes were in sight. At once disappointment gave place to fear, for now the Indians, who had been led to expect that the white man's boats would be found here, would think he had deceived them. His surmises were correct. At once a parley took place among the Indians.

Their suspicions had again been aroused, and those who had said, and there were many such, that there were no boats, proudly claimed the right to say what should now be done. Their determination was to return at once, for now it was certain that they were being led into the country of their enemies. Captain Lewis saw that he must act at once. Remembering that he had written a note to Clark, and had stuck it up on a tree near the forks as they passed, he directed Drouillard to go and get it.

“ Take an Indian with you, and let him see you take it from the tree. Bring it to me as soon as possible.”

Then, as Drouillard and the Indian moved off, Lewis stepped up to Cameahwait and handed to him his gun.

“ Now,” said he, “ if you are attacked by your enemies, you can defend yourself. If you find that I have betrayed you, shoot me. See, I have no other weapon than my knife, and this, also, I give to you.”

Then McNeal and Shields, on a signal from the captain, did the same with their weapons. Thus the three stood defenseless before the suspicious redskins. Cameahwait was silent. The warriors

were divided. Lewis begged that before a decision was made, they should await the return of Drouillard, who, he said, had gone to see if any trace could be found of the missing boats. An Indian had gone with him to see that Drouillard committed no act of treachery, and into the keeping of this Indian, Drouillard had given his gun and his knife.

Soon the Frenchman returned, bearing the note that Lewis had left upon the river bank for Clark.

“ A letter from our friends! ” shouted Lewis, with every evidence of joy, at the same time taking it from Drouillard and pretending to read.

“ The men with the boats have been unable to come up. They have sent a man ahead with a letter for me. They will be here soon. ”

The Indian who had accompanied Drouillard reported that the white man had found the paper fastened to a tree on the river bank.

This, in a measure, allayed the suspicions of the Indians until night, when Lewis and his companions lay down about the campfire. Cameahwait and five of his warriors lay in a circle about them, while all the others hid in the bushes near by, ready for instant action. Captain Lewis did not sleep; he was without weapons of defense, in the

midst of savages who might at any moment take it into their heads to kill him. He reminded the Indians, when seated before the camp fire that night, of the fight five years before on the banks of the Missouri, when four of their warriors had fallen, pierced by the bullets of the Minnetarees. He told them of Sacajawea, one of their own women, who, he said, had been captured by the Minnetarees in that fight and carried down the Missouri. He told them that she was among the party, and that in another day they should see her. He told them, too, of York, the negro, a man all black as night, with short, kinky hair, and prodigious strength. Not so much interested were they in the young Indian woman as they were in what Lewis told them of the black man. Curiosity is always a more conspicuous element in the Indian nature than sentiment. Their curiosity to see the negro, even more than the prospect of food and presents, probably secured for Lewis and his men that night a safe bivouac.

At daybreak the next morning Captain Lewis, by giving one of the Indians a knife, induced him to accompany Drouillard on a trip down the river to learn the whereabouts of the canoes. At the same time Shields went out to hunt, while McNeal pre-

pared breakfast. During the morning Lewis exercised all his ingenuity in keeping the Indians interested in something that would take their minds from the object of their fears. Tearing a leaf from his notebook he fastened it to the trunk of a tree, and then permitted the Indians to shoot at it with his rifle, offering a handful of beads to the warrior who came nearest to the mark. The clumsy efforts of the red men at handling the captain's fine rifle produced great amusement, and soon the whole camp, excepting Lewis, ceased to be anxious.

Captain Clark, with the boats, could not be far away, argued Lewis to himself, and Drouillard must return before night. If he should fail to do so, there could be little hope of restraining the Indians from returning home, breaking up their camp, and fleeing into the depths of the mountains. While the captain was brooding over this gloomy prospect, one of the Indians, who had straggled down the river to spy on the movements of Drouillard, came lashing his horse until the foam flew from his mouth and sides. Waving his bow and shield in the air, he cried, "White men! Canoes are coming!"

Lewis could not understand the meaning of the

Indian's words, but his manner could mean nothing but a joyous surprise. He was now sure the boats were near at hand. If the Indian messenger's manner was not enough to reassure him, what followed was, for Chief Cameahwait, his face relaxed into a broad smile, immediately approached the captain, and taking him in his arms, embraced him, at the same time plentifully besmearing the captain's face with vermilion from his own.

During the night just passed the canoes had been only four miles away as a bird flies, but eleven by the windings of the stream. At starting that morning, Captain Clark, Chaboneau, and Sacajawea accompanied the boats on foot. Clark followed the other two at some distance, stopping from time to time to examine rocks and plants, and look for signs of Lewis's party. Suddenly the Bird Woman was seen to dance and gesticulate excitedly. Clark, hurrying up to learn the meaning of it, saw Sacajawea put her fingers into her mouth and suck them, then point up the river. The meaning of this was easily understood, for coming along the shore of the river toward them, Clark saw, as he thought, two Indians of an unknown tribe. The Bird Woman had recognized her countrymen, and

she was sucking her fingers to indicate that she was in the home of her childhood. The two men advanced rapidly toward Clark and his companions, and in a moment the captain recognized as one of them, Drouillard. His dress and color were scarcely distinguishable from that of his Indian companion.

“Where is Captain Lewis?” asked Clark, as soon as they had greeted each other.

“He is at the forks above, waiting for you, with more than a score of Indians and horses. He is in great distress lest you do not come up in time to make the Indians believe we are not leading them into an ambush.”

“Then we must hurry,” said Clark. “You, Drouillard, go and tell the news to the men in the canoes, for they need encouragement. Tell them to come with all speed, and that I have gone on ahead across the country to Captain Lewis’s camp.”

Then with Chaboneau, Sacajawea, and the Indian, he hurried on to join Captain Lewis.

Lewis and the Indians, on getting the news brought by the Indian messenger, at once set out down the river to meet the boats, so that soon the captains were together.

At once, on seeing her people, Sacajawea ran ahead of the others. The first to greet the Bird Woman was a squaw of about her own age, who, rushing out of the crowd of Indians, embraced her with every indication of joy and affection. She, too, had been in the fight with the Minnetarees, and she remembered Sacajawea. The two had been taken prisoners at the same time, and had been carried together far down the river. Sacajawea's companion had escaped, and after days and nights of wandering, during which she nearly starved, had reached her people.

At once Sacajawea was the center of a group of curious women, all anxious for the story she had to tell of her five years' absence. In the meantime, Chief Cameahwait spread a white robe upon the grass, and, tying into Captain Clark's hair six small shells, bade him be seated. Then came the inevitable pipe, smoked in turn by all present, followed by the speeches. Drouillard had gone in search of the boats. Chaboneau did not understand the tongue of the Shoshones, nor was he an adept at the sign language. But Sacajawea was there, and Sacajawea could talk the language of her people, so she was called in to interpret.

“Bring Sacajawea here,” said Clark to one of his men.

In a few moments the young Indian woman, proud and happy, followed by a train of other women, several of whom were fondling Sacajawea’s baby, came into the conference.

“Sacajawea, tell Chief Cameahwait what I say, and then tell me his answer.”

Sacajawea had taken her seat on the ground near Captain Clark. At the mention of the chief’s name, she looked up quickly, then springing from the ground and crying, “My brother,” she threw herself upon the chief, the tears raining down her cheeks.

The chief, as if embarrassed by the suddenness of the greeting, stood stolid and unmoved. After the first outburst of her joy had spent itself, the Indian woman returned to Captain Clark’s side, and there, amid tears which still continued to trickle down her painted cheeks, she repeated to the Indians the words of the white man, and to the white man the words of the Indians.

As soon as the conference was over, Sacajawea sought out her brother, whose elevation to the chieftainship made of her a princess.

“Tell me of my family,” she said. “Where

are my sisters and my other brothers, my father and mother? ”

“ All are dead,” replied Cameahwait, “ except one of our brothers, who is many days’ journey up in the mountains, and a little boy, the son of one of our sisters.”

“ Where is he? Bring him to me,” she said.

Willing feet among the Indian boys ran for the little Indian, the nephew of Chief Cameahwait.

“ He shall be mine now,” cried Sacajawea, taking him in her arms.

So the Bird Woman adopted the boy into her family, and when, some days later, the expedition moved on, and Sacajawea with them, she made provisions for his comfort by liberal donations from her stock of trinkets, with which the white men of the expedition kept her well supplied.

In the evening the canoes came in sight, and the Indians were wild with joy at the sight of the wealth the white men displayed. Particularly were they interested in the swivel gun, which Captain Lewis ordered should be fired in their honor. That same day another conference was held, under a canopy formed of the sails. Then the captains told the Indians again of the purpose of their mission, and their desire to obtain horses to transport

their stuff to a point where canoes could float on the waters running into the Columbia.

Chief Cameahwait thanked the captains for their good talk, and expressed his joy that the white men had come among them with a peaceful purpose, and with promises of trade. He said that his warriors would furnish horses, and that their old men and guides would tell them all they knew about the way across the mountains. Then the captain gave Chief Cameahwait a medal bearing a likeness of Jefferson, a gold-braided coat, a shirt, scarlet leggings, a carat of tobacco, and many small articles, and at the same time distributed presents liberally among the others.

After a meal, at which the Indians tasted Indian corn for the first time, Clark and eleven men, with Chaboneau, Sacajawea, Chief Cameahwait and his band, set out for the Indian village, leaving Captain Lewis and the remainder of the white men to unload the canoes, and get ready pack-saddles for the horses when they should come.

It was arranged that Chaboneau and Sacajawea should remain in the little village and assist in the collecting of the horses, while Clark and his eleven men should search for a stream running to the west, that might prove navigable, and then

build canoes. As Sergeant Gass was the carpenter of the company, he went with Clark, as did also Shannon, the youngest of the company.

For six days, or until August 24th, Lewis and his men remained on the banks of the river, where they buried another portion of their baggage and provisions, and made pack-saddles out of the handles of the oars and parts of boxes, binding them together with thongs of rawhide. The canoes, themselves, were made fast in the bushes, and concealed as much as possible, with the hope that on the coming back of the expedition, in the spring, they might be found ready for use.

At the end of the sixth day Cameahwait, with fifty of his warriors, and as many women and children, came back from the village. Lewis at once bought from them nine good horses and a mule, paying for each an amount in trinkets worth five or six dollars. In addition to these he hired two.

Packing the provisions and baggage upon the backs of these animals, the white men, accompanied by the entire party of Indians, set out for the village. They had not gone far when Sacajawea came to meet them. She had learned in the village that Cameahwait had sent a messenger ahead, telling the whole camp to meet the Indians

who were coming with Captain Lewis, and go with them to the buffalo country to the east for a hunt, leaving the white chiefs to get along as best they might without their assistance. Captain Lewis thanked the Indian woman for her loyalty, and then called Cameahwait and two of the lesser chiefs into council. After smoking, he addressed Cameahwait:

“ I ask you, Chief Cameahwait, are the Shoshones men of their word, or do they lie? Do they say one thing and mean another? Can the white man believe Cameahwait? ”

The wily chief replied:

“ What Cameahwait says he will do, he will do.”

“ Then,” said Captain Lewis, “ did you not agree to be friends with us? Did you not say you would help us to reach the western river? Did you not agree to furnish horses, and guides, and tell us about the trails over the mountains? ”

“ The white chief speaks truly,” answered Cameahwait.

“ Why, then,” went on Lewis, “ do you send messengers to the village, telling them all to join you in a buffalo hunt, and leave us alone? If you wish us to be friends, and to trade with you; if you want us to have the white men bring you guns, and

powder and ball; if you want to fight on equal terms with your enemies, you should not break your promises. You should not lie or deceive us. If you mean to do what you have promised, send one of your men to the village, and tell your people that you will not go on the buffalo hunt, but that they must remain at home to receive us. What say you?" continued Lewis, addressing the two lesser chiefs, who had been called into the council.

"We did not want to go when Chief Cameahwait said we should go away," they answered.

Cameahwait was silent for a long time, then rising to his feet with a shamefaced expression, he said:

"Cameahwait knows that he did wrong, but his people need food. They are starving. Cameahwait will send to the village, and tell his people they must not hunt, but must wait and help the white man."

And so the treachery of Cameahwait was thwarted, and by his own sister, the Bird Woman, who here, as in hundreds of other instances, earned the gratitude of the captains and an honorable name in history.

On arriving at the village, Colter came from Captain Clark, who had been gone several days in

search of a way down the stream that took its rise nearby, to report that he had found the river impassable; that it consisted of almost continuous rapids with heavily timbered mountains on each side, pressing so close upon the water that not even a footpath could be found; and that every trail he had followed by land had led him into a wild and mountainous country, heavily timbered, almost devoid of game, and giving promise of endless difficulties and dangers.

Captain Clark, himself, returned to the Indian village on August 20th, where at once a conference was held with the Indians as how best to proceed. The Indians, almost to a man, declared that no one had ever been known to cross the mountains to the great river, and that no white man had ever come to them from beyond the mountains to the west. They only knew that the little stream nearby, which in the course of forty or fifty miles widened into a tumultuous river, itself flowed into another river; they had heard that away to the west, in some remote region, that river again flowed into another, which finally came to the shores of a great lake on which white men dwelt. But there was one old Indian whose knowledge impressed the captains. He had drawn a map in the sand, indicating by

lines drawn with a stick, the courses of the rivers, and by little ridges and heaps of earth, the location and direction of the mountain ranges. At once Captain Lewis engaged the old fellow for a guide, and gave to him the name of Tobey.

CHAPTER XVII

TO THE COLUMBIA AND THE SEA

THE days between August 31st and September 26th are not many on the calendar, but to the pathfinders of 1705, lost in the heart of the unexplored Rockies, they seemed so many months. August 31st was the day they set out from the friendly camp of the Shoshones under the guidance of old Tobey and five other Indians, four of whom were Tobey's sons, to find a way to reach the Columbia, and September 26th was the day they camped on the banks of a stream where first they could launch canoes.

The intervening days were the worst the explorers had encountered since they left the banks of the Mississippi. Treacherous and uncertain as had been the old Missouri, it had brought them three thousand miles to the very backbone of the great mountains; but now the streams they met mocked their efforts to navigate them, for, while their waters flowed to the west, and must at last

reach the ocean which the explorers longed to see, they hissed and boiled, and threw themselves over precipitous rocks, amid dark caverns, so that even the Indians shook their heads and said, "No. No way by the rivers. No Indian can do it. So no white man."

"But," said the captains, "we will go along their banks, and over the mountain trail."

But the Indians shook their heads.

"The white man cannot go over the mountains. There is no path. There is death in the forests."

Then they told the weird stories of their people; how brave warriors had gone to find the path to the setting sun, and had never come back; how the fires and the winds came out of the west, burning and destroying.

Captain Clark more than half believed the worst the Indians told, for, had he not gone seventy miles into the unbroken forests beyond and come back, bruised and starving, to report the streams unnavigable to canoes, and the mountains impassable to pack horses, and, worst of all, no game for the hunters?

But old Tobey knew a way. It was far to the north. The other Indians shook their heads.

“Tobey is old. Tobey is a fool.” But Captain Lewis believed in the old Indian, and by liberal gifts, and promises of rich rewards, he obtained his services as guide. Old Tobey bravely accepted the dangerous commission. Then four of his sons and another Indian asked to go along. Captain Lewis said “Yes,” but in a day or two they sneaked out of camp, leaving old Tobey alone to direct the way.

Sacajawea could have remained with her people. She had earned a reward of a life of ease in her old home among the Shoshones, as well as a place of honor in the memories of the men of the expedition, and in the annals of Western history, but she, too, with her papoose strapped to her back, rode out of camp that last day of August to follow to the end the fortunes of the intrepid white men, and serve with old Tobey as guide and interpreter among the strange people on the banks of the westward-flowing rivers.

On the fifth day's journey to the north from the Shoshone village, the party emerged from a rocky ravine into a basin or “hole” in the mountains, through which flowed a river. All save the two captains were on foot, and each led two pack horses. The captains rode in advance, accom-

panied by Sacajawea and Tobey, and one of the latter's sons, who had joined the expedition shortly after the desertion of the others.

“It is the country of the Ootlashoots,” said Tobey, and hardly had he spoken ere they heard the sound of a horse's hoofs, and caught a glimpse of a flying horseman—an Indian, making for the river.

Captain Lewis at once called a halt and, waiting for his men to come up, marshaled them into some kind of order, so as to be ready for attack should they fall into an ambushade.

The solitary horseman was Three Eagles, chief of the Ootlashoots, who had been out scouting in the neighborhood of his camp, for his people owned many valuable horses, and some had been stolen of late by their thieving neighbors. Three Eagles had seen the approach of the white men from under the cover of a clump of trees, and had watched them descending slowly and painfully into the valley. He had never seen beings like these, with white skins and no blankets. At first curious, he was now alarmed, as he saw the number of the party. Jumping on his horse, he dashed away to camp, where he told his story.

“They come out of the mountains,” he said.

“ They have no blankets. They have been in battle, and their blankets have been taken from them. They are white from hunger and fear. But one is black. He has war paint on his face and arms. They have no bows and arrows, but they have many horses carrying big loads. The chiefs ride horses. One squaw with her papoose walks beside them.”

The report created great consternation.

“ Bring in the horses! ” commanded Three Eagles. At once the braves ran to collect their horses,—of which they had some five hundred, and put them in readiness for speedy flight. Then Three Eagles stole out of camp with a few companions, and made his way stealthily in the direction from which the intruders were expected. Soon crouching amid the bushes, he saw the whole cavalcade approaching. The nearer the white men came, the more certain became the Ootla-shoots that the strangers were a defeated band or warriors of some strange nation, who had lost their blankets and their bows and arrows. Pity stole into the hearts of the Indians. Stepping out from his hiding place, Three Eagles approached the head of the little procession. The captains stopped, alighted from their horses, laid aside

their guns and, accompanied by Tobey, came to meet him. The first effort at greeting was by words, but Tobey did not understand. Captain Lewis bethought himself of the pipe and, lighting his own, he handed it to Three Eagles. The chief understood, and they were at once friends. A little later the white men were in the camp of the Flatheads, for the Ootlashoots were of that tribe.

Three Eagles was courteous and generous. He ordered some of his braves to bring their best robes, and spread them about the camp fire as seats for his guests. Other blankets he threw across their shoulders, for their faces were pale, and they must be cold. Captain Lewis thanked the chief, and told him they had robes of their own in the bundles strapped to the horses, and that they were not cold, but hungry.

This revealed the fact that the Ootlashoots, too, were without provisions, and were then on the way to the buffalo country on the upper Missouri to hunt for game. Patrick Gass found out to his discomfiture that the Indians and white men were not the only creatures in this hole in the mountains that were hungry, when on awakening the first morning in the camp, he found the Indians'

dogs had eaten up his moccasins and those of several others of the party.

The expedition bade farewell to Three Eagles and his people with some regret, as they had been hospitable and friendly, and had enabled them to get fresh horses, making the number now in the train some forty, with three colts.

One week later—September 11th—the expedition reached the banks of the Kooskooskee, with a few cans of portable soup, and twenty pounds of bear's oil, their only provisions. Here a colt was killed and eaten by the starving men. A few days later a wolf fell victim to a well-aimed shot by Chaboneau and it, too, went into the kettle. The men were all losing flesh, and so weak had they become they scarcely dragged one foot after the other. On the banks of the Kooskooskee they rested, and here Shannon went out to hunt.

Of all of the white men of the expedition, the Ohio boy was the best able to mount a horse. The two captains were both sick. Sacajawea was busy devising and serving remedies made from leaves and roots, but still the sick men grew feebler. The change from the succulent buffalo steaks, the fish of the cold mountain streams, the

tender flesh of the deer and the antelope to the occasional meal of horse or wolf flesh, and the dry roots dug from the ground, was a sudden and violent one. The hardest constitutions broke under it, so that a terrible weakness seized all in the camp; scarcely one of the men selected the year before for their muscles of iron, and their sinews of brass, now stood erect upon his feet, while many lay prostrated in the hastily constructed camp on the banks of the Kooskooskee, burning with fever, or overcome with the stupor of weakness.

Shannon was the youngest of the men and, as these days proved, the strongest of constitution, yet he trembled from head to foot, and his head swam as he slowly rose to his feet at waking, the first morning after camp was pitched on the Kooskooskee. He arose that morning determined to go hunting and not return till he could bring a bird, a rabbit, or something to tempt the palates of the sick men. Hurrying to the river, he bathed his face and breast in the cold waters, ran his gaunt fingers through his tangled hair, and then sought out Captain Lewis's couch.

“ Good-morning, Captain Lewis,” he said, bending over the captain's form, that lay on a

buffalo robe spread upon the ground. "You are better this morning, I hope."

The captain turned his bronzed, haggard face to the young man.

"Yes, I'm better, Shannon. We'll move on to-day. We must reach the ocean, and we must reach it soon. It cannot be that we have crossed the mountains to die on their western slopes without a sight of the Pacific. What would the enemies of the President not say? We must press on, Shannon. How are the men?"

"Whitehouse is stronger this morning," answered the young man, not daring to say that but one or two of the men besides himself were yet astir, though the sun was up.

"Is there anything for them to eat?" inquired the sick man, seemingly forgetful of himself, and solicitous only for the poor fellows who had followed him into the wilderness.

"There is some of the broth left." Shannon scarcely knew whether he told the truth.

"We must kill another of the horses," muttered the captain, with an expression of pain on his countenance. "The poor brutes are themselves dying of hunger. Give it all to the men. I do not need it."

Shannon recognized the heroism of his leader, and bending over the wasted form, he took the captain's hot hand in his.

"I came to get permission to hunt to-day, captain. You need something to strengthen you."

"No, not for me. I am all right, my lad. But what is the use? Our men have tramped these barren hills for days, and brought back nothing. There's not a living thing in a hundred miles. You must not risk your life, Shannon. You are stronger than some of us. If we—die you must go on. Find the Columbia, and make your way to the Pacific. There you will find white men and ships, and they will carry you home. Let it not be said we failed. The President's plans, and his faith in us, must not prove futile. No, do not risk your life for mine."

"But I am able to do it," replied Shannon. "I am strong, and can stand it. I will not go far. The men need, most of all, something to eat. The horseflesh they have eaten sickens them. They must have strength to cut timber for the canoes. They cannot do it as they are. Let me try, just this once, for the sake of the men."

Captain Lewis's eyes closed for a moment.

“ Yes. Go, Shannon. For the men.” Then turning his face away, he seemed to drop into a sleep, and Shannon stole quietly out.

The sun had been up an hour when Shannon left Captain Lewis with permission to hunt, and yet there were few signs of life about the camp. The cook, whose duties these days were few, had builded his fire and made a gruel from a small amount of soup and some edible roots left over from the day before, and with a dozen of the men sat upon the earth about the fire, eating of it with indifferent interest. The remainder of the men were too sick to crawl from their blankets, or their stomachs rebelled against the treatment they were receiving, and absolutely refused to be tempted.

Shannon cast a glance at the pot, and noting its meager supply, turned away. Sacajawea called to him, and told him to come and get his share, but he shook his head, drew his arms up as if pointing a gun at a bird in the air, and went on toward the brown hills a few hundred yards away, where, among the sage brush, the starved horses were nibbling at the thin little bunches of grass.

The morning was clear, and the air crisp and dry—just the morning for a hunt, and something

seemed to tell the young hunter he would have good luck. The feeling gave him pleasure, for if he could but bring to Captain Lewis a bird or a rabbit, he could forget his own hunger and weakness. "Now," he thought to himself, "the time has come when I can repay him for his kindness to me. He was a strong man that day in Pittsburg when I asked him to take me along, and he took me for a boy. Now I am strong—that is, stronger than he is, stretched there on his blanket sick, and I can help him and prove myself worthy of his friendship." But even as he spoke his legs trembled, and involuntarily he stopped and pressed his hand before his eyes to recover from a sudden dizziness that came upon him. A moment later he moved on slowly, wondering if it had not been wiser for him to have tasted of the gruel before starting out.

It was a matter of no difficulty to secure a horse. The poor creatures had barely strength to stand, and none to play tricks on their masters. Selecting a young horse that he had marked the day before as having more life and action than its fellows, he secured it, and led it into camp.

"You no hunt to-day," said Drouillard the veteran.

“ Yes, I must, Drouillard,” replied Shannon. “ The men must have something better to eat or there will be some sad stories to tell when we reach home.”

“ Home! ” exclaimed the old Missouri guide. “ We no see home again.”

The look of the man—this man who had seen danger in every form without quailing—haunted Shannon through the remainder of his life.

“ You dare not say that to Captain Lewis,” said Shannon reproachfully.

“ Captain Lewis,—he wonderful man,” said Drouillard, shaking his head mournfully. Then he added: “ W’at you shoot? No buffalo, no bear, no antelope, no deer, no rabbit, no bird, only the thistles and the rocks, and the pine trees. You die out there in the desert.”

“ You’ll see, Drouillard. I am not counting my chickens before they are hatched, but Captain Lewis must have something fit to eat before another day is done. Let me have your gun, Drouillard. Mine has been acting badly of late.”

“ Yes, you take my gun,” replied the guide. “ If you go, you take the best gun we got. That’s my old Simon Kenton.” Drouillard had named his shooting iron after the sturdy old ranger of

whom his father had told him in his younger days, whose life the elder Drouillard had once saved.

As Drouillard went to fetch his gun, Shannon strapped a blanket on his horse's back, passed a long leather thong about the horse's head, and between its teeth, and stood ready to mount.

"You got the best horse and the best gun in camp. I wish you good luck," said Drouillard a moment later, handing his long, slim weapon to the young man.

"Thank you, Drouillard. I'll be back by night-fall, and you shall share in what I get. Well! You rascal! You don't want to go!" This to his horse, which the moment Shannon took the gun and made a movement to leap upon his back, reared and plunged as if in great fear.

Drouillard took the gun, and advancing toward the animal brandished the weapon before his eyes, and then discharged it. The report nearly crazed the poor brute, to whom the sound of fire-arms was new, and, tugging at his bridle, he dragged Shannon, too weak to hold him, like a child.

"Better take a horse that's broke to the gun," suggested Drouillard.

“ No,” said Shannon, “ once I’m on his back I can manage him. I want a horse of good mettle.”

A few minutes’ struggle, and the horse was brought into subjection, Shannon was on his back with his rifle, and the camp was lost to view.

For some hours, or until the sun had passed the meridian, the hunter pushed on his way, describing in his course a wide circuit that would bring him home by sunset. For the first few hours he carefully scanned the country about him for signs of game, but not a twitter of a bird disturbed the quiet of the yellow hills. But still he persevered, resting at intervals beside a chance rivulet or pool that came all too infrequent for comfort in the desert. The hours crept on, and the sun began to slant its rays. A terrifying weakness came over him that caused him to urge his horse to greater speed. There came, too, across the boy’s mind a picture of a lone rider, fallen from weakness, and dying among the sage brush. His weapon seemed to grow heavy, and frequently he shifted it from one hand to the other, now resting it upon one shoulder, now on the other, and then upon his horse’s neck. His legs and feet seemed weighted with iron, and his head drooped, despite his effort to hold himself erect. At last he was afraid to

alight from his horse for fear he could not mount again. Then, most serious of all, he felt consciousness going, as if he were falling asleep. Strange visions came before his eyes. The landscape seemed obscured by a haze, and objects appeared floating about in space—strange objects, men and beasts, and trees and mountains; then scenes of his childhood—his mother's face and form, pitiful and longing, his brothers and sisters, the log cabin in the woods, and his father cutting the great trees with the glistening ax. A mighty oak trembled, tottered, and fell, and he heard the shout of the children. Then the form of the schoolmaster and the boys of the Pittsburg school. He was again on the banks of the Allegheny, looking down upon the sources of the great Ohio, and he dreamt again the dream of conquest. Then came before his eyes Captain Lewis, and Captain Clark, and the old general as they stood on the shore at Louisville, so gay and courtly in the day of high hope. Then the winter at St. Louis, and the ceremony of the passing of the old flags. Then he reeled and caught himself as he was about to fall.

“Come,” he said feebly, coaxingly to his horse.
“We must not fall here. Not here, sir, not here.”

Is this you, Shannon? You are a weakling, a fool, a coward. Come, these fancies will not do. These dreams frighten you. This is Shannon. This is Drouillard's gun. No, it is not Drouillard's gun. 'Tis too big, too heavy. Drouillard's gun was long, and bright, and light as a feather."

He was about to throw it from him, when a flutter as of wings arose in a clump of bushes ahead of him. At once his mind swung back to its moorings, and the gun went to his shoulder while the horse's bridle dropped from his hand. A sharp report rang out as a bird flew from its cover and went sailing aloft. But, alas! the shot was the boy's undoing. The horse reared, lost its balance and fell heavily backward, and Shannon, conscious but for a moment of falling, and of a heavy blow across the back of his neck and head, lay crushed beneath the fallen animal.

Evening came and Captain Lewis, propped in a sitting posture at the base of a fir tree, asked for Shannon.

"He went hunting this morning and has not returned," came the answer from one of the men who had witnessed the young man's departure that morning from camp. "He took a good

horse and Drouillard's gun, and said he would not return till night," he continued.

"Send Drouillard to me," ordered the captain. Soon the guide presented himself.

"Drouillard, did Shannon tell you where he would hunt?"

"He no tell me, captain," answered the Frenchman.

"You should not have let him go alone. No man of us is in condition to hunt all day. Which direction did he take?"

"He go back of the hills." The guide indicated by his finger the direction as being back from the river.

The captain's face betrayed anxiety. "He should have kept near the river. The boy has a curious way of getting lost. It would go hard with him, were he to lose himself now." Then as if the need were urgent, the captain turned to Clark who had come up. "Captain, we must send out for Shannon. He has been gone all day hunting."

"The foolish youngster!" exclaimed Clark. "Will he never learn to take care of himself?"

"I feel the worse about it, Captain," pursued Captain Lewis, "because he went out for me. He

insisted that I needed something palatable to eat, and he was sure he could get it."

"It does credit to his heart, if not to his judgment," replied Clark. "He is a brave and true soldier. With a regiment of such men I would not fear the phalanxes of Napoleon. As you say, we must see what has become of him."

With this Captain Clark turned and approached a group of men who were heating stones and burning out canoes from the trunks of trees. Drouillard had already made ready for the search, and, astride a horse, was awaiting orders.

"Take your horses and guns, and scatter back from the river. Fire your guns often. Don't come back without something to report."

With these orders from Captain Clark all the men able to ride set out for the hills. Shannon was popular with the men because of his bravery and generosity, and they went willingly.

"Shure!" exclaimed Patrick Gass. "And we'll find that b'hoy or niver come back."

Shannon's trail was easily followed by Gass and Drouillard, who were assigned to follow the prints of the hoofs of Shannon's horse, and by good judgment the two often made time by leaving the trail and taking short cuts to points where

they suspected the hunter would go. The sun was far below the horizon, and a full moon shone upon the two when, becoming perplexed by their non-success, they reached the banks of a little stream that flowed down among the hills toward the Kooskooskee, where they came upon a riderless horse browsing on the slender tufts of grass that barely poked their heads above the hard earth.

“There’s the lad’s baste!” cried Gass, running forward, and at the same moment Drouillard, who was walking some hundred feet off to the side, came upon his gun.

“And I haf the gun,” shouted Drouillard.

“Thin the other fellow can’t be far off,” answered the Irishman.

“There’s no load in the gun, Gass,” said the Frenchman, who had now joined his comrade.

The two men discussed for a moment the meaning of their find, and of the empty gun, without reaching a conclusion. Then at Drouillard’s suggestion they examined the ground near where the gun lay.

“There’s been trouble here,” suggested the Irishman, calling attention to several clumps of sage brush that were broken down, and to evi-

dences of something that had dragged itself over the surface.

“ This way,” whispered Drouillard, as on hands and knees he followed marks on the ground that showed something had moved along, scratching the surface as it went. Nearly a hundred feet they had gone when, suddenly, they came upon the body of Shannon stretched upon the bank of a little stream, his head just touching the water, so that it rippled against his forehead.

“ Is he did? ” asked Gass in a hollow voice.

Drouillard lifted Shannon’s head and took him in his arms, but made no answer, for the boy gave his own reply:

“ I—got—it—Captain—Lewis. It—is—there—there—by—the—bushes.”

“ What the divil is he talkin’ about? ” whispered the Irishman.

Drouillard scooped up some water in his coon-skin cap, and held its brim to the boy’s parched lips.

“ Thank—you—Captain. I’ll—do—as—much—for—you—some—day. You—are—better—Captain. We—will—now—go. I—see—the—Columbia. I—hear—the—waves—of—the—ocean. It

—is—beautiful. The—President—will—not—be—ashamed—of—Captain—Lewis.”

The two men listened, perplexed and anxious. It was night. They were miles away from camp.

“ You go, Gass. Get help. I stay here,” said the Frenchman. “ The boy sick—very sick. Tell them come quick—he die.”

The suggestion was as good as a command to Gass, who, though a sergeant, and in no position to take commands from Drouillard under ordinary circumstances, obeyed with alacrity.

Mounting his horse, the kind-hearted Irishman was soon pushing back over the trail. Shannon lay on the ground, his head resting on a blanket, his mind delirious, and his talk all of Lewis and the great commission. Drouillard sat by his side listening, awestruck and fearful.

Finally the Frenchman's thoughts turned to the empty gun, and the talk of the sick man about something—a bird he had killed. Connecting this with the wild antics of Shannon's horse at the sound of a gun just before starting that morning, he reasoned that Shannon had been thrown at the firing of his gun.

“ He shoot at something,” said the old guide to himself; then he arose and began to search the

ground about the place. The moon shone bright, and nothing but small clumps of bushes disturbed his view of the surface of the bare earth. In a few minutes his efforts were rewarded by his finding, some twenty yards distant from where he had found the gun, a pheasant shot through the head.

“It no foolish talk,” exclaimed the Frenchman as he examined the prize. “But the boy he pay dear for it. Captain Lewis he like it. It do him good.”

Several hours later a party arrived from the camp. A rough litter was hastily constructed and the boy, now fallen into a deep sleep, was carried between the men, as tenderly as those rough pioneer explorers knew how to do it, back to the camp on the Kooskooskee.

Captain Lewis barely tasted of the tender flesh of the bird.

“No, give it to Shannon. I am better now. He is the sick man. He has done for me more than I could have done for him. He has near given his life for me. Take good care of him. Let Sacajawea tend him. The rest of you hurry the boats, for soon we must be afloat. These waters flowed into the Columbia, and then the sea!”

October 4th, the canoes having been burned out, after the fashion of the Indians, for the men were too feeble to use the ax, and the thirty-eight horses having been given into the hands of three Indians who, for a knife given to each, promised to care for them till the white men's return, the whole company pushed out into the current of the Kooskooskee.

October 9th they reached the country of the Chopunish Indians, from whom they bought dogs whose flesh served as food along with the salmon, that now began to be plentiful, and the roots which still stood to them in the place of potatoes.

October 16th, with great rejoicings, the canoes rounded into a river nearly a thousand yards broad, which the Indians declared emptied into the sea.

At last the Columbia!

Two days later they beheld the snow-capped summit of Mount Hood. Now they floated upon a majestic current. The brown and yellow hills were taking on a summer green. It was no longer the muddy Missouri, but the clear Columbia, where twenty, thirty feet beneath the surface, in view of the curious travelers, multitudes of toothsome salmon sported.

Shannon had only partially recovered from his illness. Even yet his mind was disturbed by strange visions of home and friends, mingled with the strange new scenes that passed swiftly about him. Sacajawea was nursing him back to health skillfully and patiently, while Captain Lewis daily inquired as to his condition.

The day Mount Hood rose in its white grandeur in the distance, Captain Lewis sought out the boy.

“Yonder, Shannon, is the end of our hopes. Yon mountain is not far from the sea. Soon we shall see other white men. Only to-day I saw an Indian with a Spanish hat. Drouillard says he talked yesterday with a Flathead who has traded with white men from the mouth of the river. Soon we shall hear the waves beating on the shores, and see the ships with their white wings, and we shall eat and sleep and live again like men, and not like beasts.”

“It will be a proud day for you, Captain Lewis,” was Shannon’s one reply.

“And a proud one for you, and for every man of us,” replied the Captain.

“We find our pride in serving you, Captain, and in knowing that through you we have proved that President Jefferson was right and his enemies

wrong, and that we shall give to the world real knowledge of this western world.”

“ We have, indeed, justified the President’s position,” replied Captain Lewis. “ We have done on land what Columbus did on the sea—we have discovered a new world.”

Two Chopunish chiefs, Twisted Hair and Tetooth, had taken the place of Tobey and his brother, and these the captains sent ahead down the river to apprise the Indian villages of their coming and quiet any fears the red men might have. The result was that the news of the coming of the strange white men flew from tribe to tribe, and everywhere the Indians gathered in crowds to await their appearance.

Gliding down the swiftly moving current, the canoes now made thirty to forty miles a day, rapidly carrying them out of the barren, gameless, sandy country into the mountains, now known as the Cascades.

On October 22d, by the assistance of the Indians, they carried their canoes and baggage for 1,200 yards around the great falls of the Columbia, and entered the wonder region of the great river, where it flows for miles through walls of lava rocks that form noble terraces, towers, and

obelisks. All the ingenuity of these trained rivermen was called in play to navigate the narrow, boiling channel, broken as it was into a succession of rapids, swirls, falls, and cross-currents.

On October 25th Twisted Hair and Tetoh smoked with the captains "the parting pipe," and set out for their return to their people on the Kooskooskee, and the explorers entered their canoes for the dangerous but glorious ride among the dalles and the cascades of the lower Columbia.

A great joy filled the hearts of the weary men when at last, on November 2d, the Indians told them they had passed the last rapids, and had made their last portage, and they floated out on to the bosom of a mighty current a mile in width, that rose and fell at intervals, showing that they had reached tide-water.

Four days later an Indian came to them who spoke a little English and could tell the captains of the traders who had come thus far up the Columbia.

On November 7th the fog, which for days had settled over the river, suddenly lifted, and Captain Clark, who was in the foremost canoe at the time, with Shannon and two others, shouted, "The

ocean! The ocean!" With hearts beating fast, Shannon and the others strained their eyes in a steady gaze to the west, and sure enough, away beyond shone the bosom of the mighty Pacific.

"Bang!" went Captain Clark's gun, followed by a cheer from those about him, while the men in the other canoes, catching the meaning of the demonstration, answered by a volley of shots and shouts of "The ocean!"

Forgotten in the moment were their weakness, their hunger, and their destitution. What if their bodies were wasted, their skin scarred and blackened, their eyes sunken? What if their clothing was worn to shreds, so that the cold, damp air of the November nights pierced them through and threatened chills and fevers? What if fish and roots alone furnished their daily sustenance—a diet that, unvaried from day to day for weeks, nauseated and weakened them to a point of despair? What if a year and a half of trial and suffering separated them from home and kindred? Here was the ocean—the Pacific, only wildly imagined by geographers, and scarcely more than a dream to the peoples beyond the Mississippi to the east—the Pacific, into whose waters a few ships had found their way around Cape Horn, and from

whom fewer still had returned to tell marvelous tales of vast waters, mighty rivers and mountains, strange articles of commerce, and stranger peoples—the Pacific, to whose shores these few men and one lone woman and her little child, who now, like so many specks, floated on the bosom of the great river in their frail canoes of cottonwood, had hewed a path by dint of unparalleled suffering and unmatched heroism.

And what if this brief view of the ocean was at once followed by rain—rain—rain, till they were drenched to the skin, without fuel for fires, their light canoes swamped in the waves that on the broad spreading surface of the Columbia tossed high and wild as on the sea, their tents torn into shreds and letting in water like an old sieve? What if their long-hoped-for meeting with white men on the shores of the western ocean was not to be, and what if the ships with their white sails and their stores of provisions and medicines, which they so longed to see, had come and gone? Yet they had achieved the end of their desires. President Jefferson had not planned in vain. His enemies were to be confounded. A path across the wilderness had been made even to the shores of the wellnigh mythical ocean.

With pride tempered by gratitude to God, Captain Clark cut in the bark of a tree near the margin of the sea the words:

“ William Clark, December 3rd, 1805. By land from the U. States in 1804 & 5.”

And with equal satisfaction, nearly four months later, on the day the expedition started on the long journey home, Captain Lewis wrote the following on a piece of paper and tacked it to a tree, at the same time giving a copy to an Indian chief who resided in the neighborhood:

“ The object of this list is, that through the medium of some civilized person who may see the same, it may be made known to the informed world, that the party consisting of the persons whose names are hereunto annexed, and who were sent out by the government of the U' States in May, 1804, to explore the interior of the Continent of North America, did penetrate the same by way of the Missouri and Columbia rivers, to the discharge of the latter into the Pacific Ocean, where they arrived on the 14th of November 1805, and from whence they departed the 23rd day of March 1806, on their return to the U' States by the same route they had come out.”

To this paper was annexed a list of the names of

the gallant explorers and among them that of George Shannon, the boy pathfinder.

It was not until the following September—six months more of toil and suffering—that the expedition reached St. Louis on the return, and not until the following January (1807) that Captains Lewis and Clark reached Washington. They had been gone nearly three years. President Jefferson trembled with joy when he clasped the two men to his heart. Congress at once gave 1600 acres of land to each of the captains, and double pay in gold and 320 acres to each of the men, to be laid out on the west side of the Mississippi. Sacajawea and Chaboneau lived for many years thereafter among the Mandans, the latter having been paid five hundred dollars for his services and the former, nothing—so far as records show. Sergeant Patrick Gass went home to Wellsburg, West Virginia, and published his story. Then he again enlisted in the army and fought the Creek Indians, and in the War of 1812 lost an eye at Lundy's Lane. Drouillard was killed by the Indians. George Shannon settled in Missouri, where he became a judge in a court of law. One of his younger brothers, born when George was at school in Pittsburg, became Governor of Ohio.



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