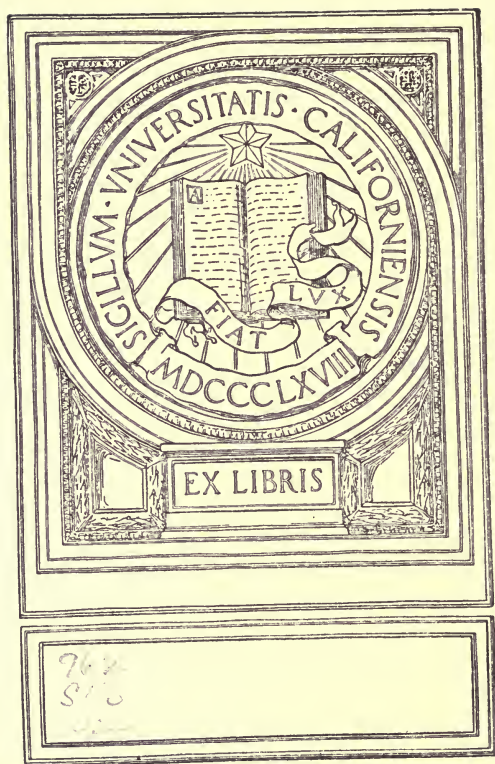


OPENING THE
WEST WITH
LEWIS AND CLARK

EDWIN L. SABIN



The Bancroft Library

University of California • Berkeley

OPENING THE WEST WITH
LEWIS AND CLARK



DID THEY SET THE PRAIRIE AFIRE JUST TO BURN HIM, A BOY?
Page 51

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

BY BOAT, HORSE AND FOOT UP THE GREAT RIVER MISSOURI,
ACROSS THE STONY MOUNTAINS AND ON TO THE PACIFIC, WHEN
IN THE YEARS 1804, 1805, 1806, YOUNG CAPTAIN LEWIS THE
LONG KNIFE AND HIS FRIEND CAPTAIN CLARK THE RED HEAD
CHIEF, AIDED BY SACAJAWEA THE BIRD-WOMAN, CONDUCTED
THEIR LITTLE BAND OF MEN TRIED AND TRUE THROUGH THE
UNKNOWN NEW UNITED STATES

BY

EDWIN L. SABIN

AUTHOR OF "THE GOLD SEEKERS OF '49,"
"WITH SAM HOUSTON IN TEXAS," ETC.

FRONTISPIECE BY
CHARLES H. STEPHENS



PHILADELPHIA & LONDON

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

COPYRIGHT, 1917, BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

TWELFTH IMPRESSION

THE NEW
AMERICAN

PRINTED IN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO THE
WESTERN RED MAN

WHO FIRST OWNED FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA,
BUT WHOM THE WHITE MEN THAT CAME AFTER LEWIS
AND CLARK TREATED NEITHER WISELY NOR WELL

M25172

“Our Country’s glory is our chief concern;
For this we struggle, and for this we burn;
For this we smile, for this alone we sigh;
For this we live, for this we freely die.”

FOREWORD

As time passes, the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition, fathered by the great President Jefferson, should shine brighter and brighter amidst the other pages of American history.

The purchase of the Province of Louisiana was opposed by many citizens. They were ignorant and short-sighted; they asserted that here was a useless burden of waste land fitted only to the Indian and the fur-trader; that the people of the United States should occupy themselves with the land east of the Mississippi.

But wiser men prevailed. The expedition launched boldly out into the unknown, to carry the flag now into the new country, and perhaps to make possible the ownership of still a farther country, at the Pacific Ocean.

Time proved the wisdom of President Jefferson's preparations made even before the territory had been bought. Just at the right moment the trail across the continent was opened. Louisiana Territory was valued at its future worth; the people were informed of its merits and possibilities; after the return of the explorers, the American citizens pressed forward, to see for themselves. And in due course the flag floated

FOREWORD

unchallenged in that Oregon where, also, the Lewis and Clark men had blazed the way.

I should like to have been under Captain Meriwether Lewis, turning thirty, and Captain William Clark, scant thirty-four. They were true leaders: brave, patient, resourceful and determined. And the company that followed them were likewise, brave, patient, resourceful and determined. These qualities are what bound them all together—the American, the Frenchman, the Indian—as one united band, and brought them through, triumphant.

EDWIN L. SABIN

DENVER, COLORADO

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
THE EXPEDITION AND THE COUNTRY	11
THE RANK AND FILE.....	13
I. MAKING READY	19
II. THE START	29
I. THE COMING OF THE WHITE CHIEFS	41
II. PETER GOES ABOARD	55
III. PETER MEETS THE CHIEFS	65
IV. TO THE LAND OF THE SIOUX	79
V. BAD HEARTS	92
VI. THE CAPTAINS SHOW THEIR SPUNK	102
VII. SNUG IN WINTER QUARTERS	112
VIII. EXCITEMENT AT FORT MANDAN	121
IX. PETER WINS HIS SPURS	135
X. THE KINGDOM OF THE "WHITE BEARS"	148
XI. WHICH WAY TO THE COLUMBIA?	160
XII. SEEKING THE BIRD-WOMAN'S PEOPLE	170
XIII. HORSES AT LAST	185
XIV. ACROSS STARVATION MOUNTAINS	194
XV. HOORAY FOR THE PACIFIC!	206
XVI. THE WINTER AT FORT CLATSOP	217
XVII. FRIENDLY YELLEPT, THE WALLA WALLA	227
XVIII. THE PIERCED NOSES AGAIN	236
XIX. BACK ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS	244
XX. CAPTAIN LEWIS MEETS THE ENEMY	254
XXI. THE HOME STRETCH	263

THE EXPEDITION

The Purpose.....	To get information upon the unexplored country extending from the interior of present Missouri to the mouth of the Columbia River in present Washington.
The Start.....	At St. Louis, Monday, May 14, 1804.
The Finish.....	At St. Louis, Tuesday, September 23, 1806.
Time Consumed.....	Two years, four months, and nine days.
Distance Travelled	To the mouth of the Columbia: 4134 miles. Back to St. Louis: 3555 miles. Counting side trips: 8000 miles, total.
Methods Employed.....	Boats, horses and afoot.
The Route.....	Up the Missouri River to its sources in present Montana; across the Bitter Root Mountains into present Idaho; by way of the Clearwater River, the Snake River and the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean.
The Party Out of St. Louis.....	Forty-five.
The Party Who Went Through...	Thirty-three: the two captains, twenty-three American soldiers, five French-Canadian and French-Indian boatmen and interpreters, one negro servant, one Indian woman guide, and one baby.
Deaths.....	One.
Seriously Injured	One.

THE EXPEDITION

Desertions One accomplished, one attempted; both early. None from the final party.

THE COUNTRY EXPLORED

The New Territory of Louisiana.. Stretched from the Mississippi River to the summit of the R o c k y Mountains. Owned first by France. By France ceded to Spain, 1762. By Spain secretly ceded back to France, 1800. In April, 1803, purchased from France by the United States for \$15,000,000.

The Columbia Country The Northwest lying between California and Canada, and the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. In 1792 visited by Captain Robert Gray of the American ship *Columbia* from Boston, who entered and named the Columbia. The same year visited by Captain George Vancouver, an English navigator. Claimed by both the United States and England. Awarded to the United States by treaty of 1846.

THE RANK AND FILE

Captain Meriwether Lewis (The Long Knife)

Born August 18, 1774, of Scotch ancestry, on the Ivy Creek plantation near Charlottesville, Albemarle Co., Virginia, and three miles from Monticello, the estate of Thomas Jefferson.

Father—William Lewis.

Mother—Lucy Meriwether.

Having fought bravely through the Revolution, after the successful siege of Yorktown ending the war, his father dies, in 1782.

In due time his mother marries a friend of the family, Captain John Marks, and removes to Georgia.

Little Meriwether is reared, with his brother Reuben and his sister Jane, younger than he, at Locust Hill, the family home, and also spends much time at "The Farm," of his uncle Nicholas Lewis, adjoining Monticello.

A lad of bold spirit, at eight years of age he is accustomed to sally forth alone with his dogs, at night, and hunt.

At thirteen, is placed in a

Captain William Clark (The Red Head)

Born August 1, 1770, in Caroline Co., tide-water Virginia.

Father—John Clark, of old Virginia Cavalier stock.

Mother—Ann Rogers, descendant of John Rogers, the "Martyr of Smithfield" burned at the stake in 1555, in England, for his religious beliefs.

William is the ninth of ten children, two others of whom have red hair. Five of his brothers enlist in the Revolution. One of these was the famous General George Rogers Clark, the "Hannibal of the West," who saved Kentucky and the Ohio country from the British and Indians.

The Clarks and the Lewises are well acquainted. George Rogers Clark was born at Charlottesville, and members of the Clark family frequently ride over there.

Little William early shows a love for frontier life.

After the close of the Revolution the Clarks remove, by horse and wagon, from Caroline Co., Virginia, to Western

THE RANK AND FILE

Latin school, under Parson Maury, to study.

At eighteen, in 1792, he volunteers to Thomas Jefferson, then President Washington's Secretary of State, to explore up the Missouri River to the Pacific Coast for the American Philosophical Society. A distinguished scientist, André Michaux, is selected, but the plan is given up.

At twenty, volunteers in the militia, at the call of President Washington for troops to put down the Whiskey Rebellion in Western Pennsylvania. Is soon commissioned a lieutenant in the regular army.

At twenty-three, commissioned captain.

At twenty-seven, in 1801, is appointed by President Jefferson his private secretary.

At twenty-nine, in 1803, is appointed by the president to head the government exploring expedition up the Missouri River and on across to the Pacific Ocean.

Leaves Washington July 5, 1803.

1804-1805-1806 is engaged in the exploration. The Indians name him the Long Knife.

1807, appointed governor of Louisiana Territory, with headquarters in St. Louis.

October 10, 1809, on his way by horse from St. Louis to Washington, while at a settler's cabin in present Lewis Co., Tennessee, 72 miles southwest of Nashville, he is shot,

Kentucky, and establish themselves in a stockade and blockhouse overlooking the Ohio River, three miles below Louisville, then known as the Falls of the Ohio; Mulberry Hill, the new home is christened.

Young William wears buckskins and moccasins, shoots deer and buffalo, takes many trips with the famous Kentucky frontiersmen, and has for friend and teacher Daniel Boone.

In 1788, at seventeen years of age, he is commissioned ensign in the regular army.

Accompanies his brother, General George Rogers Clark, on the campaign to prevent the Indians from keeping the whites east of the Ohio River, and the Spaniards from closing the Mississippi to American commerce.

1790, acts as captain of militia.

In 1791 is commissioned first lieutenant, Fourth Sub-Legion of the army. Serves under "Mad Anthony" Wayne against the Indians in Ohio. Leads a charge at the battle of Fallen Timbers, August 20, 1794, where the celebrated chief Tecumseh is defeated.

Because of ill health, he retires from military service, in 1796, and lives at Mulberry Hill, to help his brother, the general, in business matters.

In July, 1803, accepts an offer from his friend and fellow officer, Captain Meriwether Lewis,

THE RANK AND FILE

either by himself or by an assassin, and dies the next day, October 11. He is there buried. A monument has been erected over his grave.

requesting his company and assistance on an exploring trip up the Missouri River, through the Province of Louisiana, for the Government.

Is commissioned by President Jefferson second lieutenant of artillerists.

In October, 1803, he leaves with part of the expedition for St. Louis.

1804-1805-1806 is engaged in exploring to the Pacific Ocean and back. The Indians name him the Red Head.

1806, resigns his commission in the army.

1807, appointed by President Jefferson brigadier-general of the militia of Louisiana Territory and Indian agent for the Territory. Is very popular with the Indians, who revere his justness and honesty.

In 1808 marries Julia Hancock.

In 1813 is appointed governor of the Territory of Missouri.

In 1821 marries Harriet Kennerly-Radford, but is defeated in his candidacy for the governorship of the new State of Missouri.

1822, appointed by President Madison superintendent of Indian Affairs, an office which he holds until he dies.

1824 is appointed surveyor-general of Missouri, Illinois, and Arkansas Territory.

Dies September 1, 1838, at St. Louis, his long-time home, aged 68 years.

THE RANK AND FILE

ENLISTED FOR THE TRIP.

At Pittsburg, by Captain Lewis:

Soldiers from Carlisle Barracks	{	John Collins of Maryland. Went through. George Gibson of Mercer Co., Pennsylvania. Went through. Hugh McNeal of Pennsylvania. Went through. John Potts of Pennsylvania. Went through. Peter Wiser of Pennsylvania. Went through.
--	---	---

And

George Shannon, aged seventeen, born in Pennsylvania, reared in St. Clair Co., Ohio. Went through.

At Mulberry Hill, Kentucky, by Captain Clark:

The Nine Young Men From Kentucky	{	Charles Floyd of Kentucky. Was elected sergeant. Died August 20, 1804, while on the trip. Nathaniel Pryor of Kentucky. Was elected sergeant. Went through. Joseph Whitehouse of Kentucky. Went through. John Colter of Kentucky. Went through. William Bratton of Virginia. Went through. John Shields of Kentucky. Went through.
---	---	--

Reuben Fields Joseph Fields	}	brothers from Kentucky. Went through.
--------------------------------	---	---------------------------------------

William Werner of Kentucky. Went through.

And

York, Virginia negro, the captain's servant. Went through.

At Kaskaskia Post, Illinois, by Captain Lewis:

Soldiers	{	Patrick Gass, of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Was elected sergeant. Went through. John Ordway of New Hampshire. Was elected sergeant. Went through. Robert Frazier of Vermont. Went through. Thomas P. Howard of Massachusetts. Went through.
----------	---	---

At Fort Massac of Illinois, by Captain Clark:

Soldiers	{	Silas Goodrich of Massachusetts. Went through. Hugh Hall of Massachusetts. Went through. Alexander H. Willard of New Hampshire. Went through.
----------	---	---

Richard Windsor. Went through.

And

John B. Thompson, civilian surveyor from Vincennes, Indiana. Went through.

THE RANK AND FILE

Probably at St. Louis:

John Newman. Did not go through. Was punished and sent back.

Others enrolled in the party:

Chief Hunter George Drouillard (called "Drewyer") of Kaskaskia and St. Louis. Part French, part Indian. Went through.

Head Boatman Pierre Cruzatte of St. Louis. Went through.

Boatman François Labiche of St. Louis. Went through.

Boatman _____ Liberté of St. Louis. Deserted.

Trader Baptiste Lepage of the Mandan Indian town. Enlisted there to take the place of the deserter Liberté. Went through.

Trader Toussaint Chaboneau of the Mandan Indian town, where he was living with the Minnetarees. Enlisted as interpreter. Went through.

Sa-ca-ja-we-a the Bird-woman, his Sho-sho-ne Indian wife, aged sixteen. Went through.

Little Toussaint, their baby. Went through.

ENGAGED FOR PART OF THE TRIP

At St. Louis:

Corporal Warfington and six privates, to go as far as the first winter's camp.

Nine French boatmen, to go as far as the first winter's camp.

On the way up from St. Louis:

Trader Pierre Dorion, to go as far as the Sioux.

I

MAKING READY

WHEN in 1801 Thomas Jefferson became third President of the United States the nation was young. The War for Independence had been won only twenty years previous. George Washington himself had been gone but a year and four months. The Capitol was being erected on the site that he had chosen. And the western boundary of the nation was the Mississippi River.

Beyond the Mississippi extended onward to the Rocky Mountains the foreign territory of Louisiana Province. New Orleans was the capital of its lower portion, St. Louis was the capital of its upper portion. It all was assumed to be the property of Spain, until, before President Jefferson had held office a year, there spread the rumor that by a secret treaty in 1800 Spain had ceded Louisiana back to France, the first owner.

Almost another year passed. The treaty transferring Louisiana Province from Spain to France seemed to be hanging fire. The Spanish flag still floated over New Orleans and St. Louis. Then, in October, 1802, the Spanish governor at New Orleans informed the American traders and merchants that their flat-boats no longer might use the Mississippi River. New Orleans, the port through which the

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Mississippi River traffic reached the Gulf of Mexico, was closed to them.

From the west to the east of the United States swelled a vigorous cry of indignation against this decree that closed the Mississippi to American commerce. Hot words issued, threats were loudly spoken, and the people of the Ohio Valley, particularly, were ripe to seize New Orleans and re-open the big river by force of arms.

However, the Spanish governor was not within his rights, anyway. By that secret treaty, the Island of New Orleans (as it was called), through which the currents of the Mississippi flowed to the Gulf, was French property. So instead of disputing further with Spain, President Jefferson, in January, 1803, sent Robert R. Livingston, United States minister to France, the authority to buy the New Orleans gateway for \$2,000,000, or, if necessitated, to offer \$10,000,000.

President Jefferson was a gaunt, thin-legged, sandy-haired, homely man, careless of his clothes and simple in his customs, but he passionately loved his country, and he had great dreams for it. His dreams he made come true.

He long had been fascinated by the western half of the continent. His keen hazel eyes had pored over the rude maps, largely guesswork, sketched by adventurers and fur-hunters. These eyes had travelled up the water-way of the uncertain Missouri, to the Stony Mountains, as they were called; thence across

MAKING READY

the Stony Mountains, in search of that mysterious Columbia River, discovered and christened by an American. Twice he had urged the exploration of the Columbia region, and twice explorers had started, but had been turned back. Now, as President, he clung to his dream of gaining new lands and new commerce to the American flag; and scarcely had Minister Livingston been sent the instructions to open the Mississippi, than President Jefferson proceeded with plans for opening another, longer trail, that should reach from the Mississippi to the Pacific.

He had in mind the person who could lead on such a trip: young Captain Meriwether Lewis of the First Infantry, U. S. A.; his private secretary at \$500 a year, and to him like an own son. They were together day and night, they loved each other.

A Virginian, of prominent family, was Captain Lewis, and now barely twenty-nine years of age. Slim, erect, sunny-haired, flashing blue-eyed, handsome and brave, he had volunteered before to explore through the farthest Northwest, but had been needed elsewhere. This time President Jefferson wisely granted him his wish, and asked him to make an estimate of the expenses for a Government exploring expedition by officers and men, from St. Louis up the Missouri River and across the mountains to the Pacific Ocean.

Young Captain Lewis figured, and soon handed in his estimate. He was of the opinion that at an expense of \$2500, which would cover everything, a party

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

of eighteen men might travel across-country from the Mississippi River, over the mountains, and to the Pacific Ocean and back again! He had figured very closely, had young Captain Lewis—perhaps because he was so anxious to go.

President Jefferson accepted the estimate of \$2500, and in his message of January 18, 1803, to Congress, he proposed the expedition. He urged that at this small expense a party of soldiers, well led, could in two summers map a trail clear to the western ocean; bring back valuable information upon climate, soil and peoples, and make Americans better acquainted with their own continent; also encourage the traders and trappers to use the Missouri River as a highway to and from the Indians, thus competing with the British of Canada.

Congress voted to apply the \$2500 on the proposed expedition. We may imagine how the tall, homely President Jefferson beamed—he, who so firmly believed in the expansion of American trade, and the onward march of the American flag. And we may imagine how young Captain Lewis glowed with joy, when now he might be definitely named as the leader to carry the flag.

President Jefferson advised him to go at once to Philadelphia, and study botany, geology, astronomy, surveying, and all the other sciences and methods that would enable him to make a complete report upon the new country. At Lancaster, nearby, the celebrated

MAKING READY

Henry flint-lock rifles were manufactured, and he could attend to equipping his party with these high-grade guns, turned out according to his own directions.

There should be two leaders, to provide against accident to one. Whom would he have, as comrade? He asked for his friend, William Clark, younger brother to the famed General George Rogers Clark, who in the Revolution had won the country west of the Alleghanies from the British and the Indians, afterward had saved the Ohio Valley from the angry red-men, and then had defied the Spaniards who would claim the Mississippi.

As cadet only seventeen years old, and as stripling lieutenant appointed by Washington, William Clark himself had fought to keep this fertile region white. "A youth of solid and promising parts and as brave as Cæsar," was said of him, in those terrible days when the Shawnees, the Mohawks and all declared: "No white man's cabin shall smoke beyond the Ohio."

He, too, was a Virginian born, but raised in Kentucky. Now in this spring of 1803 he was verging on thirty-three years of age. He was russet-haired, gray-eyed, round-faced and large-framed—kindly, firm, and very honest.

He had retired from the army, but by rank in the militia was entitled captain. For the purposes of the expedition President Jefferson commissioned him second lieutenant of artillery.

Captain Clark was at the Clark family home of

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Mulberry Hill, three miles south of Louisville, Kentucky; Captain Lewis pursued his studies at Philadelphia. Meanwhile, what of Minister Livingston and the purchase from France of New Orleans—the mouth of the Mississippi?

The famous Napoleon Bonaparte was the ruler of France. He, like President Jefferson, had his dreams for the Province of Louisiana. He refused to sell the port of New Orleans. Here he intended to land soldiers and colonists, that they might proceed up-river and make of his Province of Louisiana another France.

Trouble loomed. Congress appointed James Monroe as Envoy Extraordinary and on March 8 he started for France to aid Minister Livingston. He arrived at Paris on April 12; but, 10, on the day before he arrived, a most astonishing new bargain had been offered by Napoleon and Minister Livingston was ready to accept.

The dream of Napoleon had faded. For war with England was again upon him; the British held Canada, their men-of-war were assembling off the Gulf of Mexico, Louisiana Province and New Orleans would be seized before ever France could muster a force there to resist. So rather than let England gain all this territory and wax more powerful, Napoleon, on April 11, directed his ministers to proffer to the United States not only New Orleans, but all Louisiana Province—and the deal must be closed at once!

“Take all, at 80,000,000 francs, or \$15,000,000, or

MAKING READY

take nothing," was the astounding proposal from Minister Marbois.

"I am authorized to buy New Orleans," replied Minister Livingston.

There was no time in which to inform President Jefferson and Congress. News crossed the ocean only by slow sailing vessels. Envoy Monroe arrived; he and Minister Livingston consulted together; Napoleon was impatient, they should act quickly——

"We must do it," they agreed. "Our country shall not lose this opportunity."

Little minds are afraid of responsibilities; great minds are not afraid. They prefer to act as seems to them they ought to act, rather than merely to play safe. Monroe and Livingston were true patriots. They thought not of themselves, but of their country, and risked rebuke for exceeding their instructions.

On April 30 they signed the papers which engaged the United States to purchase all of Louisiana. The French ministers signed. On May 2 Napoleon signed. The papers were immediately mailed for the approval of Congress.

And Congress did approve, on October 17. Thus, for less than three cents an acre, the United States acquired from the Mississippi River to the summits of the Rocky Mountains. The amount paid over was \$11,400,000; \$3,750,000 was applied on French debts.

The ship bearing the papers signed by Ministers Livingston and Monroe, and by the government of

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

France, did not reach the United States until July. Down to that time President Jefferson had no knowledge of the fact that his expedition, as planned, was to explore not French territory, but American. But when the news broke, he was all ready for it—he needed only to go ahead. That is one secret of success: to be prepared to step instantly from opportunity to opportunity as fast as they occur. The successful, energetic man is never surprised by the unexpected.

Captain Lewis had been kept very busy: studying science at Philadelphia, inspecting his flint-locks at Lancaster, storing them and gathering supplies at the arsenal of Harper's Ferry. June 20 he received his written instructions.

He was to ascend the Missouri River from St. Louis to its source, and by crossing the mountains and following down other streams, endeavor to come out at the mouth of the Columbia on the Pacific coast. It was hoped that he would find a way by water clear through. He was to make a complete record of his journey: noting the character of the country, its rivers, climate, soil, animals, products, and peoples; and particularly the Indians, their laws, languages, occupations—was to urge peace upon them, inform them of the greatness of the white United States, encourage them to sell us their goods and to visit us.

When he reached the Pacific Ocean, he was to ship two of his party by vessel, if he found one there, for the United States, by way of Cape Horn, of South

MAKING READY

America, or the Cape of Good Hope, of Africa, and send a copy of his notes with them. Or he and all his party were at liberty to return that way, themselves. He was given letters to the United States consuls at Java, and the Isles of France off the African coast, and the Cape of Good Hope, and one authorizing him to obtain money, in the name of the United States, at any part of the civilized world.

All this was a large order, placed upon the shoulders of a youth of twenty-nine years; but who knew where the Missouri River trail might lead? No white man yet had followed it to its end.

Captain Lewis was at Washington, receiving those final instructions. On July 5 he should start for the west. On July 3 he wrote a farewell letter to his mother in Virginia, bidding her not to worry, and assuring her that he felt he should return safely in fifteen to eighteen months.

He did not dream—President Jefferson, his friend and backer, did not dream, or, at least, had not voiced that dream—but even while the loving letter was being penned, into the harbor of New York had sailed a ship from France, bringing the dispatches of Ministers Monroe and Livingston. The next day the news was announced at Washington. The Province of Louisiana had been bought by the United States!

This was a Fourth of July celebration with a vengeance.

Captain Lewis scarcely had time to comprehend.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

To-morrow he was to start, and his mind was filled with the details of preparation. But a glowing joy must have thrilled him as he realized that he was to be the first to carry the flag through that new America now a part of his own United States. Hurrah!

He had no occasion for delaying. His instructions required no change. He was eager to be off. Therefore on July 5, this 1803, he set out, and from the White House President Jefferson wished him good-speed.

II

THE START

By boat up the Potomac River from Washington hastened young Captain Lewis, to pack his arms and supplies at Harper's Ferry, and forward them by wagon for Pittsburg. He got to Pittsburg ahead of them; and there remained until the last of August, overseeing the building of a barge or flat-boat. He enlisted some men, too—six of them, picked with care, and sworn into the service of the United States Army.

On August 31, with his recruits, on his laden flat-boat he launched out to sail, row, and float, towed by oxen (a "horn breeze," this was termed), down the Ohio.

At Mulberry Hill, near Louisville, Captain William Clark was impatiently awaiting. He had enlisted nine men, all of Kentucky, the "dark and bloody ground." If any men could be relied on, they would be Kentuckians, he knew. His negro servant, York, who had been his faithful body-guard since boyhood, was going, too.

Captain Clark took charge of the barge, to proceed with it and the recruits and York down the Ohio into the Mississippi, and thence up the Mississippi to St. Louis. Captain Lewis turned across country, by horse, on a short cut, to pick up more men along the way.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

He struck the Mississippi River fifty miles below St. Louis, where the United States Army post of Kaskaskia faced the Province of Louisiana across the river. Here he enlisted four men more, selected from a score that eagerly volunteered. Word of the great expedition had travelled ahead of him, and he could have filled the ranks seven times over. But only the strongest, and those of clean reputation, could qualify for such a trip. These thought themselves fortunate.

Now up along the river, by military road, hastened Captain Lewis, for the old town of Cahokia, and crossed the river to St. Louis at last. He was in a hurry.

"We'll winter at La Charette, Captain," he had said to Captain Clark, "where Daniel Boone lives. Boone can give us valuable information, and we'll be that far on our journey, ready for spring. Charette will be better for our men than St. Louis."

Glad was Captain Clark to spend the months at La Charette. Daniel Boone had been his boyhood friend in Kentucky—had taught him much wood-craft. But when, in mid-December, Captain Clark, the red-head, anxious to push on to La Charette, seventy miles up the Missouri, before the ice closed, with York and his nine Kentuckians and five other recruits whom he had enlisted from Fort Massac at the mouth of the Ohio tied his keel-boat at the St. Louis levee, he was met by disagreeable information.

"We'll have to winter here," informed Captain Lewis. "The Spanish lieutenant-governor won't pass

THE START

us on. He claims that he has not been officially notified yet to transfer Upper Louisiana to the United States—or, for that matter, even to France. So all we can do is to make winter camp on United States soil, on the east side of the river, and wait. I'm sorry—I've engaged two more boats—but that's the case."

"All right," assented Captain Clark. "Both sides of the river are ours, but I suppose we ought to avoid trouble."

So the winter camp was placed near the mouth of Wood River, on the east bank of the Mississippi, about twenty miles above St. Louis. Log cabins were erected; and besides, the big keel-boat was decked fore and aft, and had a cabin and men's quarters. Consequently nobody need suffer from the cold.

Captain Lewis stayed most of the time in St. Louis, arranging for supplies, studying medicine, astronomy, botany and other sciences, and learning much about the Indians up the Missouri. Captain Clark looked after the camp, and drilled the men almost every day.

St. Louis was then forty years old; it contained less than 200 houses, of stone and log, and about 1000 people, almost all French. The lieutenant-governor, who lived here in charge of Upper Louisiana of "the Illinois Country" (as all this section was called), was Don Carlos Dehault Delassus, also of French blood, but appointed by Spain.

Indignant now was Spain, objecting to the new ownership by the United States, and asserting that by

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

the terms of the bargain with France that government had promised not to dispose of the province to any other nation. But this evidently had made no difference to Napoleon.

Not until November 30, of 1803, while Captain Lewis was on his road from Kaskaskia to St. Louis and Captain Clark was toiling with his keel-boat up from the mouth of the Ohio (both captains thinking that they had a clear way ahead), was the Spanish flag in New Orleans hauled down, and the French flag hoisted. On December 20 the representative of the French government there, Monsieur Pierre Clement Laussat, and his men, saluted the hoisting of the Stars and Stripes, formally delivered Lower and Upper Louisiana to the United States.

Nevertheless, Lieutenant-Governor Delassus, of Upper Louisiana, waited for official instruction. Distances were great, he wished to receive orders what to do. In St. Louis Captain Lewis waited; in the camp at Wood River Captain Clark waited; the Missouri froze over and they could not go on anyway.

Christmas was celebrated, and the memorable year 1803 merged into the new year 1804. Finally, by letter, date of January 12, 1804, from Monsieur Laussat at New Orleans, Lieutenant-Governor Delassus was notified that dispatches were on the road to Captain Amos Stoddard, of the United States Artillery, and commanding at Fort Kaskaskia, empowering him to represent France at St. Louis and take over from

THE START

Spain the district of Upper Louisiana. He was then to turn it over to himself as representative of the United States.

On February 25 Captain Stoddard announced that he was ready to receive Upper Louisiana in the name of France. March 9 was set as the day. Captain Lewis was invited to be present at the ceremony, as an official witness. Captain Clark probably came over; perhaps some of the men, for all the countryside gathered at the great event.

A number of Indians from up the Mississippi and up the Missouri, and out of the plains to the west, had witnessed the ceremony of transfer. They did not understand it all. They said that the United States had captured St. Louis. On March 12 their good friend, Lieutenant-Governor Delassus, issued an address to them, explaining that now they had a new father, and he introduced to them the new United States chiefs who had come—Captain Stoddard and Captain Lewis.

But the Delawares, the Sacs, the Osages, and others—they still were dissatisfied, and especially the Osages. Captain Lewis was particularly anxious to please the Osages, for they were the first of the powerful tribes whom he might encounter, up the Missouri. He tried to talk with the chiefs in St. Louis; by a trader sent a letter on to the Osage village, asking the head chiefs to meet him at the river and exchange peace presents.

Beyond the Osages dwelt the Otoes, the Missouris,

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

the 'Mahas (Omahas), the Sioux, the Arikaras, the Mandans, the Minnetarees; and then, who could say? Few white men, even the French traders, had been farther. How would all these tribes, known and unknown, receive the strange Americans?

Spring had come, the ice was whirling down, in rotted floes, out of the north, the channel of the crooked Missouri was clearing, and every man in the expedition was keen to be away, following the honking geese into this new America over which the flag of the United States waved at last.

Now the expedition had grown to full strength. There were the two captains; the fourteen soldiers enlisted at Pittsburg, Fort Massac and Fort Kaskaskia; the nine Kentuckians, enrolled at Mulberry Hill near Louisville; George Drouillard (or Drewyer, as he was called), the hunter from Kaskaskia who had been recommended by Captain Clark's brother the general; Labiche and one-eyed old Cruzatte, French voyageurs or boatmen engaged by Captain Lewis at St. Louis; nine other boatmen, and Corporal Warfington and six privates from the Kaskaskia troops in St. Louis, who were to go as far as the next winter camp, and then return with records and trophies; and black York, Captain Clark's faithful servant, who was going just as far as his master did.

So forty-five there were in all, to start. Except York, those who were going through had been sworn in as privates in the United States Army, to serve

THE START

during the expedition, or until discharged on the way, if so happened. Charles Floyd, one of the young Kentuckians; Nathaniel Pryor, his cousin, and John Ordway, enrolled at Kaskaskia from among the New Hampshire company, were appointed sergeants.

For outfit they had their flint-lock rifles, especially manufactured; flint-lock pistols, hunting knives, powder contained in lead canisters or pails to be melted into bullets when emptied, tents, tools, provisions of pork, flour, etc., warm extra clothing for winter, old Cruzatte's fiddle, George Gibson's fiddle, medicines, including the new kine-pox with which to vaccinate the Indians, the captains' scientific instruments, a wonderful air-gun that shot forty times without reloading, and a cannon or blunderbuss.

Seven large bales and one emergency box had been packed with their stores; and there were fourteen other bales and one sample box of gifts for the Indians: gay laced coats, flags, knives, iron tomahawks, beads, looking-glasses, handkerchiefs (red and blue), paints (yellow, blue and crimson), not forgetting three kinds of medals—first-class and second-class, of silver, and third-class, of pewter—for chiefs to hang about their necks as token of friendship from their new great white father at Washington. The knives and tomahawks had been made at Harper's Ferry.

Three boats were ready: the keel-boat built at Pittsburg, and two pirogues bought at St. Louis. The keel-boat or batteau was to be the flag-ship. It was a

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

kind of flat-boat or barge, fifty-five feet long; of heavy planks, with bow overhanging and a little pointed, and square overhanging stern fitted with a keel and with a tiller rudder. It had places for eleven oars on a side, and carried a sail. Along either gunwale was a plank path or walking-board, from which the men might push with poles.

Much ingenuity and care had Captain Lewis spent on this flag-ship. Under a deck at the bows the crew might sleep; and under the deck at the stern was the cabin for the officers; in the middle were lockers, for stowing stuff—and the lids when raised formed a line of breastworks against bullets and arrows! The blunderbuss was mounted in the bows, the flag floated from a staff. The boat drew only three feet of water.

The two pirogues were smaller, open flat-boats or barges; one painted red, the other white; one fitted with six oars, the other with seven. They also had sails.

At Harper's Ferry Captain Lewis had ordered the steel framework of a canoe. This was "knocked down," in sections, and stowed in the keel-boat, later to be put together and covered with bark or skins, for use in the shallow waters far up-river.

And there were two horses, which should accompany the boats by land, for scouting and hunting purposes.

April passed; May arrived. The Missouri was reported free of ice, and was rising rapidly. The trees had budded and greened, the grasses were getting high,

THE START

game would be plentiful, the Indians would be leaving their villages for their spring hunts, and 'twas time that the expedition should start. In their camp at Wood River the men drew on the supply of quill pens, ink horns and paper and wrote farewell letters home. In St. Louis Captain Clark and Captain Lewis were given farewell dinners. By Doctor Saugrain, the learned physician and scientist under whom he was studying, Captain Lewis was presented with a handful of matches—curious little sticks which, when briskly rubbed against something, burst into flame. The Indians would marvel at these.

Shortly before four o'clock in the afternoon of May 14, this 1804, the start was made. The St. Louis people gathered along the river bank on that side, to watch the boats move up. The blunderbuss was discharged, in salute; the cannon of the fort answered. Captain Clark, bidding goodbye from the deck of the keel-boat, was in full dress uniform of red-trimmed blue coat and trousers, and gold epaulets, his sword at his belt, his three-cornered chapeau on his red head. The sails swelled in the breeze, the men at the oars sang in French and shouted in English. Drewyer the hunter rode one horse and led the other. All, save Captain Clark, were dressed for business—Corporal Warfington's squad from St. Louis in United States uniform, the nine Kentuckians in buckskins, the fourteen soldiers and civilians, enlisted at the posts, in flannel shirts and trousers of buckskin or coarse army

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

cloth, the French boatmen in brightly fringed woollens, with scarlet 'kerchiefs about their heads. Rain was falling, but who cared!

Captain Lewis did not accompany. He was detained to talk more with the Osages who had come down. He hoped yet to make things clear to them. But he would join the boats at the village of St. Charles, twenty miles above.

In the sunshine of May 16 they tied to the bank at St. Charles. At the report of the cannon—boom!—the French villagers, now Americans all, came running down and gave welcome.

Sunday the 20th Captain Lewis arrived by skiff from St. Louis, and with him an escort of the St. Louis people, again to cheer the expedition on its way. Not until Monday afternoon, the 21st, was the expedition enabled to tear itself from the banquets and handshakings, and onward fare in earnest, against the wind and rain.

Tawny ran the great Missouri River, flooded with the melted snows of the wild north, bristling with black snags, and treacherous with shifting bars. On either hand the banks crashed in, undermined by the changing currents. But rowing, poling, hauling with ropes, and even jumping overboard to shove, only occasionally aided by favoring breeze, the men, soldiers and voyageurs alike, worked hard and kept going. On leaving St. Charles the two captains doffed their uniforms until the next dress-up event, and donned buckskins and moccasins.

THE START

Past La Charette, the settlement where Daniel Boone lived—the very last white settlement on the Missouri, toiled the boats; now, beyond, the country was red. Past the mouth of the Osage River up which lived the Osage Indian; but no Osages were there to treat with them. Past the mouth of the Kansas River, and the Little Platte; and still no Indians appeared, except some Kickapoos bringing deer. Rafts were encountered, descending with the first of the traders bringing down their winter's furs: a raft from the Osages, shouting that the Osages would not believe that St. Louis had been "captured," and had burnt the Captain Lewis message; from the Kansas, from the Pawnees up the Big Platte, from the Sioux of the far north.

Off a Sioux raft old Pierre Dorion, one of the traders, was hired by the captains to go with the expedition up to the Sioux, and make them friendly. He had lived among the Yankton Sioux twenty years.

Through June and July, without especial incident, the expedition voyaged ever up-river into the northwest, constantly on the look-out for Indians with whom to talk.

The two captains regularly wrote down what they saw and did and heard; a number of the men also kept diaries. Sergeant Charles Floyd, Sergeant John Ordway, Sergeant Nathaniel Pryor, Private Patrick Gass, Private Joseph Whitehouse, Private Robert Frazier and Private Alexander Willard—they faith-

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

fully scrawled with their quill pens, recording each day's events as they saw them. The journals of Floyd, Gass, and Whitehouse have been published, so that we may read them as well as the journals of the captains.

Not until the first of August, and when almost fifty miles above the mouth of the Platte River, was the first council with the Indians held. Here a few Otoes and Missouris came in, at a camping-place on the Nebraska side of the Missouri, christened by the two captains the Council-bluffs, from which the present Iowa city of Council Bluffs, twenty miles below and opposite, takes its name.

Now in the middle of August the expedition is encamped at the west side of the river, about fifteen miles below present Sioux City, Iowa, waiting to talk with the principal chiefs of the Otoes and the Omahas, and hoping to establish a peace between them. But the Omahas had fled from the small-pox, and the Otoes were slow to come in.

The voyageur Liberté and the soldier Moses Reed were missing from the camp; a party had been sent out to capture them as deserters.

Eight hundred and thirty-six miles had been logged off, from St. Louis, in the three months.

Here the story opens.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

I

THE COMING OF THE WHITE CHIEFS

"THEY are many," reported Shon-go-ton-go, or Big Horse, sub-chief of the Otoes.

"How many?" asked We-ah-rush-hah, or Little Thief, the head chief.

"As many," replied Big Horse, "as five times the fingers on two hands."

"Wah!" gravely grunted the circle, where the chiefs and warriors squatted in their blankets and buffalo robes.

For August, the Ripe Corn month, of 1804, had arrived to the Oto Indians' country in present Nebraska beyond the Missouri River; but now at their buffalo-hunt camp north of the River Platte the chiefs of the combined Oto and Missouri nations sat in solemn council instead of chasing the buffalo.

Through a long time, or since the month when the buffalo begin to shed, the air had been full of rumors. Five moons back, when the cottonwood buds first swelled, down at the big white village of "San Loui'" there had been a ceremony by which, according to the best word, all this vast land watered by the Missouri River had changed white fathers. The Span-

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

ish father's flag had been hauled down, and a different flag had been raised. Indians had been there and had seen; yes, Shawnees, Saukies, Delawares, Osages—they had been there, and had seen. The Spanish governor, whose name was Delassus, had made a speech, to the white people. He had said:

PROCLAMATION

March 9, 1804.

Inhabitants of Upper Louisiana :

By the King's command, I am about to deliver up this post and its dependences!

The flag under which you have been protected for a period of nearly thirty-six years is to be withdrawn. From this moment you are released from the oath of fidelity you took to support it.

The speech was hard to understand, but there it was, tacked up on the white man's talking paper. Moreover, the good governor had made a talk for the Indians also, his red children. He had said:

Your old fathers, the Spaniard and the Frenchman, who grasp by the hand your new father, the head chief of the United States, by an act of their good will, and in virtue of their last treaty, have delivered up to them all these lands. They will keep and defend them, and protect all the white and red skins who live thereon.

For several days we have fired off cannon shots to announce to all the nations that your father, the Spaniard, is going, his heart happy to know that you will be protected and sustained by your new father, and that the smoke of the powder may ascend to the Master of Life, praying him to shower on you all a happy destiny and prosperity in always living in good union with the whites.

Up the great river and into the west, by traders and runners had come the tidings.

THE COMING OF THE WHITE CHIEFS

Who were these United States? What kind of a man was the new white father? He was sending a party of his warriors, bearing presents and peace talk. They already had ascended the big river, past the mouth of the Platte. They had dispatched messengers to the Otoes and the Missouris, asking them to come in to council. But the Otoes and Missouris had left their village where they lived with their friends the Pawnees, in order to hunt the buffalo before gathering their corn, and only by accident had the invitation reached them.

Then Shon-go-ton-go and We-the-a and Shos-gus-can and others had gone; and had returned safe and satisfied. They had returned laden with gifts—paint and armlets and powder, and medals curiously figured, hung around their necks by the two white chiefs themselves. They had hastened to seek out We-ah-rush-hah, the head chief, in his camp, and report.

The white chiefs were waiting to treat with him, as was proper, and they had sent to him a bright colored flag, and ornaments, and a medal.

“What do the white chiefs want?” queried We-ah-rush-hah.

“They say that the new white father will be generous with the Otoes and Missouris, and wishes us to be at peace with our enemies.”

“Will he protect us from those robbers, the Omahas?”

“He wishes us to make peace with the Omahas.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

The United States would go with us to the Omahas, but we told them we were afraid. We are poor and weak and the Omahas would kill us."

"Good," approved We-ah-rush-hah.

"There are two of the white chiefs," added Wethe-a, or Hospitable One, the Missouri chief. "They wear long knives by their sides. Their hair is of strange color. The hair of one is yellow like ripe corn; the hair of the other is red as pipe-stone. The Red Head is big and pleasant; the yellow-haired one is slim and very straight, and when he speaks he does not smile. Yes, the Red Head is a buffalo, but the other is an elk."

"They have three boats," added Shos-gus-can, or White Horse, who was an Oto. "One boat is larger than any boat of any trader. It has a gun that talks in thunder. Of the other boats, one is painted white, one is painted red. The chiefs are dressed in long blue shirts that glitter with shining metal. The party are strong in arms. They have much guns, and powder and lead, and much medicine. They have a gun that shoots with air, and shoots many times. It is great medicine. They have a man all black like a buffalo in fall, with very white teeth and short black hair, curly like a buffalo's. He is great medicine. They carry a white flag with blue and red borders. Red, white and blue are their medicine colors. The flag is their peace sign. There are French with them, from below, and another, a trader from the Sioux. They

THE COMING OF THE WHITE CHIEFS

received us under a white lodge, and have named the place the Council-bluffs. They must be of a great nation."

"I will go and see these United States, and talk with them," announced Little Thief, majestically. "Their presents have been good, their words sound good. It is unwise to refuse gifts laid upon the prairie. If indeed we have a new father for all the Indians, maybe by listening to his chiefs we can get more from him than we did from our Spanish father. I will go and talk, at the burnt Omaha village. Let the four white men who have come with gifts and a message, seeking brothers-who-have-run-away, be well treated, so that we shall be well treated also."

Then the council broke up.

On the outskirts, a boy, Little White Osage, had listened with all his ears. The affair was very interesting. A hot desire filled his heart to go, himself, and see these United States warriors, with their painted boats and their marvelous guns and their black medicine-man and their two chiefs whose hair was different, like his own hair.

His own hair was brown and fine instead of being black and coarse, and his eyes were blue instead of black, and his skin, even in its tan, was light instead of dark. Sometimes he was puzzled to remember just how he had come among the Otoes. He did not always feel like an Indian. To be sure, he had been bought from the Osages by the Otoes; but away, 'way back

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

there had been a woman, a light-haired, soft-skinned woman, among the Osages, who had kissed him and hugged him and had taught him a language that he well-nigh had forgotten.

Occasionally one of those strange words rose to his lips, but he rarely used it, because the Osages, and now the Otoes, did not wish him to use it.

The Otoes called him Little White Osage, as a kind of slur. Nobody kissed him and hugged him, but in their ill-natured moments the Oto squaws beat him, and the children teased him. The squaws never beat the other boys. Antoine, the French trader, was kinder to him. But Antoine had married an Oto woman, and all his children were dark and Indian.

“At the burnt Omaha village,” had said Chief Little Thief.

Little White Osage knew where this was. The United States chiefs, by their messengers, had invited Little Thief to meet them at the principal Omaha Indian village, so that peace might be made between the Omahas and the Otoes. But the village had been smitten by a sickness—the smallpox, old Antoine had named it, and the frightened Omahas had burned their lodges and had fled, such as were able. Only the site of the village remained, and its graves.

It would be of no use to try to go with the chief's party. They would not want boys, and especially a boy who was not like other Indian boys, and bore a name of the hated Osages. Therefore, this night, in

THE COMING OF THE WHITE CHIEFS

the dusk, he slipped from under his thin blanket in the skin lodge, where slumbered old Antoine and family, and scuttled, bending low, out into the prairie.

He would have sought the four white men who had come from the United States chiefs' camp, but they had left, looking for two other men who had strayed. And besides, he didn't feel certain that they would help him.

The prairie was thick with high grasses, and with bushes whereon berries were ripening; he wore only a cloth about his waist, on his feet moccasins, but he did not mind, for his skin was tough. He carried his bow, of the yellow osage wood, and slung under his left arm his badger-hide quiver containing blunt reed arrows.

The damp night air was heavy with smoke, for the prairies had been fired in order to drive out the game. Now and then he startled some animal. Eyes glowed at him, and disappeared, and a shadowy form loped away. That was a wolf. He was not afraid of any cowardly wolf. Larger forms bolted, with snorts. They were antelope. To a tremendous snort a much larger form bounded from his path. That was an elk. But he hastened on at a trot and fast walk, alert and excited, his nostrils and eyes and ears wide, while he ever kept the North Star before him on his left.

It seemed long ere in the east, whither he was hurrying, the stars were paling. On his swift young legs he had covered many miles. None of the Oto or

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Missouri boys could have done better, but he simply had to rest. The dawn brightened; he should eat and hide himself and sleep. So he paused, to make plans.

“Wah!” And “Hoorah!” “Hoorah!” was one of those strange words which would rise to his lips. Far before him, although not more than three or four hours' travel, was a low line of trees marking the course of the big river. He took a step; from a clump of brush leaped a rabbit—and stopped to squat. Instantly Little White Osage had strung bow, fitted arrow, and shot. The arrow thudded, the rabbit scarcely kicked. Picking him up, Little White Osage trotted on, his breakfast in hand.

Now he smelled smoke stronger, and scouting about he cautiously approached a smouldering camp-fire. Omahas? But he espied nobody moving, or lying down. It was an old camp-fire. Around it he discovered in the dust that had been stirred up, the prints of boots. The white men had been here—perhaps the messengers to the camp of Little Thief. Good! He might cook his rabbit; and sitting, he did cook it after he had built the fire into more heat. He ate. Then he curled in the grass, like a brown rabbit himself, and slept.

When he wakened, the sun was high. He stretched; peered, to be safe; drank from a nearby creek, and set forward again. Nearer he drew to the big river, and nearer; and he had to move more carefully lest the Omahas should be lurking at their village, and sight

THE COMING OF THE WHITE CHIEFS

him. The Omahas would be glad to capture anybody from the Otoes. There was no peace between the two peoples.

The ruined village lay lifeless and black, with its graves on the hill above it. He circled the village, and found a spot whence he could gaze down.

The broad big river flowed evenly between its low banks; curving amidst the willows and cottonwoods and sandbars, it was the highway for the great white village of "San Loui'," at its mouth many days to the south. It led also up into the country of the Mandans and the fierce Sioux, in the unknown north. And yonder, on a sand spit above the mouth of the Omaha Creek, was the white chiefs' camp!

With his sharp eyes Little White Osage eagerly surveyed. Three boats there were, just as said by Shos-gus-can: one painted white, and one painted red, and one very large, fastened in the shallows. On the sand were kettles, over fires, and many men moving about, or lying under a canopy; and a red, white and blue flag flying in the breeze.

A party were leaving the camp, and coming toward him. They could not see him—he was too cleverly hidden in the bushes, above. Wading through the grasses waist high they made for the creek and halted where the beavers had dammed it into a pond. These were white men, surely. They numbered the fingers on two hands, and three more fingers. They carried guns, and a net of branches and twigs; and one, a tall

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

straight man, wore at his side a long knife in a sheath which flashed. He had on his head a queer three-cornered covering. He was the leader, for when he spoke and pointed, the other men jumped to obey.

They walked into the water, to net fish. They hauled and tugged and plashed and laughed and shouted; and when they emerged upon the bank again their net was so heavy that the leader sprang to help them. He tossed aside his head covering. His hair was bright like ripe corn. One of the two chiefs, he!

What a lot of fish they brought out! Hundreds of them sparkled in the sun. This sport continued until near sunset, when the men all went away, to eat and sleep.

At dusk little White Osage stole down to the creek. Some of the fish were scattered about, but they were stiff and dull; he could not eat them without cooking them and he was afraid to risk a fire. So he gathered mussels and clams, and these were pretty good, raw.

That night the camp-fires of the "United States" warriors blazed on the beach at the river; in the grasses of a hollow above the creek Little White Osage finally slept.

Therefore another morning dawned and found him still here, waiting to see what the new whites would do next. But he must not be caught by Chief Little Thief and old Antoine, or they would punish him.

The United States were eating. Almost could he smell the meat on the fires. After eating, the camp

THE COMING OF THE WHITE CHIEFS

busied itself in many ways. Some of the men again walked up the creek. Others raised a pole, or mast, on the largest boat. Others swam and frolicked in the river. Evidently the camp was staying for the arrival of We-ah-rush-hah.

But that meat! The thought of it made the mouth of Little White Osage to water. Well, he must go and find something and cook it where he would be safe, and then return to those women and children who did not like him. He had seen the "'Nited States," and their chief with the yellow hair. Maybe he had seen the red-hair chief, too.

He crept on hands and knees, until he might trudge boldly, aiming northward so as not to meet with Little Thief. When after a time he looked back, toward the river, he saw a great smoke rising. The United States had set the prairie afire!

Hah! That they had! Did they set the prairie afire just to burn him, a boy? Had they known that he was watching them, and had that made them angry? The smoke increased rapidly—broadened and billowed. The prairie breeze puffed full and strong from the southeast, and the pungent odor of burning grasses swept across his quivering nostrils. The fire was pursuing him. It had cut off any retreat to the big river waters; it was swifter than an antelope, on his trail. Very cunning and cruel were those "'Nited States" men.

Through the tall dry grasses strained Little White

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Osage, seeking refuge. He sobbed in his husky throat. If he might but reach that line of sand hills, yonder, they would break the wall of fire and save him. It was such a big fire to send after such a small boy. Now the sun was veiled by the scudding smoke, and the wind blew acrid and hot. Before him fled animals—racing antelope and bounding elk, galloping wolves and darting birds. They were fast; but he—alas, he was too slow, and he was weak and tired. Was he to be burned? He threw aside his quiver, and next his bow. They felt so heavy.

The fire was close. He could hear the crackle and the popping as it devoured everything. The sand hills were mocking him; they seemed to sneak backward as he toiled forward. Suddenly, panting and stumbling, he burst into a little clearing, where the grasses were short. In the midst of the clearing lay the carcass of a buffalo bull.

With dimmed staring eyes Little White Osage, casting wildly about for shelter, saw. He saw the carcass, partially cut up; the meat had been piled on the hide, as if the hunters had left, to get it another time; and on the meat was planted a ramrod or wiping-stick, with a coat hung on it, to keep off the wolves. But nobody was here.

Not in vain had little White Osage been trained to look out for himself. Now he knew what he could do. He staggered for the meat-pile; frantically tore it away, but not to eat it. He barely could lift the great hide,

THE COMING OF THE WHITE CHIEFS

but lift it he did; wriggled underneath, drew it over him, and crouched there, gasping.

Crackle, pop, roar—and the wall of fire charged the clearing, dashed into it, licked hotly across it, and snatched at the robe. He felt the robe shrivel and writhe, and smelled the stench of sizzling flesh and hair. He could scarcely breathe. Over him the buffalo hide was scorching through and through. How the fire roared, how the wind blew; but neither fire nor wind could get at him through that tough, inch-thick canopy. Almost smothered by heat and smoke, Little White Osage cringed, waiting. He was a wee bit afraid.

Soon he knew that the fire had passed. He ventured to raise an edge of the hide and peek from under. Smoke wafted into his face and choked him. Black lay the cindered land around; the fire was surging on to the west, where the sand hills would stop it, but it had mowed a path too hot to walk on, yet. He must stay awhile.

He reached out a hand and dragged to him a piece of the charred bloody buffalo meat, and nibbled at it. Over him the buffalo hide had stiffened, to form a puppet; and really he was not so very uncomfortable. He ate, and stretching the best that he might, pillowed his face on his bended arm. Next, he was asleep—tired Little White Osage.

He slept with an ear open, for voices and tread of feet aroused him. People were coming. He craned his neck to peer about—and ducked further inside, like a turtle inside its shell.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Two persons had arrived in the clearing. They were walking straight toward him. They were white men. They were some of those United States warriors!

A moment more, and a heavy foot kicked the hide—thump!—and hands ruthlessly overthrew it. Exposed, Little White Osage sprang erect, gained his feet at a bound, stood bravely facing the two warriors of the “’Nited States.” He would not show them that he feared.

“B’ gorry,” exclaimed a voice, “here’s a quare pea in a pod!”

II

PETER GOES ABOARD

LITTLE WHITE OSAGE did not understand the words, but they were said with a laugh. He could only stare.

Two, were these United States men. The one who had spoken was short and broad and quick, like a bear. He had a lean freckled face and shrewd twinkling grey eyes. He wore a blue shirt, and belted trousers, and boots, and on his head a wide-brimmed black hat. Leaning upon a long-barrelled flint-lock gun, he laughed.

The other man was younger—much younger, almost too young to take the war path. He was smooth-faced and very blue-eyed. He wore a blue shirt, too, and fringed buckskin trousers, and moccasins, and around his black hair a red handkerchief, gaily tied.

But as his hair was black, he could not be one of the chiefs. The short man's hair was not black, but it was the color of wet sand—and so he could not be one of the chiefs.

Now the young warrior spoke and his voice was sweet.

“Who are you, boy?”

This Little White Osage did understand. The words penetrated through as from a distance. There

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

had been a long time since he had heard such words. His throat swelled to answer.

“ Boy,” he stammered.

“ I see. What boy? Oto?”

Little White Osage shook his head.

“ Missouri?”

Little White Osage shook his head.

“ 'Maha?”

Little White Osage shook his head more vigorously.

“ What tribe, then?”

Little White Osage struggled hard to reply in that language. But his throat closed tight. The young warrior was so handsome and so kind, and the broad warrior was so homely and so alert, and he himself was so small and so full of hopes and fears, that he choked. He could not speak at all.

“ See what you can make out of him, Pat,” bade the young warrior. “ He seems afraid of me. But he understands English.”

“ Faith, now,” drawled the bold warrior, “ sure, mebbe he's wan o' them Mandan Injuns, from up-river. Haven't they the eyes an' complexion same as a white man?” And he addressed Little White Osage. “ Mandan?”

Little White Osage again shook his head.

“ Well, if you're not Oto or Missouri or 'Maha or Mandan, who be ye? My name's Patrick Gass; what's your name?”

The throat of Little White Osage swelled. He

PETER GOES ABOARD

strove—and suddenly out popped the word, long, long unused.

“Kerr.”

“What?”

“Kerr—white boy.”

“Holy saints!” exclaimed Patrick Gass, astonished. “Did you hear that, George, lad? An’ sure he’s white, an’ by the name o’ him Irish! Ye’ll find the Irish, wherever ye go. An’ what might be your first name, me boy? Is it Pat, or Terry, or Mike?”

That was too much talk all at once, for Little White Osage. The man called George helped him out.

“How can he understand your villainous brogue, Pat! Let me talk to him.” And he invited, of Little White Osage: “Kerr, you say?”

Little White Osage nodded.

“You are white?”

“Yes.”

“Where’d you come from?”

“Oto.”

“Where are you going?”

A boldness seized upon Little White Osage.

“You,” he said. “Up big river—with ’Nited States.”

“Oho!” laughed Patrick Gass. “Another recruit, is it? Does your mother say you might?”

Little White Osage shook his head. Somehow, a lump rose in his throat. “Mother?” What was “mother?” That soft white woman, who away back

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

in the Osage village had hugged him and kissed him and taught him these words which thronged inside him, must have been "mother."

"No mother. No f-f-father." He carefully felt his way. "Ken—Kentucky. Peter—Peter Kerr. Go up river with 'Nited States." And he managed another word. "Please."

"An' we set the prairie afire to call in the Injuns, an' here's what we caught," ejaculated Patrick Gass. "Peter Kerr, be it? Likely that was his father's name, an' he's young Peter. Well, what'll we do with him?"

"We can take him back to the boats with us, I suppose," mused George. "But as for his going on with the expedition, Pat, I don't know what the captains would say, or the Otoes, either. He's from the Otoes, he claims."

"Ah, sure ain't he an Irishman from Kentucky?" reminded Pat. "An' ain't we Irish, too? Mebbe we can buy the young spalpeen, for a trifle o' paint an' powder."

George didn't think so.

"I doubt if the Otoes would sell him. How long have you been with the Otoes, Peter?"

Little White Osage had been listening as hard as he could, trying to guess what these long speeches were about. That last question, to him, awakened an answer.

"Al-ways," he uttered, slowly. "First Osage, then Oto."

PETER GOES ABOARD

“Do you know where Kentucky is?”

Little White Osage shook his head.

“No.” But he pointed to the east. “There.”

“Where are your father and mother?”

“There,” and Little White Osage pointed to the sky.

“Do you know where St. Louis is?”

“There,” and he pointed south.

“Do you know where we’re going?”

“There,” and he pointed north.

“When did you leave the Otoes?”

“Two days.”

“Why?”

“Me—white; you white. I ’Nited States.” And Little White Osage stiffened proudly.

“Bedad, spoken like a good citizen,” approved Patrick Gass. “Faith, George, lad, ’twould be a shame to return him to the Injuns—to them uncivilized rascals. Can’t we smuggle him aboard? An’ then after we’re all under way the two captains can do with him as they plaze.” His gray eyes danced at the thought, and he scanned George questioningly.

George’s blue eyes were twinkling.

“I dare say that on our way up river we’ll meet more traders coming down, and he can be sent to St. Louis that way. But we’re liable to be in a scrape, Pat, if we’re found out.”

“What’s an Irishman without a scrape?” laughed Pat. “Listen, now,” he bade, to Little White Osage,

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

who had been attending very keenly. "After dusk ye slip aboard the big boat. Understand?"

Little White Osage nodded. They had planned something good for him, and he was willing to agree to whatever it was.

"Slip aboard the big boat," and Pat pointed and signed, to make plain, "an' hide yourself away for'd down among the supplies. Kape quiet till after the council, or the Otoes'll get ye. I'll be findin' ye an' passin' ye a bit to ate. An' when we're a-sailin' up the big river wance more, then ye'll have to face the captains, an' what they'll say I dunno, but I'll bet my hat that Cap'n Clark'll talk the heart o' Cap'n Lewis, who's an officer an' a gintleman, into lettin' ye stay if there's proof ye have no-wheres else to go." And Patrick Gass chuckled. "Sure, they can't set ye afoot on the prairie."

There were too many strange words in this speech, but Little White Osage caught the import.

"I hide," he said, obediently. "In big boat."

"Right-o!" encouraged George. "And if you're found, stand up for yourself."

"No tell," blurted Little White Osage. "Talk to 'Nited States chiefs. No tell."

"B' jabbers, there's pluck!" approved Patrick Gass. "Now, we be goin' to take some o' this meat back wid us, but we'll lave you enough to chew on. You have plenty fire. 'Twas only for signal to the Injuns to come in to council. We had no thought o'

PETER GOES ABOARD

burnin' annywan, 'specially a boy. No, or of burnin' me own coat, nayther, till I see the wind changin'." He and George rapidly made up a parcel of the meat, blackened and charred though the hunks were. "But we cooked our supper by it. Goodbye to ye. Chance be we'll see ye later." With airy wave of hand he trudged away.

"His name is Patrick Gass. My name is George Shannon," emphasized George, lingering a moment. "Yours is Peter Kerr. All right, Peter. Watch out for the Otoes, that they don't spy you when you come in after dark."

"I come," answered Peter, carefully. "Oto no catch."

Away they hastened, toward the river. Standing stock-still, Peter watched them go. Good men they were. They were white; he was white. They were 'Nited States; he was to be 'Nited States, too.

He did not pause to eat now. He grabbed a chunk of the buffalo meat left for him, and trotted for the nearest sand-hill. The fire had burned before him, and the earth was still warm, but the sand-hills were untouched.

He drank, at last, from a branch of the Omaha Creek; and among the sand-hills he stayed all day.

In the afternoon he heard, from off toward the United States camp at the river, a rumble like thunder. It was the big gun! At dusk he saw a glow redly lighting the eastern horizon over the river. Maybe the

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

United States were having a war-dance. At any rate, the man named Pat had told him to come; this seemed to be the best time; and, guided by the glow, he hurried for the river.

When he had struck the river well above the camp, the boats and the beach were ruddy. People had gathered about a huge fire. They were making music and dancing; and some were white men and others were Indians: Otoes! Chief Little Thief had arrived.

Somewhat fearing, but very determined, Peter cautiously waded out into the water, and from waist-deep slipping into the current silently swam down, down, outside the edge of the firelight, until obliquing in he might use the big boat as a shield. With his hand he felt along it; encountered a rope stretched taut from boat to water. Wah! Or—hoorah, he meant.

As neatly as a cat he swarmed up the rope and hoisted himself over the gunwale. Sprawling in, he dropped flat, to cower in the shadow of the mast. A dark figure, with a gun, had seen him—was making for him, from down the deck.

“Hist, Peter!” huskily spoke a voice. “’Tis Pat. Ye’re all right. Stay where ye are, now!”

Yes, except for Pat, the sentry, all the big boat was deserted. There was a great time ashore. Crouched panting and dripping, Peter witnessed, from behind the mast. The shore was bright, the figures plainly outlined. There were the two white chiefs. Of

PETER GOES ABOARD

this he was certain. They had on their heads the queer hats; they wore long tight blue shirts that glittered with ornaments; they carried the long knives, in sheathes at their sides; the one was the chief with the yellow hair, and the other was the chief with the red hair.

The 'Nited States were giving a feast and dance, evidently. Two of them were making music by drawing a stick across a box held to their chins; and the others, and the Indians, sat in a circle, around the fire, watching the dances.

It was now the turn of the Otoes, for they sprang up, and into the centre, to dance. Peter knew them, one by one: Head Chief Little Thief, Big Horse, Crow's Head, Black Cat, Iron Eyes, Bix Ox, Brave Man, and Big Blue Eyes—all Otoes except Crow's Head and Black Cat, who were Missouris.

They danced. It was the Oto Buffalo Dance. The 'Nited States warriors cheered—and on a sudden cheered louder and clapped their hands together, for into the centre had leaped a new figure, to dance by himself.

He was the black medicine man!

His eyes rolled white; his teeth were white; but all the rest of him was black—and he was very large. Assuredly, the 'Nited States must be a great and powerful nation, with such medicine men, decided little Peter, watching.

Along the deck Patrick Gass hissed and beckoned.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

“Here,” he bade. Peter scurried to him. “Get down in for’d,” and Pat pointed to the open door of the forecastle or wooden house that had been built in the bows, under a higher deck. “Stow yourself away an’ kape quiet. Ye’ll find a place.”

Peter darted in. It was a room lined with beds in tiers from floor to ceiling: the white warriors’ sleeping-room. Clothing was hanging against the far end; down the centre was a narrow table. Like a cat again, Peter sprang upon the table, scrambled into the highest of the bunks on this side, and came to the far-end wall. The wall did not meet the roof; it was a bulk-head partition dividing off the room from the remainder of the bows. Peter thrust his arm in over the top, and could feel, there beyond, a solid bale on a level with the bunk. He wriggled in over, landed cautiously, explored with hands and feet, in the darkness—and stretched out in a space that had been left between the ballast of extra supplies and the deck above. Good!

That warm August night the “’Nited States” men of Captains Lewis and Clark slept on the sand, in the open air, by the river; and in the tent of the captains slept Chief Little Thief. But Patrick Gass, when relieved from guard duty, slept in the forecastle, near Peter—that being, as he yawned, “more convanient.”

III

PETER MEETS THE CHIEFS

THE hour was early when Pat stuck his head over the partition, and to Peter said: "Whisht! Are ye awake, Peter?"

"H'lo," answered Peter.

"I'll fetch ye a bite to eat, an' wather to drink," said Patrick. "An' ye best lie hid till we start, when the Injuns go. 'Twon't be long."

"Aw-right," answered Peter.

Patrick passed in to him some dried meat and a canteen of water. After that the day seemed to move very slowly. Here on the boat all was quiet, particularly in Peter's end. However, outside on the shore there was a constant sound of voices, from the 'Nited States camp.

The sun rose high, as betokened by the close warmth where Peter lay hidden. He felt as though he must get out and see what was going on. So he peered over the top of the partition, to find whether the forecastle was empty. It was. He slipped down into it, and stealing through and worming flat across the deck, peeped through a crack in the gunwale.

Little Thief and his Otoes and Missouris had not yet gone. They were holding another council with the 'Nited States. More talk! The 'Nited States chiefs

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

and warriors were sitting, and the Otoes and Missouris were sitting, all forming a great circle.

One after another the Otoes and the Missouris arose and talked, and the white chiefs replied; but of **all** this talk Peter understood little. After a time he grew tired; the sun was hot, and he went back into his nook. He still had meat and water enough.

It was much later when he awakened, to hear people in the room beyond his partition. There were white men's voices—one voice sounded like that of his other friend, George Shannon. And there were groans. Soon the white men left—all except the man who groaned. He stayed. Evidently one of the white men was sick, and had been put into a bed.

Dusk was falling, and Peter thought that he might venture out and stretch his legs. The sounds from the sick man had ceased; maybe he slept. Peter peered over. Everything was quiet; and forth he slipped—only to discover that in the open door was sitting, amidst the dusk, a watcher. It was the United States warrior, George Shannon. He saw Peter, poised about to leap down, and smiled and beckoned. Peter lightly went to him.

George Shannon looked worn and anxious.

“Are you all right, Peter?”

“Yes. Aw-right.”

“A soldier—very sick,” said George, and pointed to a bunk.

“What name?” asked Peter.

PETER MEETS THE CHIEFS

“ Charles Floyd. He danced and got hot. Lay down on the sand all night and got cold. Now very sick.”

“ Huh,” grunted Peter. “ Mebbe get well? ”

“ I don’t know,” said George, soberly.

That was too bad. Why didn’t they call in the black medicine-man?

Except for George and the sick Charles Floyd, the boat was deserted; for on the shore another dance and feast were in progress. Chief Little Thief and his Indians were staying, and the ’Nited States appeared to be bent upon giving them a good time.

All that night the sick Charles Floyd moaned at intervals, in the bunk; and George Shannon and Patrick Gass and others kept watch over him; while Peter, on the other side of the partition, listened or slept. Toward morning, when Peter next woke up, he had been aroused by tramp of feet over his head, and splash of water against the boat, and orders shouted, and a movement of the boat itself.

They were starting, and he was starting with them! Hoorah! Now he was not hungry or thirsty or tired; he was excited.

Yes, the boat was moving. He could hear the plashing of oars, and the creak as the sail was raised. And in a few minutes more the boat leaned and swerved and tugged, and the river rippled under its bow.

Peter waited as long as he possibly could stand it to wait. Patrick Gass had said for him to lie hidden

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

until Chief Little Thief had left, and the boat had started. Very well.

All was silent in the room beyond. He peered, and could see nobody. Over the partition he once more squirmed, into the top-most bunk; and feeling with his toes let himself down. The door was shut, but it had a window in it that he might look out of; and if anybody opened, he would dive under the table or under a bunk, until he saw who it was.

The sick man in the bottom bunk opposite suddenly exclaimed. He was awake and watching.

"Who are you?" he challenged weakly.

With his feet on the floor, Peter paused, to stare. He saw a pale, clammy countenance gazing at him from the blanket coverings—and at that instant the door opened, and before Peter might so much as stir, the chief with the red hair entered. Peter was fairly caught. He drew breath sharply, and resolved not to show fear.

The chief with the red hair was all in buckskin, and wore moccasins on his feet, and on his head a round hat with the brim looped up in front. His face was without hair and was very tanned, so that it was reddish brown instead of white, and his two eyes were clear, keen gray. His hair was bound behind in a long bag of thin skin. He had rather a large nose, and a round chin; and was heavy.

"Well!" he uttered. He glanced swiftly from Peter to the sick man's bunk, and back again to Peter. "What's this?"

PETER MEETS THE CHIEFS

"He stole down from above, Captain," said the sick man.

"How are you, Sergeant? Any better?"

"No, sir. I'm awful weak, sir."

"Much pain?"

"Yes, sir. I've been suffering terribly."

"I'm sorry, my man. We'll do all we can for you." Now the chief spoke to Peter. "Who are you? How'd you come here?" His voice was stern and quick.

"I hide," said Peter.

"Where?"

Peter pointed.

"Who brought you here?"

"I come. Night. Swim down river. Hide." For Peter had no notion of telling on Patrick Gass and George Shannon.

"Humph! You did!" And the chief with the red hair grunted. "Ran away, eh? Who was your chief?"

"We-ah-rush-hah. First Osage, then Oto, but me white."

"Where's your mother?"

Peter shook his head.

"Where's your father?"

Peter shook his head.

"Here's a pretty pickle," muttered the chief with the red hair—and Peter wondered what he meant. "Well, you come along with me." And he added, to

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

the sick man, "I'll be back directly, Charley; as soon as I've turned this stow-away over. Do you want anything?"

"No, sir. I'm sleepy. Maybe I'll sleep," and the sick man's voice trailed off into a murmur.

"Come here," bade the red-haired chief to Peter, beckoning with his finger. And Peter followed Captain William Clark, of the United States Artillery, and second in command of this Captains Lewis and Clark government exploring expedition up the Missouri River, through the doorway, into the sunshine and the open of the great barge's deck.

Captain Clark led straight for the stern, but on the way Peter, keeping close behind him, with his quick eyes saw many things. The white warriors, in buckskins or in cloth, were busy here and there, mending clothes and tools and weapons and assorting goods, or viewing the river banks—and all paused to gaze at him. The big sail was pulling lustily, from its mast. At the stern two warriors were steering. In the barge's wake were sailing the two smaller barges, the red one and the white one. They followed gallantly, the river rippled, the banks were flowing past. Nothing was to be seen moving on the banks, and the site of the Omaha village, and the sand spit where the council with Little Thief had been held, were gone. Good!

Before the cabin in the stern of the barge were standing the slim, yellow-haired chief and Patrick Gass, and they were watching Peter coming. The slim

PETER MEETS THE CHIEFS

chief was dressed in his blue clothes and his odd hat, and wore his long knife by his side. His hair hung in a tail. Patrick Gass was dressed as always. His eyes twinkled at Peter, as if to say: "Now, what are you going to do?"

Peter knew what he was going to do. He was going to stay with the 'Nited States.

But the slim chief's face betrayed no sign. He simply waited. For this Captain Meriwether Lewis, of the First United States Infantry, the leader of the exploring expedition sent out by President Jefferson and Congress, was not much given to smiles, and was strong on discipline. A thorough young soldier, he, who felt the heavy responsibility of taking the expedition safely through, with the help of Captain Clark.

"Here's what I've found, Merne," announced Captain Clark, with half a laugh.

"Who is he, Will?" Captain Lewis's query was quick, and his brows knitted a trifle.

"He says he's white. I found him in the forec'sle when I went in to see about Floyd."

"How is Floyd?"

"No better."

"How'd that boy get there?"

"Ran away from the Otoes, he says, and hid himself in the bows beyond the bulkhead. Like as not he's been there a day or two."

"What's your name?" demanded the Long Knife Chief, of Peter.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

“ Peter.”

“ What else? ”

“ Peter—Kerr.”

“ Where did you live? ”

“ Oto. No like Oto. No like Indian. White boy.”

“ Hah! Did the Otoes steal you? ”

“ Osage. Oto buy me.”

“ Where did the Osage get you? ”

“ Do—not—know,” said Peter, slowly, trying to speak the right words. “ Kill—father. Take mother. She die. Long time ago. Me—I white.”

“ Sure, Captain, didn't we hear down St. Louis way of a fam ly by the same name o' Kerr bein' wiped out by the Injuns some years back,” spoke Patrick Gass, saluting. “ 'Twas up country a bit, though I disremember where, sorr.”

“ Yes, but there was no boy.”

“ There was a bit of a baby, seems to me like, sorr,” alleged Sergeant Gass. “ An' the woman was carried off, sorr.”

Captain Lewis shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

“ Very well, Pat. You go forward and you and Shannon see if you can do anything for Floyd. Don't let him move much. He's liable to be restless.”

“ Yes, sorr.” Patrick Gass saluted but lingered a moment. “ If I might be so bold, sorr——”

“ What is it? ”

“ Seein' as how the boy's Irish——”

“ Irish! He's as black as an Indian!”

PETER MEETS THE CHIEFS

"Yes, sorr. But the eyes an' hair of him, sorr. An' sure he has an Irish name. An' I was thinkin', beggin' your pardon, sorr, if you decided to kape him a spell, Shannon an' me'd look after him for ye, sorr. We Irish are all cousins, ye know, sorr."

Young Captain Lewis's mouth twitched; he shot a glance at Captain Clark, who smiled back.

"Does that sound to you like an Irish name, Captain? More like good old English, to me!"

"I was thinkin' again, sorr," pursued Pat, "that more like it's O'Kerr."

"That will do, Gass. Go forward and find Shannon, and the two of you tend to Floyd." Patrick saluted and trudged away. Captain Lewis continued, to Captain Clark: "There's something back of this, Will. Gass is too willing. I'll wager he and Shannon know more than we do."

"Oh, it's the Irish in him, Merne. Do you think they smuggled the lad aboard?"

"If they did—who brought you on this boat?" demanded the Long Knife Chief of Peter.

Peter shrugged *his* shoulders.

"I come," he said.

"Why?"

"Go with 'Nited States. Up big river."

"Who taught you to speak English?"

"My—mother," stammered Peter. "No English; 'Merican; Ken-tuck-y."

"Kentuckian!" blurted Captain Clark. "He is

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

white, sure enough. That comes pretty close to home-folks, Merne. I know some Kerrs there, myself."

"But the question is, what are we to do with him?" reminded Captain Lewis, sharply. "We can't cumber ourselves with useless baggage, and we can't start out by stealing children from the Indians."

"No; and yet it sort of goes against the grain to let the Indians keep any children they've stolen," argued Captain Clark.

"Yes, I agree with you there, Will," answered Captain Lewis. "But the President instructed us to make friends with all the tribes. We could have shown the Otoes they were wrong, and could have offered to buy the boy or have made them promise to send him to St. Louis if we couldn't send him ourselves. This looks like bad faith."

"Shall we stop and put him ashore, Merne?"

"If we put you ashore will you go back to We-ah-rush-hah?" queried the Long Knife Chief, of Peter.

Peter had not comprehended all that had been said, but he had listened anxiously—and now he did understand that they were talking of putting him off.

"No!" he exclaimed. "No go back to We-ah-rush-hah. 'Maha catch me; Sioux catch me; Oto whip me. No Indian; white.'" And he added: "I follow boat."

"If you give the order, Merne, we'll stop and send him back with an escort," teased Captain Clark, who knew very well that Captain Lewis would do no such

PETER MEETS THE CHIEFS

thing. "And we'll tell the Otoes to forward him on down to St. Louis. You think they'd do it, do you?"

Captain Lewis tapped uneasily with his foot.

"Oh, pshaw, Will," he said. "We can't stop and waste this fine breeze, even to send back a boy. When we land for dinner will be the proper time. We may meet some traders, bound down, and he can be started back with them, to St. Louis. Meanwhile Gass and Shannon must take care of him."

"He can be sent down river with the first party that take back the dispatches," proffered Captain Clark.

Patrick Gass came clumping up the deck and again saluted.

"Sergeant Floyd wishes might he speak with Cap'n Clark, sorr."

"How is he, Pat?"

"Turrible weak, sorr, but the pain be not so bad."

"Go ahead, Will," bade Captain Lewis. "You enlisted him. He knows you better. If I can do anything, call me."

The Red Hair Chief hastened away. The Long Knife Chief spoke to Patrick Gass.

"You'll take charge of Peter until we send him back, Patrick. Draw on the commissary for such clothes as he needs. We can't have him running around naked, this way, if he's white."

"Yis, sorr," replied Patrick Gass. "Come, Peter, lad; come with your cousin Pat, an' we'll make your outside as white as your inside."

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Peter gladly obeyed. He was rather afraid of the handsome young Long Knife Chief, but he was not afraid of Patrick Gass—no, nor of the Red Hair.

When dressed in the clothes that Patrick found for him, Peter was a funny sight. There was a red flannel shirt—to Peter very beautiful, but twice enough for him, so that the sleeves were rolled to their elbows, and the neck dropped about his shoulders. And there was a pair of blue trousers, also twice enough for him, so that the legs were rolled to their knees, and the waist was drawn up about his chest, and the front doubled across where it was belted in.

“Niver you mind,” quoth Patrick, while the 'Nited States men gazed on Peter and howled with merriment. “Sure, I’m a bit of a tailor an’ if we can’t fit you with cloth we’ll fit you with leather. Let ’em laugh. Laughin’s good for the stomick.”

And Peter did not mind. These were white people’s clothes, and he was proud to wear them, although they did seem queer.

The sun had passed the overhead. At some orders the barge was swung in for shore; the two smaller boats followed. Now would he be sent back, or left; or—what? Landing was made on the right-hand side, which was the country of the Iowas and of the Sioux: not a good place, Peter reflected, for *him*. But scarcely had the barge tied up, and Peter’s heart was beating with anxiety, when Captain Clark hastily emerged from the fore-castle; another soldier trod close behind.

PETER MEETS THE CHIEFS

Captain Clark went to Captain Lewis; the soldier proceeded slowly, speaking to comrades. He arrived where Patrick was keeping friendly guard over Peter.

“Charley’s gone,” he said, simply, his face clouded, his voice broken.

“Rest his soul in pace,” answered Patrick. “Sure, I’m sorry, Nat. Did he say anything?”

“He knew. He asked the Captain to write a letter for him, to the folks at home. After that he went to sleep and did not wake again, here.”

“Faith, he gave his life for his country,” asserted Patrick.

So the sick man had died. This much Peter easily guessed. It turned dinner into a very quiet affair. Nothing more was said of leaving Peter ashore, nor of sending him back; but as soon as the dinner was finished the boats all pushed out and headed up river, along a bank surmounted by rolling bluffs.

After about a mile by sail and oars, everybody landed; and the body of Sergeant Charles Floyd, United States Army, the first of the expedition to fall, was buried on the top of a bluff. Captain Clark read some words out of a book, over the grave; and upon the grave was set a cedar post with the name, Sergt. C. Floyd, and the date, Aug. 20, 1804, carved into it. Then three volleys from the rifles were fired.

The boats proceeded on for a camping-place, which was found about a mile up, on the right-hand or north side, near the mouth of a little river. The bluff of the

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

grave was referred to as Floyd's Bluff, and the little river was called Floyd's River.

All the men, including Peter, felt sorry for Sergeant Nathaniel Pryor. Floyd had been his cousin. They felt sorry for those other relatives and friends, back at the Floyd home in Kentucky.

Fifty years later, or in 1857, the grave of the sergeant was moved a few hundred feet, by the Sioux City, Iowa, people, so that it should not crumble into the Missouri River; and in 1895 a monument was placed over it. To-day Floyd's Bluff is part of a Sioux City park.

The camp this evening was only thirteen miles above the Omaha village and the place where Chief Little Thief had come in to council, so that Peter very easily might have been sent back. But the death of Sergeant Charles Floyd seemed to be occupying the thoughts of the two captains; it made the whole camp sober. To-night there was no dancing or music, and Peter slept aboard the barge with nobody paying especial attention to him. Of this he was glad, because he feared that, once ashore, he would be left behind—the 'Nited States would try to sail on without him.

IV

TO THE LAND OF THE SIOUX

"FUST we have to pass the Sioux Injuns," explained Patrick Gass, to Peter. "Ye know the Sioux?"

"They bad," nodded Peter. "Fight other Injuns."

"Yis," said Patrick. "But we aim to make everybody peaceful with everybody else. An' after the Sioux, we talk with the 'Rikaras."

"'Rees bad, too," nodded Peter. For the Otoes were afraid of the northern tribes.

"Yis," said Patrick. "An' after the 'Rikaras we come, I'm thinkin', to the Mandans, an' by that time 'twill be winter, an' with the Mandans we'll stay. I hear tell they have white skins an' blue eyes an' their hair trails on the ground."

Sometimes sailing, sometimes rowed, and sometimes towed by heavy ropes on which the men hauled, from the banks, the three boats had been steadily advancing up-river. Peter was feeling quite at home. Everybody was kind to him—especially Pat, who had been elected sergeant in place of Charles Floyd, and young George Shannon, who was only seventeen.

Two horses followed the boats, by land, for the use of the hunters. George Drouillard, a Frenchman, who had lived with the Omahas, was chief hunter. At the evening camps Pierre Cruzatte, a merry Frenchman with only one eye, and a soldier by the name of George

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Gibson, played lively music on stringed boxes called violins. Each night the two captains, and Pat and other soldiers, wrote on paper the story of the trip. York, the black man, was Captain Clark's servant. Early in the morning a horn was blown to arouse the camp. During the days the captains frequently went ashore, to explore.

It was well, thought Peter, that Pierre Dorion, a trader who lived with the Sioux, was aboard the boats, for the fierce Sioux Indians did not like strangers. Still, who could whip the United States?

In the afternoon of the eighth day after leaving Chief Little Thief, old Pierre, from where he was standing with the two captains on the barge and gazing right and left and before, cried aloud and pointed.

"Dere she is!"

"What, Dorion?"

"De Jacques, w'at is also call de Yankton River; my people de Yankton Sioux lif on her. Mebbe soon now we see some."

The barge, flying its white peace flag, bordered with red and blue, ploughed on. All eyes aboard were directed intently before. The mouth of the river gradually opened, amidst the trees.

"We'll halt there for dinner," ordered Captain Lewis. "That looks like a good landing-place just above the mouth, Will."

Captain Clark nodded, and the barge began to veer in; the two pirogues or smaller boats imitated.

TO THE LAND OF THE SIOUX

"I see one Injun," said Peter. "You see him, Pat?"

"Where, now?" invited Patrick Gass.

"He is standing still; watch us, this side of Yankton River."

"Faith, you've sharp eyes," praised Pat, squinting. "Yis, sure I see him, by the big tree just above the mouth."

Others saw him. And as the barge hove to, and led by Captain Clark the men leaped for the shore, to cook dinner, the Indian plunged into the water and swam across.

"'Maha!" quoth Peter, quickly, when, dripping, the Indian had plashed out and was boldly entering the camp.

"Oh, is he, now?" murmured Patrick Gass.

Pierre Dorion translated for him, to the captains. He said that he was an Omaha boy, living with the Sioux. While he was talking, two other Indians came in. They indeed were Sioux—straight, dark, and dignified, as befitted members of a great and powerful nation.

"Dey say de Yanktons, many of dem, are camp' to de west, one short travel," interpreted Dorion. "Dey haf hear of our comin', an' will be please' to meet de white chiefs."

"All right, Dorion. You go to the camp with these fellows, and tell the chiefs that we'll hold council at the river. I'll send Sergeant Pryor and another man

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

along with you," instructed Captain Lewis. "You'll find us again about opposite where their camp is."

"Good," approved Pierre Dorion. "Now mebbe I get my wife an' fam'ly one time more. My son, he dere, too, say dese young men." For Pierre had married a Sioux woman.

The two Sioux, and Pierre, and Sergeant Nathaniel Pryor and Private John Potts left on foot for the camp of the Yanktons; but the Omaha boy stayed. Peter preferred to keep away from him. The Omahas, to him, were not to be trusted.

From the mouth of the Yankton River, which is to-day called the James River of South Dakota, the boats continued on up the Missouri, to the council ground. The red pirogue ran upon a snag, so that it almost sank before it could be beached. Then all the goods had to be transferred to the white pirogue. This took time, and it was not until nearly sunset that Captain Lewis ordered landing to be made and camp pitched.

The camp of the Sioux was supposed to be somewhere across the river. In the morning no Sioux had yet appeared for council, and Captain Lewis anxiously swept the country to the north with his spy-glass. However, Indians could not be hurried, as Peter well knew. But about four o'clock there spread a murmur.

"Here they come!"

"De Sioux! Dey come. Now for beeg talk an' beeg dance! Hoo-zah!"

TO THE LAND OF THE SIOUX

“Oui!” added George Drouillard, the hunter.
“Mebbe fat dog feast, too!”

“Oh, murther!” gasped Pat. And, to Peter: “Did ye ever eat dog, Peter?”

Peter shook his head, disgusted. Not he; nor the Otoes, either. Only the northern Indians ate dog.

“There’s a t’arin’ lot of ’em, anyhow,” mused Patrick Gass. “I’m after wishin’ George was here. Sure, he’s like to get into trouble, wanderin’ about the country where all those fellows are.”

For two days back George Shannon had been sent out to find the horses that had strayed from camp, and he had not returned.

The Sioux made a brave sight indeed. They looked to be almost a hundred—a horse and a foot, with gay streamers and blankets flying. Pierre Dorion and Sergeant Pryor and Private Potts were to be seen, mounted and riding with the principal chiefs in the advance. So evidently everything was all right.

They halted on the bank opposite the United States camp. Sergeant Pryor waved his hat, and the captains send the red pirogue across for him. He and Pierre and Private Potts returned in it. They brought with them young Pierre, who was old Pierre’s son. He was half Sioux, and traded among the Tetons; but just now he was visiting among the Yanktons.

“They are friendly, are they, Sergeant?” inquired Captain Lewis.

“Yes, sir. They treated us very handsomely, and

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

the head chief is yonder, waiting to talk with you," informed Sergeant Pryor.

"Very good. You and young Dorion go back to them—we'd better send along some presents, hadn't we, Will?—and tell the chiefs that we'll speak with them in the morning. 'Twon't do to let them think we're in any more of a hurry than they are."

"Yes, sir," answered Sergeant Pryor.

He took over presents of corn and tobacco and iron kettles, with young Pierre to do the translating for him, and returned. Both camps settled down for the night.

"Did yez have a rale good time with the Sioux, Nat?" queried Patrick Gass, that night around the fire, after a hearty supper on cat-fish. During the day a number of huge cat-fish had been caught, some of them weighing sixty pounds. Now all the men were curious to hear more from Nat Pryor and John Potts.

"Tremendous," declared Nat. "They wanted to carry us into camp in a blanket, but we told 'em we were not chiefs. They could wait and carry the captains. They gave us a fat dog, though, boiled in a pot—and I swear he was good eating."

"None for me, thank ye," retorted Sergeant Pat. "An' how far is their camp, an' what kind is it?"

"It's about nine miles back, near the Jacques. All fine buffalo hide lodges—some elk hide, too—painted different colors. Fact is, they're about the best Indians we've met yet."

TO THE LAND OF THE SIOUX

“Ye didn’t learn anything of Shannon or the horses, then?”

“Not a word. But I think he’ll be safe if only the Sioux find him.”

The next day dawned so foggy that nobody could see across the river. The captains made preparations for the grand council. A pole was set up, near to a large oak tree, and a new flag hoisted to the top of it. The flag was striped red and white; in a corner was a blue square, like the sky, studded with stars. ’Twas the great flag of the United States nation—and Peter thought it beautiful.

The two captains dressed in their best. Captain Lewis wore a long coat of dark blue trimmed with light blue, down its front bright brass buttons, and on its shoulders bright gold-fringed epaulets. Captain Clark’s coat was dark blue faced with red; it, too, had the brass buttons and the bright epaulets. Both wore their cocked hats, and their long knives, or swords.

The men also were ordered to put on their best, and to clean up even if they had no “best.” Presents were laid out. By the time the fog lifted, at eight o’clock, the camp was ready.

Now it could be seen that over in the Sioux camp, also, the chiefs and warriors were preparing.

“They’re painting and polishing, Merne,” remarked Captain Clark, who had levelled the spy-glass, to peer.

That was so. Peter needed no spy-glass. He could make out figures of the chiefs and warriors sitting and

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

plaiting their hair and painting their faces and chests and arms.

The two captains waited until nearly noon. Then the red pirogue was dispatched, under Sergeant Pryor, accompanied by old Pierre, to bring the chiefs and warriors. The white pirogue was loaded with goods, but the red pirogue had been emptied for repairs. Even then the Sioux so crowded it that it scarcely could be rowed. A number of the young Sioux waded into the river and swam across.

Now there were more Sioux than white men in the United States camp. But they were armed mainly with bows and arrows, while the United States were armed with rifles; and Peter's sharp eyes observed that the cannon in the bow of the barge was pointed right at the camp, ready for business.

Broad-chested and sinewy were these Yankton Sioux, and evidently great warriors. What struck Peter and the soldiers, especially, were the necklaces of claws stitched in bands of buckskin or red flannel, and hanging low on those broad chests. Many warriors wore them.

"D' you mean to say those are b'ar claws!" exclaimed John Shields, one of the Kentuckians.

"Oui, my frien'," assured Drouillard, the hunter. "Dey claw of great white bear—so we call heem. Beeg! More beeg dan one ox. An' 'fraid? He not 'fraid of notting. To keel one white bear make Injun beeg warrior."

TO THE LAND OF THE SIOUX

“And where do those critters live, then?” queried John.

“Up river. We meet ‘em pret’ queeck, now. Sometime w’en we land—woof! Dere coom one beast—beeg as one ox—mouth he open; an’ mebbe eat us, if brush so t’ick we not see heem soon ‘nough.”

The listening Kentuckians and other soldiers scratched their heads, as if a little doubtful.

“Faith,” said Patrick Gass, “some o’ them claws are six inches long, boys. ‘Tis a country o’ monsters that we’re goin’ into.”

A group of the Sioux had been staring at black York, who, larger than any of them, was gaping back. Suddenly one stepped to him, wet his finger and swiftly drew it down York’s cheek; then looked to see if the black had come off.

“Hey, you man!” growled York. “Wha’ foh you done do dat?”

Another Sioux deftly snatched off York’s hat, and clutched the black curly wool underneath; but it would not come off, either. Much impressed, the circle widened respectfully, and Sioux murmured gutturally to Sioux.

“That’s all right, York,” warned Captain Clark, who had noted; for his own red hair had been attracting much attention. “They say you’re great medicine.”

“Oui; he black buffalo,” affirmed young Dorion. After that York strutted importantly, alarmed the

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Indians by making fierce faces, and was followed about by a constant admiring procession.

The council was held at noon, under the great oak tree beside which floated the United States flag. The chiefs and the leading warriors sat in a half circle; the two captains sat facing them, Pierre Dorion stood before them as interpreter; and the soldiers and French boatmen sat behind in another half circle.

Captain Lewis made a welcoming speech—and a fine figure he was, standing straight and slim, in his tight-fitting, decorated coat, his cocked hat with black feather, his sword at his side.

“The land has changed white fathers,” he said. “The great nation of the Sioux, and all the other Indians, have a new white father, at Washington. That is his flag, the flag of the United States nation, which has bought this country. The new father has sent us, who are his children, to tell his red children that he wants them to be at peace with one another. I have given flags and peace gifts to the Otoes and the Missouris, and have sent word to the Osages and the Omahas and the Pawnees and the Kickapoos and other Indians, that there must be no more wars among the red children. I will give you a flag and gifts, too, so that you will remember what I say.”

Then the gifts were distributed. To the head chief, Weucha, or Shake Hand, a flag, and a first-grade silver medal, and a paper that certified the United States recognized him as the head chief, and a string

TO THE LAND OF THE SIOUX

of beads and shells, and a "chief's coat," which was a red-trimmed artillery dress-coat like Captain Clark's, and a cocked hat with red feather in it. Weucha was immensely pleased; he put on the coat and hat at once.

The four other chiefs also were given gifts. Chief Weucha produced a long peace-pipe of red stone, with reed stem; it was lighted, he puffed, Captain Lewis and Captain Clark puffed; the four lesser chiefs puffed. After that the chiefs solemnly shook hands with the captains, and withdrew into a lean-to of branches, to consult on what they should reply to-morrow.

The Sioux stayed at the camp during the afternoon. The captains gave them a dressed deer-hide and an empty keg, for a dance drum. The deer-hide was stretched taut over the head of the keg; and that night, by the light of the fires, the Sioux thumped on the drum and shook their rattles, and danced. One-eyed Cruzatte and George Gibson played on their violins, and the United States warriors danced. But the Sioux kept it up almost all night, and nobody got much sleep.

In the morning after breakfast Weucha and his three sub-chiefs sat before the oak tree; each held a peace pipe in front of him, with the stem pointing at the spot where the captains were to sit. The names of the other chiefs were White Crane, Struck-by-the-Pawnee, and Half Man.

"He ver' modes'," explained One-eyed Cruzatte. "He say 'I am no warrior, I only half a man.'"

Weucha spoke first, standing clad in his artillery

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

coat and cocked hat. He said that the Yanktons were willing to be at peace, but were very poor.

White Crane, and Struck-by-the-Pawnee and Half Man likewise spoke. They agreed with what Shake Hand had said. They wanted powder and ball, and their great father's "milk"—which was whisky.

That evening the Sioux went back, across the river, well satisfied. Pierre Dorion and young Pierre went with them. Old Pierre promised that in the spring he would take some of the chiefs to Washington, that they might meet their new father.

Just as the Yanktons were leaving, Captain Lewis beckoned Peter to him.

"You had better go with Pierre. He will take you down river in the spring, if not before."

"No, please," objected Peter. "I rather stay."

"But we're going clear to the Pacific Ocean, my boy," spoke Captain Clark. "It will be a hard trip."

"I will go, too," declared Peter. "Do not want to stay with Sioux. I am white."

"What will you do, along with us, Peter?"

"I work. I can talk sign language," answered Peter, proudly.

"There's something in that, Merne," laughed Captain Clark. "Now with Dorion gone we'll need an interpreter to help Drouillard. I fancy Peter knows almost as much as he does."

"You've got a kind heart, Will," replied Captain Lewis, his eyes softening. "But game's plenty; we'll

TO THE LAND OF THE SIOUX

have meat enough—and that's the main question. All right, Peter. You can come as far as the Mandan village, anyway. And in the spring we'll see."

Whereupon Peter resolved that he would make himself useful, so that they would take him clear to the Pacific Ocean, which lay, according to Patrick Gass and the other men, many, many days' travel, far beyond the western mountains.

V

BAD HEARTS

WORK, work, work! Through this the month of September, 1804, the boats had been toiling on up the sluggish Missouri River, in the present State of South Dakota. With the rains, the winds, and the shallows, everybody, even the captains, was wet all the day, from hauling on the tow-ropes, in and out of the water.

The weather turned cold and raw. Shelters of deer hides were stretched over the two pirogues, and in the camps the men made themselves hide coats and leggins and moccasins. Patrick and old Cruzatte together fitted Peter with a buckskin suit that felt much better to him than his other, clumsy garments.

After having been gone over two weeks, George Shannon appeared at last, riding through the rain, with only one horse. He had been lost, and had almost starved, and the other horse had broken down. All were glad to see George again.

But where, now, were the Teton Sioux? George reported that he had seen none.

The last week in September a great smoke was sighted in the distance; and that night three Indian boys swam the river, to enter the camp. They were Tetons, from two villages a few miles above.

“Give them some tobacco,” directed Captain Lewis.

BAD HEARTS

“Tell them to say to their chiefs that we will hold a council to-morrow morning, near the villages.”

On the way up, Reuben Fields, who had been hunting, horseback, returned afoot and signalled to be taken aboard. He said that some Indians had stolen his horse while he was dressing an elk.

“Oui,” chirped Drouillard. “Dose Tetons haf bad hearts. We best look sharp or dey take scalps, too.”

“We mustn’t let them have the idea they can plunder us,” spoke Captain Lewis, reddening. “This leaves us without horses.”

“Aren’t those several Indians, on the bank ahead?” presently queried Captain Clark.

Captain Lewis peered through his spy-glass.

“Five of them. We’ll stop and hail them, and hear what they have to say.”

“Do you think they’re the fellows who stole your horse, Fields?” asked Captain Clark.

“I can’t tell, sir,” answered Reuben. “I had only a glimpse of the thieves, and these Injuns mainly look alike, sir, till you get to know ’em.”

The five Indians on the bank stolidly waited, while the barge hove to, opposite.

“Are they Tetons, Drouillard?” inquired Captain Lewis.

“Oui,” nodded Drouillard. “Dey Tetons. Eh, Cruzatte?”

“Mais, oui,” confirmed One-eyed Cruzatte. “Beeg rascals.”

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

"All right. Tell them that some of their young men have stolen a horse from their great father at Washington, and we want it returned or we will hold no council. We're willing to be friends, but we aren't afraid of them."

"I do not know much of dees Sioux tongue, but I will try," engaged Drouillard. And by signs and a few words he delivered the message.

The Indians consulted a moment together; then one of them replied.

"I t'ink dey say dey haf not seen a hoss," translated Drouillard. "But if it is found it will be return'."

"I t'ink so, too," added the funny Cruzatte—although everybody was aware that he did not understand a word of Sioux.

However, by the signs that were made, Peter would have interpreted the same as Drouillard. He and the Oto-boys had practiced for hours, talking sign language.

The boats stopped for the night off the mouth of a river on the left or the south. This night only a few men were allowed ashore, to guard the cook fires; the remainder slept aboard the boats, with their guns ready. The captains named the river Teton River, but it was soon renamed Bad River, for very good reason.

In the morning everybody, except the boat guards, landed. The captains ordered the United States flag hoisted, again, on a pole, and the awning was stretched, as at the camp where the Otoes had been entertained.

BAD HEARTS

All the soldiers ashore were formed in rank, under arms, facing the flag-pole and the canopy; and soon the Tetons came in to council, from their village two miles up-river.

There were about sixty of them. They were not nearly so good-looking as the Yanktons, being smaller, with slim crooked legs and lean arms, and eyes set over high cheek-bones.

The council did not pass off very satisfactorily, because Drouillard knew little Teton talk, and scarcely could make himself understood when he talked for Captain Lewis. Still, the head chief, Black Buffalo, was given a medal, and a United States flag, and a red coat decorated with white lace, and a cocked hat with red feather. The second chief, Tor-to-hon-ga or Partisan, and the third chief, Buffalo Medicine, were given medals and beads and tobacco. Two warriors, Wah-zing-go, and Mat-o-co-que-pa or Second Bear, also were rewarded.

“What do you suppose those raven scalps signify?” asked George Shannon. For the two warriors wore each two or three raven skins fastened to their waists behind, with the tails sticking out, and on their heads was another raven skin, flattened with the beak to the fore.

“Dey special soldier,” explained old Cruzatte. “W’at you call—marshal. Oui. Dey boss. Obey nobody but chief.”

Then the captains took them all aboard the barge

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

to show them the cannon and the air-gun that shot forty times, and other wonders. Captain Clark brought them ashore again in the red pirogue.

No sooner had the cable been carried on shore, to be held by Patrick Gass and Reuben Fields and George Shannon while the load was landed, and Captain Clark had stepped out, than three of the Indians grabbed it, and Wah-zing-go, the warrior, put his arms about the mast, as if to keep the boat there. Tor-to-hon-ga began to talk in a loud and angry voice. Captain Clark flushed.

"What does he say, Peter?" he appealed. For Drouillard was on the barge, and only Peter was near. When the five men had started to row the pirogue ashore, with the chiefs and Captain Clark, he had slipped in, too.

"The chief say you cannot go away till you give them more presents," translated Peter, boldly; for he had picked up some Sioux words and he could read the gestures, also.

"What!" And Captain Clark was angry indeed. He had only five men, two in the boat and three ashore, but he was not afraid. "You tell him we will go on, and he can't stop us. We are not squaws, but warriors. Our great father has medicine on those boats that will wipe out twenty Sioux nations."

"The chief says he has plenty warriors, too," interpreted Peter.

And at that moment the chief sprang for Captain

BAD HEARTS

Clark; the warriors spread right and left, jerked arrows from quivers and fitted them to strung bows. Out whipped Captain Clark's bright sword—the long knife; and Chief Tor-to-hon-ga dodged. Captain Clark's face was redder than his hair. He acted like a great chief.

“ Watch out, Sergeant! ” he cried, to Patrick Gass. “ Rally on the boat; never mind the rope. Face them and stand together, men! ”

Captain Lewis's voice rang high and stern, from the barge. Out of the white pirogue a dozen men plashed into the shallows and wading and plunging, hastened to reinforce the red pirogue. Corporal Warfington and the six St. Louis soldiers who had been sent along to help as far as the Mandans were with them.

“ Steady! ” warned Captain Lewis. “ Look sharp, Will. ” And now the black muzzle of the cannon in the bows of the barge swung full at the shore. Behind it stood Gunner Alexander Willard, with lighted match.

This was enough. Head Chief Black Buffalo shouted an order, and his men left the cable and the pirogue and fell back. The “ medicine ” of the great father at Washington was, they realized, strong medicine.

To show that he was not afraid, and that he wished to be friendly, Captain Clark offered to shake hands with Black Buffalo and Partisan; but they surlily refused. So the captain laughed, and ordered the red

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

piroque to return to the barge. Then Black Buffalo and Partisan, and the warriors Wah-zing-go and Second Bear ran after, through the water, and climbed aboard, to go on the barge also.

“Rather a close shave, Will,” remarked Captain Lewis. “An instant more and I’d have helped you out with a round of grape.”

“They wished to try our metal,” smiled Captain Clark.

“We were afraid the white chiefs would go on and not stop at our village to show our squaws and boys the great father’s boats,” alleged Chief Black Buffalo.

“Tell him we are willing to be friends, and will stop,” directed Captain Lewis. “The soldiers of the great father do not fear the Sioux.”

“If head chief he not tell dat raven soldier to let go mast, he hang on till cut in leetle pieces,” was saying Cruzatte.

In the morning the boats were moved up to the village, and Captain Lewis went ashore. Truly, the Red Head and the slim Captain Lewis were brave men. Peter was proud to have been by Captain Clark’s side, in the fracas. It was fine to be a United States.

When Captain Lewis returned on board, he told Captain Clark that everything was all right, and that the Tetons were waiting for the Red Head.

“You’re a bigger man than I am, Will, after the stand you made yesterday,” he laughed.

And it seemed to be that way, for when Captain

BAD HEARTS

Clark landed he was met by ten young warriors, with a gaily decorated buffalo robe. They carried him upon it, and then bore him, sitting in it, to the council house. This was great honor.

"You're nixt, Cap'n," ventured Patrick Gass. "There they are, back for ye, sorr."

"Be alert, Sergeant," bade the captain, as he vaulted from the barge into the pirogue. "They may appear friendly, but we mustn't take any chances. Don't let the men lay aside their arms for a minute, and keep them together."

"Yis, sorr. I will, sorr," promised Patrick Gass. He was the oldest soldier in the company, and the captains relied upon him.

Captain Lewis likewise was borne to the council house; and the men of the expedition, except the boat guards, marched after.

The council lasted a long time, and was concluded with a feast of the dog-meat from a pot, and of buffalo meat and hominy and ground-potato. Buffalo meat was given to the white chiefs as a present. The Tetons claimed to be poor, but they weren't. This was a powerful and rich village, as anybody might see. Before the dance that had been planned for the evening, the men were permitted to roam about a little. Peter and Patrick Gass and their party discovered a string of scalps hanging from a pole, and a number of Omaha squaws and children who appeared very miserable.

Peter talked with them a little. They were pris-

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

oners. The Tetons had attacked their village down the river, and had burned forty lodges and killed seventy-five warriors.

When dusk fell the dance was started, by the light of a fire, in the middle of the council house. The Sioux warriors danced, and the Sioux women danced; but at midnight the captains told the chief that everybody was tired and it was time to go to bed.

"The chief he say: 'Ver' well. Now sleep. Tomorrow more Sioux come, to talk with de great father.' He want you to stay," interpreted Drouillard.

"We will stay and see these other Sioux," answered Captain Lewis. "What do you think, Will?"

"If you say so, Merne," replied Captain Clark. "But there's some trick in this. We mustn't be caught off guard—and of course we mustn't show that we're afraid, either."

But no visiting Sioux turned up, although the boats waited all day. At night another dance was given.

"We in bad feex," asserted One-eyed Cruzatte. "Dose Teton, dey keep us. I t'ink dey plan mischief. I wish we go on."

Everybody was nervous.

"Now I wonder if we're in for a fight," spoke Corporal Warfington.

"Sure," said Patrick Gass, "we can lick 'em."

Amidst the dusk ashore, while Peter, tired of the noise and dancing, was wandering a few steps, a low voice hailed him, in Oto

BAD HEARTS

"Hist! You Oto?" It was one of the Omaha squaws. How could she have guessed that he had been an Oto?

"No. White," responded Peter.

"Tell your chiefs the Sioux are bad. They will not let the big boats go. They play you a trick."

"I will tell," responded Peter. "You speak Oto well."

"I am Omaha, but I was in Oto village once. I saw you." And the squaw vanished.

VI

THE CAPTAINS SHOW THEIR SPUNK

PETER believed that the Omaha woman spoke the truth. The captains ought to be told at once. But the dancing was still in progress in the lodge of Chief Black Buffalo, where sat the two captains and the chiefs, watching. A boy would not be admitted. So Peter sought out Sergeant John Ordway, who was in charge of the shore guard. John Ordway was not from Kentucky; he was from a place called New Hampshire, in the northeast of the United States.

"You don't say!" replied John Ordway, when Peter had told him of the warning from the Omaha woman. "Well, anybody might suspect as much. I'll get word to the captains, first chance."

The dancing continued until late, again. Peter curled in the bows of the waiting pirogue, and went to sleep. He had done his duty and could trust to John Ordway. By the stars it was midnight when he awakened at the approach of the captains. They and two Indian guests and the guard clambered in, and the pirogue was rowed for the barge.

The shore was silent and dark—but how alert were those Sioux! The pirogue ran against the anchor cable of the barge, in the darkness, and broke it. The

THE CAPTAINS SHOW THEIR SPUNK

barge was adrift. The captains cried loudly, ordering the oars to be manned and the barge held until a cable could be passed ashore—and instantly the two Indians in the pirogue shouted excitedly, in the Sioux tongue, summoning the village.

“Here! Quick!” they called. “To the boats! Come!”

The whole village burst into an uproar; the warriors poured forth to the water’s edge. It was very plain that they feared the white men were leaving. The captains could pay little attention until a cable had been carried from the barge and fastened to a tree on the bank, and the barge pulled in out of the current. Then——

“Ask Tor-to-hon-ga what’s the meaning of all this alarm,” bade Captain Lewis, tersely, of Drouillard. Tor-to-hon-ga was one of the two guests.

“He say de Tetons ’fraid de ’Maha warriors haf come up an’ attack de boats of de great white father,” interpreted Drouillard.

“Nonsense!” muttered Captain Lewis.

And anybody might see how foolish was this excuse of the Tetons: that the Omahas would attack boats defended by guns, when the Sioux were the real enemies. After the village was quiet again, at least sixty Teton warriors remained there on the bank, all night, ready for action.

“I t’ink,” commented Drouillard, “mebbe we have leetle trouble, in mornin’.”

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

"We're in a bad box," quoth Sergeant Ordway. "Now we're tied up close to the bank, under direct fire. We may have a hard time casting off."

Strong guards were kept under arms, on all the boats. There was little sleep. Both captains were constantly about, peering through the darkness, and listening. Early in the morning the Tetons were assembled; and while Patrick Gass and a detail were dragging from a pirogue, trying to find the barge's anchor, several chiefs and warriors waded out to the barge and climbed aboard.

The anchor could not be found.

"Never mind," said Captain Lewis. "We'll go on without it. Send those fellows ashore, Will. Sergeant Pryor, take a squad with you and cast off that rope."

The Indian visitors did not wish to go ashore, but Captain Clark ordered them pushed into the pirogue which was to bear Sergeant Pryor and squad. Chief Black Buffalo still refused to go. Sergeant Pryor released the rope from the tree on the bank and returned. The sail on the barge was being hoisted—and at the instant laughter and shouts mingled, both ashore and from the boats.

A number of the Sioux had sat upon the rope, holding it!

Captain Lewis flared into hot rage.

"Take charge of the pirogues, Will," he ordered. "Down behind the gunwale, men. Advance your

THE CAPTAINS SHOW THEIR SPUNK

rifles. See that the priming's fresh, Ordway and Gass. Stand to your swivel, Willard!" And, to Chief Black Buffalo: "My young men are ready for battle. If your young men do not release the rope we will fire."

"He say de young men want leetle more tobac'," translated Drouillard.

"Tell him we have given all the presents that we're going to give," crisply answered Captain Lewis. "No—wait. Here!" And snatching a roll of tobacco, Captain Lewis threw it at Black Buffalo's feet. "Tell him there is his tobacco, on the prairie. He says he is a great chief. Among the white men great chiefs are obeyed. If he is a great chief let him order his young men to release that rope and they will obey him. But we do not believe he is a great chief. He is a squaw, and the young men laugh at him."

"Wah!" grunted Chief Black Buffalo, when he heard. He seized the tobacco and leaped from the boat, to surge for the shore. There he tumbled his young men right and left, snatched the rope and hurled it out into the water.

"Go," he bawled. Thus he proved himself to be the great chief.

The soldiers cheered. The barge's sail caught the breeze, the barge moved. Just in time Captain Clark leaped from the pirogue, into which he had transferred, and gained the gunwale, and the deck.

"Well done, Merne," he panted.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

“Golly!” babbled York. “Dat chief mighty brash when he get started.”

The barge and the pirogues gained the middle of the river. Rapidly the Teton village was left behind. Patrick Gass waved his hat derisively.

“Bad luck to yez,” he said. “Sure, an’ if we’d stayed a minute longer we’d ha’ put your town into mournin’. We’re not so peaceful as we look.” And he added: “The ’Rikaras nixt. We’ll hope they be gintlemen. Annyhow, we’ve no horses left for ’em to stale.”

Just what was to be expected from the Arikaras nobody might say, but although they were warlike they were thought to be not so mean as the Teton Sioux. The boats forged on, and the month changed to that of October.

“How far to the ’Rikara villages, sir?” asked Captain Lewis, of a trader named Valle who came aboard the barge for a talk.

“By river about 100 miles, captain.”

From an excursion ashore with Captain Clark and squad, York returned tremendously excited.

“We done found one o’ dem white b’ars,” proclaimed York. “Yessuh, me an’ Marse Will. Oof!”

“Where’bouts, York?”

“Whar’s his scalp?”

“Did you get a shot at him?”

Questions were volleyed thick and fast. York wagged his woolly head and rolled his eyes.

THE CAPTAINS SHOW THEIR SPUNK

"Nossuh. Didn't get no shot at him. We des seen his track, in dem bushes yonduh near de mout' ob de ribber. Oof! Marse Will he set his moccasin cl'ar inside, an' dat track it stuck out all 'round. 'Spec' dis chile ain't got bus'ness wif dem critters. Oof!"

"Yes," agreed George Shannon. "According to Drouillard even the Indians won't tackle one of those white bears, except in a crowd of six or eight. And if they don't shoot him through the head or heart he's liable to out-fight them all. Before they go after him they make big medicine, same as if they were going to war with a whole nation."

"He's 'special fond of black meat, too, I hear tell," slyly remarked John Thompson.

York rolled his eyes, and muttered. But the Kentuckians, some of whom had hunted with Daniel Boone, fingered their rifles eagerly and surveyed the low country at the mouth of the river, as if hoping to see York's monster stirring.

The next day the first Arikara Indians came aboard, from their lower village. Captain Lewis went with some of them to return the visit. He was accompanied back by Mr. Tabeau and Mr. Gravelines, two French traders who lived with the Arikaras. Mr. Gravelines spoke the Arikara language.

There were three Arikara villages, so that the captains ordered camp made on the north side of the river, across from the villages.

The Arikaras were tall, handsome people—much

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

superior, thought Patrick Gass and the rest of the men, to the Sioux. Chiefs Ka-ka-wis-sas-sa or Lighting Crow, Fo-cas-se or Hay, and Pi-a-he-to or Eagle's Feather, were introduced by Mr. Gravelines, and the camp soon filled with the Arikara warriors, and even squaws who rowed across in little skin boats of a single buffalo hide stretched over basket-work.

York held a regular reception, for he appeared to astonish the Arikaras as much as he had astonished the Sioux.

"Hey, Marse Tabeau," he called, to the French trader. "Des tell dese people I'se bohn wil', an' my young marster done ketched me when I was runnin' in de timber an' tamed me. Tell 'em I used to eat peoples bones an' all. I'se a sorter g'riller." And thereupon York seized a thick stick, and snapped it in his two hands, and howled and gritted his teeth. He was very strong, was York.

"Huh!" grunted the Arikaras, respectfully falling back from him.

"That will do, York," cautioned Captain Clark, trying not to laugh.

But York, of much importance, thoroughly enjoyed himself.

The Arikaras were splendid entertainers and exceedingly hospitable—" 'Mos' like white folks," asserted York. They did not beg, as the Sioux had begged; they gave lavishly out of their store of corn and beans and dried squashes, and accepted thankfully

THE CAPTAINS SHOW THEIR SPUNK

the gifts from the great father; they would not drink any whisky—"We are surprised that the great father should send us liquor to make fools of us," said Chief Lighting Crow. Their houses were built close together, of a willow frame plastered with mud, and were entered through a covered passage-way that kept out the wind. Around each village was a fence of close upright pickets, for defense. They were well armed, too, with guns.

When it came time, after the councils had been held, to leave the friendly Arikaras, all the men of the expedition hated to go. John Newman, who had enlisted at St. Louis, was the most outspoken.

"Look here," he uttered, boldly, among his comrades at the last camp fire. "Why should we go on, up to those Mandans? Why can't we spend the winter where we are? The Mandan village is nigh on 200 miles yet, and I'm tired of working my hands raw in this cold weather, hauling the boats over sand-bars."

"Orders be orders," reminded Patrick Gass. "An' up to the Mandans we go, I'm thinkin'."

"Not if we show a little spunk and say we want to stay," retorted John.

"Whisht, now!" cautioned Patrick. "Would ye spoil a good record? Faith," he added, "if the captain heard ye he'll have ye on the carpet for mutiny, b' gorry." Captain Clark had strode hastily by, wrapped in his cloak. "It's mutiny ye're talkin'," scolded Patrick Gass. "An' I want no more of it."

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Captain Clark had heard, for at breaking camp in the morning, John was placed under arrest and confined in the fore-castle aboard the barge.

That night, at camp, twenty-five miles above the Arikara villages, a court-martial was held on the case of John Newman. He was found guilty of mutinous speech and sentenced to receive seventy-five lashes, and be suspended from the company. The next noon the boats stopped in the rain, at a sand-bar in the middle of the river, everybody was ordered out, and John was roundly whipped on the naked back with ramrods and switches.

Chief Ah-ke-tah-na-sha of the Arikaras, who was going with the expedition up to the Mandans, to make peace between the Mandans and the Arikaras, squatted on the sand-bar, to watch. Evidently he did not understand, for he began to weep.

"Why does Ah-ke-tah-na-sha cry?" asked Captain Clark.

Ah-ke-tah-na-sha, who could speak some Sioux, explained to Drouillard, and Drouillard explained to the captains.

"He say de 'Rikara dey punish by death, but dey never whip even de children. He weep for Newman."

"Tell him what the matter is, and that this is the white man's way of punishing disobedience," directed Captain Clark, to Drouillard.

Drouillard did; and reported.

"He say mebbe so, but 'mong Injuns to whip men

THE CAPTAINS SHOW THEIR SPUNK

make women of dem. If dees is white man way, all right. Men ought to obey deir chiefs."

"Now aren't ye 'shamed o' yourself, when even an Injun cries over ye?" reproved Patrick Gass, of John Newman, who was painfully donning his shirt and coat.

"Well, I am," admitted John. "I guess I deserved what I got. I don't harbor any grudge, and I'll do my duty."

VII

SNUG IN WINTER QUARTERS

THE weather had grown much colder, with squalls of snow and sleet and high winds; the wild geese were flying high, headed into the south; and the river, falling rapidly, was split with bars and narrow channels, when, two weeks after the punishment of John Newman, the barge and the two pirogues anchored off the first of the Mandan villages, in the centre of present North Dakota.

“Five long months we’ve been travelin’, an’ for sixteen hundred crooked miles,” quoth Patrick Gass. “Sure we deserve a bit o’ rist. Now what will the Mandans say, I wonder?”

“Did you see that young fellow who’d lost the halves of two fingers?” queried George Shannon. “Well, he’d cut ’em off, on purpose, because some of his relatives had died! That’s the Mandan way of going into mourning.”

“’Twould be better to cut the hair, I’m thinkin’,” said Pat. “They most of ’em nade it—an’ hair’ll grow again.”

The Mandans had swarmed aboard, and were examining every object with much curiosity. They were an odd people, wrinkled and of low stature—many of the women with brown hair, but others with gray hair

SNUG IN WINTER QUARTERS

which flared almost to the ground. However, their voices were gentle, and they brought gifts of corn and vegetables, in earthen jars.

Mr. Jessaume, a French trader among them, also came aboard; so did a Scotchman named Hugh McCracken, from a British fur company post far north.

"They're frindly, be they, Pierre?" asked Pat, of One-eyed Cruzatte, who was hobbling past after a lively conversation with Mr. Jessaume.

"Oui," answered Cruzatte, with a grimace of pain. "I t'ink we stay an' spen' one winter. Dey glad. We protect' dem 'gainst de Sioux. My poor leg, he carry me not furdur, anyway."

For Cruzatte had the rheumatism in both knees. Reuben Fields was laid up with the rheumatism in his neck; and Captain Clark had been so bothered with a stiff neck that he could not move around until Captain Lewis had applied a hot stone wrapped in red flannel.

"Hi!" cackled big York, strutting as usual. "Dese heah Mandans done gif me name Great Medicine, Mistuh McCracken say. Dey wants me foh a chief."

"There's coal in the banks, yonder," spoke George Shannon. "See it, Peter?"

"What is coal?" ventured Peter.

"Black stuff, like a rock, that will burn."

"It'll make fine fuel for my forge," put in John Shields, who was clever at fashioning things out of metal. "Expect I'll be busy all winter, smithing, while you other fellows are hunting and dancing."

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

The Mandan villages were three in number. There was a village of Minnetarees, also; and a village of Ar-wa-cah-was and Ah-na-ha-ways—Indians whom neither Drouillard nor Cruzatte knew.

“Ah, well, now, belike there be plenty Injuns on ahead, too, that ye never heard of,” declared Pat. “Yis, an’ lots of other cur’osities before we get to the Pacyfic Ocean.”

The head chief of all the Mandans was Pos-cap-sa-he, or Black Cat. The chief of the lowest village was Sha-ha-ka, or Big White. The chief of the second village was Raven Man. The chief of the Ar-wa-cah-was was White Buffalo Robe. The chief of the Ah-na-ha-ways was Cherry-on-a-Bush, or Little Cherry, but he was very old. The chief of the Minnetaree village was Black Moccasin. And the chief of the upper Mandan village, across from the Minnetaree village, was Red Shield.

The two captains met in council with all the villages together, and smoked the pipe of peace and distributed gifts. During the speeches old Cherry-on-a-Bush, the Ah-na-ha-way chief, rose to go, because, he said, his son was on the war-trail against the Sho-sho-nes, or Snakes, and his village was liable to be attacked.

“Shame on you, for an impolite old man,” rebuked Sha-ha-ka, Big White. “Do you not know better than to show such bad manners before the chiefs from the great white father?”

And poor Cherry-on-a-Bush sat down mumbling.

SNUG IN WINTER QUARTERS

The Arikara chief who had come up on the barge was well received. The Mandans promised to observe peace between the two nations.

“ We did not begin the war,” they said. “ We have been killing those 'Rees like we kill birds, until we are tired of killing. Now we will send a chief to them, with this chief of theirs, and they can smoke peace.”

Camp was made at a spot picked out by Captain Clark, across the river, below the first Mandan village, and everybody not on guard duty was set at work erecting winter quarters. Captain Clark had charge of the camp, but Patrick Gass “bossed” the work. He was a carpenter. Axes rang, trees were felled and under Patrick's direction were trimmed and notched, to form the walls and roofs of the cabins.

There were to be two rows of cabins, joined so as to make four rooms, below, on each side, and four rooms above, entered by ladders. The walls were of hewn logs tightly chinked with clay; and the ceilings, seven feet high, were of planks trimmed with adzes—and covered with grass and clay to make a warm floor for the lofts. The roofs slanted inward, which made the outside of the rows eighteen feet high, so that nobody could climb over. Every down-stairs room had a fire-place, and a plank floor. The two rows met, at one end, and were open at the other; and across this opening was to be stretched a high fence of close, thick pickets, entered by a stout gate.

The Mandans and their Indian friends marveled

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

much at the skill of the white men, and at the strength of York, the Great Medicine. They admitted that these white men's houses were better even than the Mandan lodges—although the Mandan lodges were also of heavy timbers, plastered with earth, and banked with earth at the bottoms; had doors of buffalo hide, and fireplaces in the middle.

Mr. Jessaume, the French trader, moved to the camp, with his Mandan wife and child; and so did another French trader named Toussaint Chaboneau. He had two wives: one was very old and ugly, but the other was young and handsome. She was a Sho-sho-ne girl, from far-off. The Minnetaree Indians had attacked her people and taken her captive, and Chaboneau had bought her as his wife. She and the old wife did not get along together very well.

Mr. Jessaume and Chaboneau could speak the languages, and were hired by the captains to be interpreters for the camp.

“My young wife come from ze Rock mountains,” said Chaboneau—who was a dark little man, his wrinkled face like smoked leather. “One time I was dere. I trade with Minnetaree.”

“You never were over the mountains, Toussaint, were you?” asked Sergeant Pryor.

“Me, Monsieur Sergeant?” And Toussaint shuddered. “Ma foi (my word), no! It is not ze possible. Up dere, no meat, no grass, no trail, notting but rock, ice, cold, an' ze terrible savages out for ze scalp.”

SNUG IN WINTER QUARTERS

The cabins were erected rapidly, for the cotton-wood logs were soft and easily split. The first trees were felled on November 3, and on November 20 the walls were all in place. The men moved in before the roofs were put on, but buffalo hides were stretched over.

The two captains occupied one cabin, at the head of the angle. And six or seven men were assigned to each of the other cabins. Sergeant Patrick Gass, Privates George Shannon, Reuben Fields and Joseph Fields, who were great hunters, George Gibson, who played the violin, John Newman, who now was no longer mutinous, but worked with a will, and Peter formed one mess; Corporal Warfington and his six soldiers from St. Louis formed another; Drouillard, the hunter, and five of the French boatmen another; One-eyed Cruzatte and five other boatmen another; and so forth. Jessaume and Chaboneau had erected their own lodges.

It was high time that the cabins were completed. The weather turned very cold and windy, and ice floated in the river. The roofs were hastened, and the picket fence ought to be erected soon, for the Mandans were not yet satisfied with the presence of the white men.

Black Cat and Big White were frequent visitors. One day after Black Cat had spent the whole morning talking with the captains, Chaboneau reported the bad news.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

“Mebbe now dere is troubles,” he uttered, as he sat toasting his shins at the fire in the Patrick Gass cabin. He had entered with a gay “Bon soir (good evening), messieurs,” and had brought a draft of icy air with him. “Mebbe now dere is troubles.”

“What’s the matter, Toussaint?”

“I interpret for ze Black Cat an’ ze captains. Ze Black Cat say ze Sioux dey much enrage’, ’cause ze ’Rees make ze peace with ze Mandan. Dey sen’ ze word dat someday dey come up an’ take ze scalp of all ze ’Ree an’ ze Mandan an’ ze white soldier. Dey sorry dey did not kill ze white soldier down-river, for ze white soldier carry bad talk. Black Cat fear. He fear mebbe ze ’Ree get scare’ an’ help ze Sioux, an’ he been tol’, too, dat ze white soldiers build strong fort, to stay an’ try to make slaves of ze Mandan, an’ soon ze whole country he be Sioux.”

“That sounds like the British,” remarked George Shannon. “They naturally don’t want the United States in here, taking away their trade. They’d like to have us driven out.”

“An’ what did the captains say?” inquired Patrick Gass.

“Dey say Black Cat must not open hees ears to such talk,” answered Toussaint. “Ze United States speak only truth, an’ if ze Mandan listen ze white soldiers will protec’ dem ’gainst all deir enemies. Black Cat say dere been a council held, on ze matter, an’ ze Mandan will wait an’ see.”

SNUG IN WINTER QUARTERS

Much was yet to be done before the fort was secure. The barge ought to be unloaded and its goods stored in the two store-cabins. The men in the Gass cabin spent their time evenings braiding a large rope of elk-skin, by which the barge might be hauled up on the bank, farther out of the ice. Big White and Little Raven and other chiefs and warriors brought meat, on the backs of their squaws. Big White's village was across the river, and he and his wife came over in their buffalo-hide boat. She followed him to the fort, with 100 pounds of meat at a time on her back. She was delighted with the gift of a hand-ax, with which to cut wood for the lodge fire. The captains presented the Mandan nation with an iron mill for grinding corn. This pleased the women.

The weather turned warm, and Captain Lewis took a squad of men, to pay a visit to the villages. Only one chief was unfriendly. He, named Mah-pah-pa-pa-ra-pas-sa-too, or Horned Weasel, refused to see the captain at all.

"And we know the reason why," asserted Sergeant Pryor, who had been along. "Seven traders of the British Northwest Company have just come down with dog-sleds from the north country, and are giving out British flags and medals and telling the chiefs we aren't true men."

When Mr. Francois Larocque, the captain of the traders, paid a visit to the fort, Captain Lewis informed him very strongly that the United States would

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

not tolerate any flags and medals except those authorized by the President. This was now United States territory.

This day Sergeant Pryor dislocated his shoulder while helping to take down the mast of the barge.

Now cold weather set in again, and the river was closed by ice. The snow fell for a day and a night, and lay thirteen inches deep. But fortunately the roofs were on the cabins, the stone chimneys drew well, and there was plenty of meat and dried corn.

VIII

EXCITEMENT AT FORT MANDAN

“Ho! Hi! Hi-o!”

It was the morning after Sergeant Pryor had hurt his shoulder, and the Northwest Company traders had been talked to by Captain Lewis; a bitterly cold morning, too, with a stinging north wind blowing across the snow and ice. The shrill call drifted flatly.

“Hi! Hi-o!”

“Sergeant of the guard,” summoned William Bratton, who in beaver-fur cap, buffalo-fur coat and overshoes and mittens was walking sentry outside the opening of the two lines of cabins.

Sergeant John Ordway came running. All the men stopped their after-breakfast tasks at the barge and in the street and in the timber, to gaze and listen. On the opposite bank of the river an Indian stood, wrapped in his buffalo-robe, with his hands to his mouth, calling. The river, frozen from shore to shore, was only 400 yards wide, and the voice carried clearly.

“I dunno what he wants, but he wants something,” informed Sentry Bratton.

“Hi! Hi-o!” And then signs and a jangle of Indian words.

“He wants to talk with us,” explained Peter, who read the signs, to George Shannon.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

“Where’s Chaboneau?” demanded Sergeant Ordway. “Here, Toussaint! What’s he saying?”

“Hi!” called back Chaboneau, with lifted hand. And listened to the answer. “He say he have some-t’ing ver’ important to tell to ze Long Knife an’ ze Red Head. He want to come over.”

The Indian crossed on the ice. The sergeant and Chaboneau accompanied him to the headquarters cabin at the head of the street. The Indian was not closeted there very long. Out from the cabin bustled Sergeant Ordway again, and hastened down to the barge.

“Oh, Gass! Here—you’re to take twenty men, Pat, and go with Captain Clark. See that they’re well armed, and in marching order. The captain means business.”

“That I will,” replied Pat, dropping his armful of supplies. “B’ gorry, I hope it’s a bit of a fight.”

“What’s up, John?” queried half a dozen voices.

“The Sioux have tried to wipe out a party of Mandans, down to the southwest, and Big White’s afraid the village is going to be attacked. So now’s the time for us to help Big White and show these Mandans our hearts are good.

“Hooray!” cheered Pat. “All right.”

Out from the headquarters cabin strode Captain Clark, in his furs, and buckling his sword about his waist outside of his buffalo overcoat. Usually he did not wear his sword. He was known as the Red Head.

EXCITEMENT AT FORT MANDAN

Captain Lewis was known as the Long Knife, because he was rarely without his sword.

Behind Captain Clark came Chaboneau, and York, agrin, carrying his rifle, and looking indeed like a black buffalo.

Peter thrilled. He was wild to go, himself. He ran after Pat, and clutched him by his skirt.

"I go, Pat."

"By no orders o' mine, bedad," rebuked Pat. "Ah, now," he added. "Sure, it's the Irish blood in ye—an' if ye snake after an' the cap'n doesn't see ye, I'll not send ye back. But ye can't go further 'n the village. Mind that."

"York can go. I can go," asserted Peter, for York was no soldier, either, although sometimes he pretended to be. So Peter ran to York.

"You get out, boy," rebuked York, strutting about while the men were being formed at Sergeant Pat's sharp orders. "Dis am wah! Dis am berry seryus bus'ness when Cap'n Will done buckle on his sword. Yessuh. 'Tain't no place foh chillun."

"Did Captain Clark say you could go?" challenged Peter.

"'Twa'n't necessitous, chile," retorted York. "Marse Will gwine to take keer ob his soldiers; I go to take keer ob Marse Will. He cain't get along wiffout Yawk. I raise him from a baby."

But when the little column pressed forward, Captain Clark and Chaboneau, the interpreter, in the lead,

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Sergeant Pat conducting the double file of men, and York toiling behind, Peter trotted at the heels of York.

York glanced over his shoulder, and grunted.

“Huh! 'Spec' you think you gwine to help carry Marse Will's scalps.”

The ice was firm and snow-covered. Captain Clark led straight across. No sounds except the barking of dogs issued from the site of the Big White village, above. The Sioux had not yet attacked. Not an Indian was to be seen; in the distance before, the smoke from the lodges streamed in the wind. The captain made a half circuit of the village, and entered it on a sudden, from the land side. At the approach of the little company the Mandan dogs barked furiously—women screamed—the village seemed to be alarmed; but Chief Big White, and Chief O-hee-naw, a captive Cheyenne, and Chief Sho-ta-haw-ro-ra or Coal, issued to see what was the matter.

“We have come to protect our friends the Mandans,” announced Captain Clark.

“The Red Head chief is welcome,” bade Big White, breathless—for he was rather fat. His hair, pure white, bushed out all around his head. “Let my brothers come to the council lodge.”

Peter had done well to stick by York; for York was Great Medicine, and of course was gladly admitted into a council. Peter sidled in beside him. If he had tried to get in alone, the chiefs would have ordered him out. Councils were no places for boys.

EXCITEMENT AT FORT MANDAN

Captain Clark made a speech.

“We have heard that the Sioux have not kept our peace talk in their hearts,” he said, “but have attacked our friends, the Mandans, and have stained the prairie with blood. So we armed at once and are here to lead the Mandan warriors against the Sioux and punish them for their treachery.”

“Wah!” grunted the chiefs and warriors, approving. They spoke together, in their half circle, a few minutes; and O-hee-naw, or Big Man, the Cheyenne, arose and dropped his robe, to answer.

“We see now,” said Big Man, “that what you have told us before is true. When our enemies attack us, you are ready to protect us. But, father, the snow is deep, the weather is very cold, and our horses cannot travel far. The murderers have gone off. In the spring, when the snow has disappeared, if you will conduct us we will follow you to the Sioux and the Ricaras with all our warriors.”

When the council dispersed, the Mandans were in a very good humor. Chief Big White accompanied Captain Clark back to the river, and hugged him, at parting.

“We love our white fathers,” he declared. “My village has been weeping night and day for the young man slain by the Sioux; but now my people will wipe their eyes.”

Across the ice Captain Clark marched his men, to the fort again.

“Huh!” grumbled York. “Dose Mandans, dey

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

ain't gwine to fight when 'tain't comf'table to fight."

"Sure, I'm thinkin' that was jest a Mandan trick, to try our mettle," asserted Patrick Gass.

"De Mandans now our heap frien's," assured Drouillard.

Colder grew the weather, until at the close of the first week in December the mercury of the thermometer stood at 10 above zero. The earth was freezing so rapidly that the men had hard work to set the pickets of the fence which was to enclose the open end of the fort.

Now on the morning of December 7, Patrick Gass paused in his work of aligning the fence stringers to which the pickets were being spiked, and swung his arms and puffed. His breath floated white in the biting wind. He had peeled his overcoat, and was working in his flannel shirt. Sha-ha-ka the Mandan chief shuffled business-like through the opening left for the gate. He was muffled from chin to ankles in a buffalo robe; and above it protruded his bushy white hair framing his solemn but good-humored wrinkled face.

"Top o' the mornin' to ye, Big White," hailed Pat. "What's the good news, this fine day?"

"Ooh!" grunted Big White, scarcely checking his stride. "Where Red Head? Long Knife? Heap buffs." And he passed on.

"Hooray!" cheered Patrick Gass. "Buff'lo, does he say?"

Suddenly, through the thin air drifted a distant medley of shrill shouts, across the river.

EXCITEMENT AT FORT MANDAN

“Listen!” bade Cruzatte. “Dey hunt boof’lo! De boof’lo haf come out on de prairie!”

The uproar increased. Sha-ha-ka had disappeared in headquarters; but out burst York, and Chaboneau, and Jessaume, armed and running for horses. Out issued Captain Clark and Sha-ha-ka, followed by Captain Lewis. Baptiste Lepage, a new interpreter, yelled in French to Jessaume, and Jessaume excitedly answered.

“Gran’ boof’lo hunt,” proclaimed Baptiste, running also. “Ever’body hunt ze boof’lo.”

Tools were dropped, but Captain Clark’s voice rang clearly.

“Pryor!”

“Yes, sir.”

“Take a dozen men who aren’t otherwise engaged and join the Indians across the river in that buffalo hunt. Get all the meat you can. Use what horses you need, but don’t wait for me.”

“Yes, sir. I will, sir.” And rejoiced, Sergeant Pryor, whose arm had healed, called off the names as he bustled hither-thither.

“Arrah!” mourned Patrick Gass. “That laves us out, fellows. ‘Not otherwise engaged,’ said the captain. An’ here we are with our fince not finished.”

Captain Clark and Chief Big White were hurrying for the river, and the village beyond.

“Don’t you want your rifle, Will?” called Captain Lewis, after.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

“No, Merne. I’ll hunt as the Indians do. We’ll beat them at their own game.”

Already the Sergeant Pryor detachment were mounting. There were scarcely horses enough to go around, for only enough had been hired from the Mandans to supply the regular hunters.

“There are more at the village, lads,” called Captain Lewis.

The men without mounts went running, plodding, laughing, across the snowy ice, for the village. York was pressing after the captain and the chief. He carried a rifle and had a large knife belted around his soldier’s overcoat. Peter delayed not, but scurried, too.

“I stay by Marse Will,” was declaring York. “We show dem Injuns.”

In mid-river the sounds from the hunt were plainer. To thud of hoofs the squad under Sergeant Pryor raced past with a cheer and flourish of weapons. At the village the squad afoot were met by squaws, holding ponies. A young squaw who had frequently smiled on York tendered him the hide rope of a splendid black.

“Great Medicine heap kill ’um,” she urged.

“Huh! Dey all like Yawk,” chuckled York, scrambling aboard.

The other men were grabbing ropes and mounting. A very old and ugly squaw with a spotted pony yelped at Peter (who knew better than to push forward) and signed. She thrust the pony’s thong at him.

EXCITEMENT AT FORT MANDAN

“ Boy go,” she cackled, grinning toothless. She signed “ Wait,” and shuffled away, fast.

All the men except Peter and York left, hammering their ponies with their overshoes, in haste to join the fray. Yonder, about a mile, a snow dust hung in the wind, and under it black figures plunged and darted. Reports of fire-arms boomed dully.

Captain Clark and Chief Sha-ha-ka had disappeared in the chief’s lodge, before which stood a squaw holding two horses. Peter’s squaw came trotting back, with a bow and quiver of arrows. Grinning, she extended them to Peter, and signed: “ Go! Shoot!” Peter thankfully accepted—slung the quiver at his waist, strung the bow. He never had killed a buffalo, but he had shot rabbits; now he would kill a buffalo. The bow was a strong little bow, but after these weeks of work he had a strong little arm.

“ Golly!” chuckled York. “ Cap’n Clark done got a bow, too.”

For the captain and Sha-ha-ka had emerged from the chief’s lodge. Sha-ha-ka was muffled in a buffalo robe; so was the captain. He had shed his overcoat, and his cap, had bound about his brow a scarlet handkerchief, Indian fashion, and his red hair flowed loose to his shoulders. He carried a bow; doubtless underneath his robe was the quiver.

As quick as the chief he snatched the hide rope from the squaw’s willing fingers, and vaulted upon the pony’s back, and he and Big White pounded off together.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

“Come on, boy,” bade York; and he and Peter launched in pursuit.

“Never mind me, York,” yelled the captain, over his shoulder. “I’ll take care of myself. This gray is the best buffalo horse in the village.”

“Marse Will done been brung up by Dan’l Boone,” explained York, to Peter. “Yessuh; done shot wif bow ’n arrer, too, back in ol’ Kaintuck. Reg’lar Injun, Marse Will is.”

The Indian ponies were saddled only with a buffalo-hide pad, from which hung thong loops into which the rider might thrust his feet, if he wished. Peter could not reach the loops. And the ponies were bridled only with a single thong which looped around the lower jaw. But Peter had ridden in this fashion many a time before.

York clung like a huge ape. To ride bareback was nothing new to him. Before, the captain sat as if glued fast. Sha-ha-ka could sit no firmer than the Red Head.

The breeze was keen, whistling past one’s ears and stinging one’s cheeks. But see! The buffalo! There were hundreds, in a writhing, surging, scampering, bewildered mass. They had come out of the sheltered bottoms to feed in the open, and the Indians had espied them. Now around and around them sped the Indians, yelling, volleying arrows, stabbing with lances, working at the mass, cutting out animals and pursuing them to the death. The hunters from the fort were at work,

EXCITEMENT AT FORT MANDAN

also. Guns puffed little clouds, which mingled with the greater cloud of snow.

Here and there were lying buffalo carcasses, red-
dening the snow. The captain and Sha-ha-ka, and
then Peter and York, began to pass some, and the
blood-stains were frequent. Before, other buffalo were
staggering, or whirling and charging. Indians on their
ponies dodged, and plied their arrows. Peter glimpsed
One-eyed Cruzatte, and Chaboneau—they could hardly
be told from the Indians, so cleverly they managed their
ponies. Sergeant Pryor had been thrown, and was
running afoot, a great bull after him. Ah!

Chief Sha-ha-ka whooped shrilly, and dropped his
buffalo-robe about his thighs. Captain Clark dropped
his, and laid arrow on bow. Their ponies quickened,
as if understanding.

“Gwan, you hoss! Gwan!” implored York, ham-
mering his black mount. The spotted pony also leaped
eagerly.

With a loud shout Captain Clark charged straight
at Sergeant Pryor's bull. The gray horse bore him
close alongside, on the right—the proper place. When
even with the bull the captain drew bow, clear from
hand to shoulder, loosed string—and the arrow, swifter
than sight, buried to the feathers just back of the bull's
foreleg. The stung bull jumped and whirled; on raced
the gray horse, and wheeled; the bull, his head down,
lunged for him—and the gray horse sprang aside—
the bull forged past, the captain was ready with another

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

arrow—twang! thud!—the gray horse leaped again, to follow up—but the great bull halted, faltered, drooped his head, his tail twitched and lashed, still his head slowly drooped, he straddled, and began to sink.

“Catch your horse, Pryor. Quick!” ordered the captain. “You can’t hunt afoot.” And before the bull’s body had touched the snow he was away again, in the wake of the frantic herd, his red hair flaming on the wind.

“Fust kill foh Marse Will,” jubilated York. He and Peter scarcely had had time to check their horses. “He done beat Big White. Come on, boy!”

In a twinkling all was confusion, of buffalo bel-lowing, fleeing, charging; of horsemen shouting, pursuing, dodging, shooting; of flying snow and blood and steaming breaths and reek of perspiring bodies. Peter speedily lost York; he lost Sha-ha-ka and Cap-tain Clark—but occasionally he sighted them, now sep-arated, now near together, as if they were rivals. He lost everything but himself and pony and the buffalo. He shot, too; he saw his arrows land, he left wounded buffalo behind and chased others; and ever and again he saw the red hair of the captain.

The captain was in his buckskin shirt; Sha-ha-ka was in buckskin; many of the Indians rode half naked—excitement kept them warm. Peter felt no cold, through his buckskin and his flannel shirt. He had been more thinly clad in the Oto village and was used to weather. But bitter was the wind, nevertheless, and

EXCITEMENT AT FORT MANDAN

the wounds of the prone buffalo almost instantly froze.

The chase had proceeded for a mile—and on a sudden Chief Big White, from a little rise in a clear space, shouted high and waved his robe. It was the signal for the hunt to cease. The turmoil died, the frightened herd rushed on, and the horsemen dropped behind, to turn back. The squaws from the village already had been at work with their knives, cutting up the dead buffalo. They must work fast, on account of the cold. They carefully pulled out the arrows and laid them aside, so that it might be told to whom that buffalo belonged. The arrows of each hunter bore his mark, in paint on the shaft or the feathers.

Captain Clark rode in, panting and laughing, with Sha-ha-ka. His quiver was empty, his buffalo-horse frost-covered from eye-brows to tail. Sha-ha-ka treated him with great respect; and so did the other Indians.

“Dey say de Red Head one great chief. He ride an’ shoot like Injun,” explained Chaboneau, as the company from the fore assembled.

“Marse Will kill more buff’los dan all the rest ob dem put togedder,” prated York. “Only he done run out ob arrers. Den he try to choke ’em wif his hands!”

Five buffalo were credited to the captain—his arrows were in them. Five more were credited to the soldiers, who had been hampered by their unsaddled horses and by the big overcoats. York claimed three of the five—but nobody could believe York. The in-

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

interpreters—Chaboneau and Lepage and Jessaume—had made their own kills, for their families.

“How many do you claim, Peter?” inquired the captain, with a smile.

“The old squaw who gave me the horse and bow, she owns what I kill,” answered Peter, carefully.

For there she was, cutting up a fat cow, from which one of Peter’s arrows protruded. Peter rode over to her.

“Mine,” he signed, proudly.

But she only grinned and shook her head, and pointed to his pony and his bow. Then she handed one of his arrows to him.

“Keep,” she said. “Keep bow. Make big hunter.”

Understanding, Peter rode away. There seemed to be plenty of meat, but a good bow and quiver was a prize. So he was willing to trade.

IX

PETER WINS HIS SPURS

To twenty-one, and then to thirty-eight below zero dropped the thermometer. The captains forbade the men to venture far from the fort, and the sentinels were relieved every half hour. The air was so filled with ice haze that two suns seemed to be shining.

Of course not much work could be done out of doors, in such weather. However, with the first warm spell, at twenty above, Pat, the boss carpenter, hustled his squad to complete the fence. Lustily chopping with broad-axes they rapidly turned out pickets that were two feet wide, four inches thick, twelve feet long and sharpened at both ends. These were set upright in a shallow ditch and spiked, edge against edge, to the stringers.

Finally Pat swung the heavy gate to and fro on its leathern hinges; it closed perfectly, and the bar that fastened it dropped easily into place. That was the last touch, and Pat heaved a sigh of relief.

"'Tis a good job well done, lads," he complimented. "An' jest in time. To-morrow we cilibrate."

"Why, Pat?" queried Peter.

"Sure, ain't to-morrow Christmas?" rebuked Pat. "That's a new wan to ye, mebbe?" And Peter needs must have "Christmas" explained to him.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Yes, the captains had decided to celebrate. They instructed Chaboneau to tell the Mandans that on the morrow the white men were to have a great medicine day, and that no Indians should come near. That night, in the mess cabin, Patrick Gass passed another word.

“It’s all o’ yez up ’arly in the mornin’, boys,” he said. “We’ll wake the captains with thray rounds, so they’ll know we’ve not forgot.” And he winked.

In his bunk Peter was roused with a jump, amidst the grayness, by a thunderous noise. He sprawled to the floor—he heard a voice giving sharp orders, and before he could reach the door there was another thunder. Had the Sioux come? No! It was Christmas, and the celebration had begun. He opened the door—powder smoke wafted into his nostrils, the men had formed two lines down the middle of the street, their rifles were leveled, and “Whang!” they all spoke together.

“Hooray!” now the men cheered.

“Christmas Day in the mornin’!” shouted Pat, waving his cap. The door of the captains’ cabin opened and the captains stood gazing out; York’s black face peering over their shoulders. “Merry Christmas to yez, sorrs,” welcomed Pat, with a bow and a scrape. “It’s only welcomin’ the day, we are, an’ christenin’ the flag with a bit o’ powder.” For from the flag-staff in the street floated the United States flag.

“Very good,” approved Captain Lewis. “Merry

PETER WINS HIS SPURS

Christmas to each of you. You may dismiss the men for the day, Sergeant."

What a jolly day this day of Christmas proved to be. Nobody worked, everybody was merry. After breakfast in the mess hall, which was a cabin with a table down the centre seating twenty on a side, and a huge fireplace at one end, and a loft for the cooks and their supplies, the table was moved, One-eyed Cruzatte and George Gibson tuned their fiddles, and the men danced and capered.

There was a big dinner, of juicy meats, stewed corn, stewed dried pumpkin, with plum pudding at the close. The captains were present, in uniform. There was more dancing, and story-telling; not until late at night was the fort quiet. All the Indians had kept away.

Thus was passed Christmas Day, 1804, at this first United States fort west of St. Louis, 1600 miles up the River Missouri, in the centre of a North Dakota yet to be named.

"When do we have another Christmas, George?" asked Peter, eagerly.

"Not for a long time, Peter," laughed George. "Christmas comes only once a year."

For, you see, Peter had a great deal to learn.

Now Fort Mandan settled down to a winter routine. The United States flag floated. The swivel cannon from the barge had been planted in the street, its muzzle commanding the entrance. Just outside the

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

gate a sentry constantly paced, by day; another sentry walked a beat on the top of a mound of earth that half circled the rear of the fort and banked the store-rooms against the cold. John Shields, the blacksmith, established his forge—and that, also, was great medicine. The Indians crowded about to watch the bellows fan the charcoal into ruddy heat. Even the interpreters were astonished, when John set to work.

“Ma foi!” exclaimed Toussaint Chaboneau. “I go get my squaw’s kettle. She haf one hole in him.”

Away he ran, and returned with Sa-ca-ja-we-a, bringing her kettle. A gentle little woman was the girlish Sa-ca-ja-we-a, or Bird-woman, of the far distant Snake nation; everybody was fond of her. John Shields willingly took the kettle, and patched the hole in it; and beaming with smiles the Bird-woman hastened to put it on her fire again.

But the wife of Jessaume had a kettle which could *not* be mended; and very indignant and jealous she left the fort, with her kettle and her children, and went across the river to her own people.

“Huh!” said Jessaume, shrugging his shoulders. “She be so bad, guess I get ’nodder wife.”

John Shields not only mended kettles for the women, but he mended the battle-axes and tomahawks of the men. From scraps of sheet-iron and tin he manufactured a marvelous variety of articles—hide-scrapers, punches, arrow points, and occasionally a whole battle-ax. For these, the Indians from the vil-

PETER WINS HIS SPURS

lages traded corn and beans and dried pumpkins, so that John proved to be a valuable workman.

William Bratton and Alexander Willard sometimes helped him; and as they were gun-smiths too, they repaired the rifles of the expedition and the few fusils of the Indians.

The weather blew warm, and cold again. There were hunting excursions; and on January 1, 1805, which, Peter learned, was called New Year's, there was another celebration, like that of Christmas.

"Ze Mandan, dey reques' we pay visit to deir village an' show ze squaw an' boys how ze white mans dance," informed Chaboneau, in the morning, after a call from Big White.

So the captains gave permission for Cruzatte and George Gibson to take their violins, and for York and Patrick Gass and a dozen others to go, and entertain the village of Big White.

They traped gaily across the river, and in the lodge of Chief Black Cat, who lived at this village, Francois Labiche, one of the boat-men from Cahokià, opposite St. Louis, danced on his head to the music of the two fiddles, and thereby greatly astonished the Indians.

The village rewarded the dancers with buffalo robes and corn; and that evening Head Chief Black Cat brought to the fort another quantity of meat packed on his wife's back.

"Let the white medicine dancers visit my other villages, or there will be jealousy," he urged.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

"I will haf no more hair," complained Francois Labiche.

Forty below zero sank the thermometer. John Newman froze his feet so badly that he was unable to walk in, and a rescue party with horses were sent to get him.

Captain Clark, with Chaboneau as guide, led a hunting party down-river, with the thermometer eighteen below. Chaboneau returned alone, to say that Captain Clark had obtained some meat, but that the horses could not carry it on the slippery ice.

"Your wife is ill, Chaboneau," informed Captain Lewis. And Chaboneau rushed for his lodge.

Forth he darted again.

"My wife she ver' seeck," he cried, wringing his hands. "W'at s'all I do? I fear she die, ma pauvre Sa-ca-ja-we-a (my poor Sa-ca-ja-we-a)."

"I'll try to tend to her, Toussaint," said Captain Lewis; and got out the medicine chest.

But all that night, and part of the next day the groans of the little Bird-woman could be heard.

"Dere is one remedy I hear of," spoke Jessaume. "I sorry my wife lef'. But sometime de Injun gif de rattle of de rattlesnake."

"Let's try that, then," bade Captain Lewis.

So the captain broke open the specimen bales in the store-room and found a dried rattlesnake skin. With Chaboneau jumping about imploringly, he crumbled two of the rattles into water, and this the suffering Bird-

PETER WIN HIS SPURS

woman drank. Everybody at the fort was interested.

Soon from the lodge of Chaboneau issued a new sound—a feeble, shrill, piping wail. But the groans of Sa-ca-ja-we-a had ceased. Out again darted Chaboneau, his leather face beaming.

“One fine boy,” he shouted, capering. “It is all right. One fine boy. I t’ink he look like me.”

The next day, which was February 12, the hunting party returned, having left their meat in a pen to protect it from the wolves.

“I have the honor to announce a new recruit, Captain,” reported Captain Lewis, saluting Captain Clark, a twinkle in his eyes.

“What’s his name, Merne? Chaboneau?” demanded Captain Clark, smiling broadly, with cold-red-dened face.

“He is leetle Toussaint,” proclaimed Chaboneau. “One fine boy who look so han’some as me.”

“B’ gorry,” uttered Sergeant Pat, “an addition to our number, is it? Faith, he has good lungs, but I thought it was a weasel chasin’ a rabbit.”

The next morning four men and three horses to haul sleds were sent down to get the meat; but at evening they came back empty-handed. A hundred Sioux had robbed them. Captain Lewis set out at sunrise, to punish the robbers. Only three or four Mandans went. Chief Black Cat said that his young men were out hunting, and the villages had few guns, so his people could not help the white soldiers.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Captain Lewis was gone six days. He did not overtake the Sioux, but he brought up the meat—part of it on a sled drawn by fifteen men.

Mr. Gravelines, the trader, arrived from the Arikara nation. The Sioux sent word by the Arikaras that they would hereafter kill the white soldiers whenever they caught them.

But nobody at the fort minded these threats. February slipped into March, and all thoughts were turned upon the onward journey as soon as the river opened.

The thermometer rose to forty above zero. A flock of ducks were seen, flying up stream.

“The first sign,” quoth Sergeant Gass.

The weather was “open an’ shet,” as said Pat, with wind, sunshine, and snow flurries. But the ice in the river began to move, a little; another sign of spring. The captains decided that the barge was to be sent back to St. Louis, with the specimens, and the Corporal Warfington squad and other extra men. Under the direction of Captain Clark and Patrick Gass, the carpenter, boat timber was cut, and small pirogues, or canoes, were built, to take the place of the barge. John Shields was busy all the days long, making battle-axes to trade for a fresh supply of corn.

The store-room was ransacked and the clothing and such damp stuff was hung out to dry. Great strings of geese and swans and ducks passed, northward bound. The rising river burst into a channel; down it floated

PETER WINS HIS SPURS

ice cakes, carrying buffalo, elk and deer. The Indians, running out across the firmer ice, killed them with spears. The canoes were finished and brought out of the timber, and to the bank at the fort. All hands were put at work loading.

This was an anxious time for Peter. Was he to be sent down with the barge, or was he to be taken on, with the captains and Pat and all?

"I go," announced Chaboneau. "I engage' as one interpreter, for ze journey to ze Rock Mountains an' ze salt ocean. I take my young wife, an' my baby, but I leave my ol' wife."

"Do I go, Pat?" queried Peter.

"Well, now, I dunno," drawled Pat, pausing to wink at Toussaint. "An' what would we do with a boy, yonder up amongst the white bear an' the two-headed Injuns? For I hear there be giants, wearin' two heads on their shoulders. Sure, they'd ate a boy with only one o' their mouths."

"I hunt," asserted Peter.

"Would ye kill bear an' buff'lo with the bow an' arrer?" teased Pat. "Ain't we got Drouillard an' Fields an' the captains an' meself, all handy with the gun?"

"I show you, Pat," exclaimed Peter.

Two steps he made, and grabbed his bow and quiver, where they were lying on the gunwale of the barge. The quiver was full of iron-pointed arrows, which

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

John Shields had equipped for him. Out he ran, upon the ice of the river. His quick eye had noted a black object floating down the channel aboard a floe. No Indian was after it, yet. He would show that he was as good a hunter as any Indian.

Buffalo? Elk? Deer? Wah! It was crouching, and he could not yet tell. But fast he ran, in the slush, dodging air-holes, and with the ice weaving and bending beneath him. Suddenly, as he approached, heading off the floe, the creature stood. It was no buffalo, or elk, or deer; it was a bear.

Wah, again! Also, hooray! Voices were shouting at him, to turn back; but, no, he would not turn back, even for a bear. He was a hunter. He ran faster, because he was afraid that some of the men would come with guns.

He reached the edge of the channel. The bear stiffened, lowered its head, and bristled, showing every fang. No "white bear" was it, evidently. It was a brown bear, but an old one, large and cross. Below, a few yards, the channel narrowed; the floe might lodge there, or the bear be enabled to spring from it to the other ice. Peter must act quick. He knelt and bent his bow—drew the arrow clear to the iron point, so that his arm holding the bow was straight and the hand of the other arm was against his shoulder. That was the way to shoot. The bear was right in front of him, balancing on the ice cake. Twang-thud! The arrow

PETER WINS HIS SPURS

struck true—was buried to the feathers where the bear's neck met shoulder.

Now another! Up reared the bear, roaring and clawing, and the floe swerved in toward the channel's edge. Peter in his haste to pluck a second arrow, string it and launch it, slipped and fell sideways—and on the instant the floe had touched the channel edge, where the channel narrowed; roaring, the bear had sprung ashore, and roaring he was coming, the arrow feathers dripping red and his tongue dripping red, and crimsoned froth slathering his open jaws. The bristles on his back were full six inches high.

All this Peter saw in a twinkling. He had time only to launch his arrow. But he took good aim, there on his knees; whang-thud!—his second arrow landed near the first; and away he ran. From the bank at the fort men, both white and red, were running, too; running to help him. They waved their arms and weapons, shouted loudly.

Peter changed his course. They should *not* help him. He would show Pat, and the captains, and everybody, what he could do. He glanced over his shoulder. The bear was close. A bear could easily outrun a boy, or a man, and for a short distance, a horse. Aside leaped Peter, digging in his moccasined heels, for foothold in the soft spots; another arrow was on the bow-string; with scratching of claws and furious growl the bear slid past. But Peter had turned in a flash, and

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

while turning had drawn his bow. Whang-thud! The arrow sank almost out of sight in the bear's ribs, forward where the heart should be.

"Hooray!" cheered the shouting men.

The blow had knocked the bear down. He went sliding, in a struggling heap. Now he roared indeed, and twisting his head bit at the arrow. Up he rose, sighted Peter, and on he came. Peter lost a moccasin, his foot slipped. He stood his ground, held his breath, and took very careful, cool aim—bending his bow till it quivered in his grasp. A moment more, and the bear would rear, to strike him—and he loosed the taut string. The arrow struck the bear right in the nape of the burly neck; his head was low, bear fashion, and Peter had taken the chance. Down sprawled the bear, as if smitten by lightning, for the arrow point had cut his spine. He shivered, and was still. The four feathered ends jutted from his hide. He was a dead bear.

"Glory be!" panted Sergeant Pat, arriving. "An' ye did it all by yourself! But, sure, I thought I see ye 'aten up entoirely."

"Huh!" grunted Little Raven, second Mandan chief, prodding the lax, furry carcass with his spear. "Heap boy. Make big hunter."

All together they dragged the bear, at the end of Pat's belt, to the barge. Peter, of course, said nothing. But when Captain Clark clapped him roundly on the shoulder, and Captain Lewis said, "Well done, Peter,"

PETER WINS HIS SPURS

he knew that he stood a good chance of being taken up-river. The Long Knife was not much given to idle words; but he appreciated deeds. The bear proved to be very old, very thin, with tusks worn to stubs. Hunger had driven him out of his winter hole early. The hair of his hide was loose. Nevertheless he was a large specimen.

“We’ll send his head to the President,” remarked Captain Lewis to Captain Clark. “No such bear as this can be found in Virginia or Kentucky.”

X

THE KINGDOM OF THE "WHITE BEARS"

APRIL was ushered in by a great thunder-storm of rain mingled with hail. That speedily cleared the river. The rotted ice went swirling down, and soon from bank to bank the Missouri was free.

"De trail is open," said old Cruzatte.

"How far to the Rock Mountains, Pat?" asked Peter.

"Another thousand miles, I hear tell. An' after that, another thousand miles to the big ocean."

"How do we get over the mountains, Pat?"

Pat scratched his carroty thatch, and reflectively rubbed his stubbled chin.

"Faith, an' I dunno. Trust to the commandin' officers, I guiss. That's the proper way for soldiers. We'll find a gate some'ers. There be some tremenjous falls to get around, fust, say the Injuns."

"Sa-ca-ja-we-a know," proudly asserted Chabon-eau. "Her peoples lif dere, in ze mountains, beyond dose falls. She speak ze Snake tongue."

"I gwine to kill one ob dem white b'ars," boasted York.

All the fort was in a fever of impatience—the down-river men to be on their way "back to the United States," as they expressed it; the up-river men to be

THE KINGDOM OF THE "WHITE BEARS"

on their way into a new country never explored by white foot. Long letters were being scrawled, for the "folks at home," telling them of the past year's adventures; Captain Lewis was busy preparing his report to the President; Captain Clark was laboring nights, by fire-light, putting final touches on a map of the Missouri, based upon a ruder map sketched by Little Raven, the Mandan, with charcoal on a buffalo hide. Baptiste Lepage and Chaboneau helped, for they, also, had been many days' travel westward, trading with the Cheyennes and the Minnetarees.

Only John Newman was sad at heart. Captain Lewis had decreed that he be returned to St. Louis at the first opportunity. The opportunity was near. John pleaded to be permitted to go on with his comrades. He wanted to make good. Already he had showed that he was repentant of his brief bad conduct. Had he not worked faithfully, and even frozen his feet?

Captain Clark might have yielded to him, but Captain Lewis was sterner.

"No, John," he said, again. "I must make an example of you. I cannot run the risk of any more mutinous talk. We have two thousand miles before us, and the party must all work together. You will return to St. Louis on the barge. Later, if your good conduct continues, I will request the President to overlook your offense and you will be granted an honorable discharge."

"Yes, sir," replied John Newman, saluting. "But

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

it's pretty tough, sir. I'd rather take another lickin', sir."

However, in time, John did receive honorable discharge, and was granted the 320 acres of land and the extra pay allowed to the other men.

April 7 was the day for breaking camp. By five o'clock in the afternoon the boats, loaded and manned—the barge for down-river, the six canoes and the two pirogues for up-river—were being held at the bank, waiting only for the captains' orders.

"Ready, barge?" called Captain Lewis.

John Newman gripped the last of the hands extended to him by his former comrades, and clambered aboard. He and five of the Corporal Warfington privates from St. Louis were the guard. The sixth private, Moses B. Reed, was being returned as a prisoner, for he had attempted to desert, with his musket and other government equipment. Corporal Warfington was in command. Trader Gravelines was the pilot. Two French boatmen were the crew. Chief Brave Raven, and two other Arikaras who had accompanied Mr. Gravelines up from the Arikara village, also were aboard. They were going on to Washington to see their great white father.

For President Jefferson were being sent Captain Clark's journal and map, and Captain Lewis's report to this very date. And many hide and wooden boxes of specimens and trophies: two stuffed antelope, a white weasel pelt entire, squirrels that had been brought by

THE KINGDOM OF THE "WHITE BEARS"

the Minnetarees clear from the Rocky Mountains, dried prairie dogs, mountain sheep and elk and deer horns, a painted buffalo robe picturing a battle of Mandans and Minnetarees against Sioux and Arikaras, a beautiful shield made and decorated by Chief Black Cat especially for the great white father, Peter's bear head, a yellow bear hide and other furs, Indian shirts and leggins and moccasins, a Mandan bow and battle-ax, and even an ear of the red Mandan corn. And three cages containing a live ground squirrel, a prairie hen, and four magpies.

Not until ten months later did these wonders arrive at Washington.

"All ready, sir," responded Corporal Warfington, to the captain.

"Give way."

Out pushed the barge. Captain Lewis drew his sword.

"Present! Ready! Fire!" he shouted. And every rifle, of canoes and pirogues, cracked in a volley.

"For the United States," murmured Patrick Gass. "Arrah—but good luck to 'em."

Then into the white pirogue sprang Captain Lewis.

"Give way," he cried, standing beside Captain Clark; and out were shoved the eight boats together. Captain Lewis nodded at Gunner Willard.

"Boom!" spoke the swivel cannon, in farewell to the shore.

Sha-ha-ka and other Indians had come over in skin

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

canoes to bid the Long Knife and the Red Head goodby. They stood, and gazed, and made no sign. They would wait, and take care of the white fathers' fort.

"We'll be back," declared the buoyant George Shannon, as he bent to an oar. "Stay where you are, old fort. We'll be back in the fall and light your winter fires again." For the captains thus had figured.

"We locked the gates, but sure the Injuns 'll be climbin' over the fince before we're out o' sight," grunted Sergeant Pat.

The wind was almost dead ahead. With oars and paddles the men settled to their work. Now the party numbered thirty-three, and Peter.

There were the two captains—Captain Meriwether Lewis and Captain William Clark (to each other "Merne" and "Will"), from Virginia and Kentucky; and Sergeants John Ordway, of New Hampshire, Nathaniel Pryor and Patrick Gass; and Privates William Bratton of Captain Lewis's state (Virginia); Alexander Willard from John Ordway's state, and John Shields, of Kentucky, the three smiths; Reuben Fields and Joseph Fields, brothers, John Colter, Joseph Whitehouse, William Werner, who like Pryor and Shields, were from Captain Clark's state, Kentucky; John Collins, of Maryland; John Thompson, the surveyor, from Indiana; Robert Frazier, of Vermont; the handsome, merry George Shannon from Ohio and Pennsylvania both; George Gibson, the fiddler, Hugh McNeal, John Potts, Peter Wiser, all from the same

THE KINGDOM OF THE "WHITE BEARS"

place as Pat and George—Pennsylvania; Silas Goodrich and Thomas Howard and Hugh Hall, of Massachusetts; Dick Windsor, said to hail also from Massachusetts.

Peter knew them all; fine men; but he liked Pat and George Shannon the best.

Then, there were the Frenchmen: gay old Cruzatte, with his one eye and his lively fiddle; Francois Labiche, the boatman who danced on his head; Baptiste Lepage, who joined at the Mandan villages to take the place of one Liberté who had run away; George Drouillard, the hunter; Chaboneau and Sa-ca-ja-we-a, the Bird-woman, who was to help the party into the mountains and make friends of the Snakes. And little Toussaint, the beady-eyed baby—a great pet.

And York, black, enormous York, the great medicine, whom all the Indians so highly respected.

Yes, this was a glorious company, from which a boy might learn much.

So, in a line, the eight boats proceeded up the Missouri, through present North Dakota. The wind blew sometimes fair, sometimes adverse; sometimes so strong that it lifted the fine sand in dense clouds above the river and the men's eyes were made sore. Captain Lewis's tightly-cased watch stopped and would not run.

At the end of the first week, when the night's camp was breaking up, for the day's journey, George Shannon espied a black animal slinking through the grass.

"Wolf!" uttered Pat. "An' a black wan, for the

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

captains' collection. Wait till I draw a bead on him."

"No! That's a dog, Pat!" And George whistled. "Don't shoot."

The black animal crept toward George, stomach to earth, tail wagging.

"Assiniboine dog," pronounced Chaboneau. "He sled dog. Draw ze sled in winter, an' ze travois—ze lodge pole, in summer. He from dat ol' camp we see yesterday. Mus' be los', poor leetle dog."

"He's only a puppy, and nigh starved," said George, patting him.

So the black shaggy little dog was taken along.

That night at camp Lepage and Chaboneau consulted together.

"I never been up-river funder dan dees," announced Baptiste. "I t'ink once I stop right at dees spot, an' turn back. Chaboneau, he stop once 'bout t'ree mile below."

"Then it's our own trail from here on," spoke John Shields.

Where North Dakota and Montana meet, George Drouillard was sent out to explore south up the Yellowstone River. He returned with report of many sandbars and much coal.

Beyond the mouth of the Yellowstone, in the morning of October 26, while the boats were slowly sailing on up the Missouri, Captain Lewis suddenly appeared, at a clear spot on the bank, and signaled with a rifle-shot.

THE KINGDOM OF THE "WHITE BEARS"

"Faith, the cap'n's been in a hurry," observed Patrick Gass, as the boats turned in.

And so he evidently had. He was still out of breath.

"We've killed a large white bear," he panted. "Some of you men come and help Drouillard bring him down."

"Good work, Merne," called Captain Clark. And enough men tumbled ashore to carry half a dozen bears.

Cruzatte ran, Peter ran, the Fields brothers ran; all ran. Back a few hundred yards they found Drouillard working with his knife on the carcass of a bear.

"No! Let's fetch him down entire, for the whole crowd to see," cried Reuben Fields. "He's a sock-dologer. Look at him, Joe!"

"He not so ver' beeg—but he beeg plenty," averred Cruzatte.

"Who shot him, Drouillard?"

"De cap'n an' me, both," answered Drouillard. "Dere was two. De one we woun', he get away. Dis odder we woun', an' my gracious, he chase de cap'n. He chase him seventy, eighty yard, but he bad hurt, could no run quite so fas' as de cap'n. De cap'n load hees gun while he run, an' shoot again—bang! Bear no fall. I come, aim queeck—bang! Dis time bear fall. But my gracious, he ver' tough to keel."

They dragged the huge carcass to the shore. It

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

weighed 300 pounds. "Young bear," declared Drouillard. Everybody crowded about, to examine its fur (which was not white at all, but was yellowish), its long claws and tusks, its little, deep-set black eyes.

"Dis chile dunno," stammered York, his own eyes popping. "Mebbe he ain't gwine to look foh dis kind ob b'ar. If he jes' a young b'ar, what mought his daddy be? Hoo!"

"Don't you or the men take any chances with these animals, Will," cautioned Captain Lewis, to Captain Clark. "There are lots of signs of them now."

Captain Clark and Reuben Fields did take a chance, a few days later. In the dusk they met a monster brown bear (which was a better name for it than white bear, although grizzly bear is better still) not far from the evening camp. When they shot together, he roared so loudly that the very air shook, but fortunately he tried to escape. They followed him and shot him eight times more; and even then he swam clear into the middle of the river, and died on a sand-bar.

It was quite a job to get him into camp. He weighed about 600 pounds. The captains measured him. From his hind feet to his nose was eight feet, seven and a half inches; he was five feet, seven and a half inches around the chest, three feet, eleven inches around the neck, and one foot, eleven inches around the fore-legs! His heart was as large as an ox-heart, and his claws four and one-half inches in length.

THE KINGDOM OF THE "WHITE BEARS"

But William Bratton "caught" the worst bear, to date. About five o'clock the boats were just being landed, for night camp, when a great crashing and shouting were heard; out from the brush burst William, and bolted, staggering and gesturing, for the nearest boat. He had lost his hat, his buckskin suit was torn, he could scarcely speak.

"Another man in a hurry," quoth Patrick Gass, as everybody reached for a gun. "Injuns, mebbe?"

"He-he-help!" panted William, lunging into the shallows and fairly falling across the gunwale of the white pirogue.

"Speak, man! What's the matter?" demanded Captain Lewis.

William heaved and gasped.

"Bear! White bear! Chasing me—close behind." Puff. Puff. "Shot him—chased me—mile and a half—almost caught me. Look out!"

"Whereabouts? Which direction?"

"Down river—back in brush, sir."

"Hah!" exclaimed the captain. "I'll go after him. Drouillard, the two Fields, Willard, Potts, Shields, Pryor, come with me. Bratton's found another bear. Want to go, York?"

"Nossuh, nossuh!" asserted York, with decisive emphasis. "I'd like to go mighty well, Marse Merne, but I got to stay right hyah an' take keer ob Marse Will."

Away hastened Captain Lewis and the seven men.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

All eyes scanned the shore, and many tongues plied the exhausted hunter with questions. He said that after shooting the bear he had run a mile and a half, with the bear roaring and floundering behind him, but unable quite to overtake him because of its wound.

In about an hour back came the hunting party, into camp—Alec Willard and John Shields, who were the two largest members, weighted down with an enormous hide and a great quantity of fat.

They all said that after following Bratton's trail back, for a mile, they had come upon the bloody trail of the bear. He had turned aside and had gone another mile, until he had stopped, to dig a hole or bed two feet deep and five feet long. There they had killed him.

"An' he ought to 've been dead long before," declared John Shields. "Bratton had shot him straight through the chest. He was a tough one."

"Faith, as the cap'n says, it's safer to fight two Injuns together than wan white b'ar by hisself," proclaimed Pat.

The fat of this bear yielded eight gallons of oil, for greasing the guns and keeping the men's hair slick.

On the third day after, six of the men had a pitched battle with another bear. He put them all to flight—almost caught several of them; and did not fall until he had been shot eight times. And while this was going on at the shore, Cruzatte's canoe, out in the stream, narrowly escaped a fatal upset.

A gust of wind struck the sail, while Chaboneau

THE KINGDOM OF THE "WHITE BEARS"

was steering. Chaboneau lost his head, dropped the oar, began to cry aloud with fright. The canoe tilted, tilted, water flowed in—and over on its side turned the boat. The sail's rope had been jerked out of Cruzatte's hand.

"Seize de rudder, Toussaint! Ketch de rope—queeck! Pull on de sail! We all drown! Do de right t'ing or I shoot you!" ordered Cruzatte, scrambling along the gunwale.

Only young Sa-ca-ja-we-a was calm. Holding her baby, she reached right and left and gathered the articles that were floating off. In a moment more the canoe righted, but was full of water. Baling and rowing, the men got her beached just in time.

"Dat stupid Chaboneau! Hees wife is better man dan heem," scolded Drouillard. "He near los' all de fine instruments an' de papers of the captains. Mebbe drown ever'body, too."

As it was, a great deal of medicine had been spoiled by the soaking.

The six victors over the one bear brought him in at last. Because of the battle, this place was known as Brown-bear-defeated Creek.

XI

WHICH WAY TO THE COLUMBIA?

“WIRRAH, but tired I am!” groaned Patrick Gass.

It was June 3, and in the nineteen days they had come more than 300 miles from Brown-bear-defeated Creek. What with the constant wading and tugging to conquer the narrow, swift current and the strong head winds, well might all groan.

Night alarms had disturbed the camps. Once the men had been aroused only just in time to drag the captains' hide lodge away from a spot upon which a burning tree was about to fall; and, again, a stupid buffalo bull had charged through, and only the little black dog had saved the camp from much damage.

But the Rock or Shining Mountains were nearer. On Sunday a week ago Captain Lewis, climbing a hill, had seen them, to the west. The Sho-sho-nes or Snake Indians might be expected any day. Their country was near, also.

Now the river had split: one branch for the north, one for the southward; and the captains did not know which branch to follow. So they ordered camp here at the forks, below present Fort Benton in north central Montana.

A travel-worn camp it was, tog—of bearded, long-haired men, their buckskin and elk-hide suits shriveled

WHICH WAY TO THE COLUMBIA?

by water, their moccasins in tatters, their hands blistered and their feet sore from rocks and the prickly-pear cactus.

“De nort’ branch—she de true Missouri,” asserted old Cruzatte. “See how swift an’ muddy she is, jus’ like de Missouri. Ain’ dat so, Drouillard?”

Drouillard nodded.

“I sartin she true Missouri. I lif on Missouri most my life, an’ I know. De odder stream too clear an’ smooth.”

“For that very r’ason it comes out o’ the Rock Mountains, ’cordin’ to the cap’ns,” put in Pat. “An’ the bed of it be round stones, the same as are fetched down out o’ the mountains. Not but what I favor the north branch myself, as the more likely direction. We’ll find the Columby across to the north, an’ not to the south, I’m thinkin’.”

“The Minnetarees down at the Mandan town told us the Missouri was clear, at its head, didn’t they?” queried George Shannon. “And there are some big falls to pass.”

“Mebbe de nort’ branch get clear, in leetle time,” argued Drouillard. “She de true Missouri, for de Columby.”

“Oui. So t’ink we all,” agreed Cruzatte and Chaboneau and Lepage and Labiche. “De odder branch go too far sout’.”

This was the opinion of the majority of the men. But——

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

“ We’ve got to be might careful,” argued George. “ The Missouri and the Columbia are supposed to head right near each other, the one on this side the mountains, the other on ’tother side. It would be a bad mess if we crossed and found we were in the wrong place. We haven’t any time to lose.”

Evidently so thought the captains. For the next day Captain Lewis took Drouillard, Sergeant Nat Pryor and several others, to explore by foot up the north fork. Captain Clark took Chaboneau, Sergeant Pat and several others, to explore up the south fork. Peter and the rest of the men remained at camp, together with Sa-ca-ja-we-a and little Toussaint.

This gave them the opportunity to sit in their bare feet, mend their moccasins and leggins, and pick green wild currants and ripe wild gooseberries. Sa-ca-ja-we-a, who was always busy, dressed a doe-skin for herself and little Toussaint.

The Captain Clark party returned on the third day, in the rain. They had gone up along the south branch about forty miles—had walked about 100 miles, all told, said Pat, with a wry face and a limp; Reuben had been chased so shrewdly by a big bear, after his gun had missed fire, that in climbing a tree he kicked the bear’s mouth, and as nobody could get to the tree the bear had kept Reuben there for an hour; rain and snow both had made the trip uncomfortable—but the river appeared to lead west of south, and the captain was convinced that it was the true Missouri.

WHICH WAY TO THE COLUMBIA?

“He’s the commandin’ officer; still I don’t agree with him,” said Pat. “An’ I hope he’s wrong, for the other river’s the ’asier. I’d rather sail in a boat than on foot, any day.”

“Did you sight any falls, Pat?” asked Joe Fields.

“Niver a fall—but I felt some,” answered Pat.

Captain Lewis was yet out. He and his party did not return this evening, nor the next day; and on the following day everybody was worried about them. But that afternoon at five o’clock they came toiling in, hungry, soaked with the cold rain, and weary after a five days’ tramp of 120 miles.

“I’m glad to see you, Merne,” exclaimed Captain Clark, his face lighting up amidst his thick red hair and shaggy red beard. “What’s the news?”

“We’ve been along the north fork sixty miles and it doesn’t head toward any mountains. I don’t believe it’s the Missouri, although Drouillard insists it must be.”

“I don’t believe so, either, Merne. The south fork looks the better of the two, to me.” And they paced together to their lodge.

It was a cheery crowd, in spite of the dangers and discomforts and the hard work. That evening the sky had cleared, there was a big supper of venison, the feet of the men who had stayed in camp were about well, and Cruzatte tuned up his fiddle for a dance.

Toward noon of the next day, Sunday, June 9, a parade was ordered, to hear what the captains had

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

decided. The men left their tasks of dressing skins and repairing weapons, and fell in, under their sergeants.

Captain Lewis stood straight and slim before them, in his fringed but stained buckskin suit. His bright hair was tied in a queue behind, and he, like Captain Clark, had grown a beard—yellow as his hair.

“Captain Clark and I have consulted together, men,” he said. “We have examined our maps, and compared our notes; and we believe that the southern fork is the true Missouri. It has all the signs of a mountain stream, the Indians never have mentioned passing any south fork in order to proceed on to the great falls, and this south fork certainly bears off for those snowy mountains to the southwest which are undoubtedly the Rock Mountains that divide the waters of the Missouri and the Columbia. Accordingly we will take the south fork. That we have chosen as the Missouri; the north fork I have had the honor to entitle Maria’s River, as a tribute to my cousin in Virginia, Miss Maria Wood, of Charlottesville.”

“Do you wish to hear from any of the men, Captain?” inquired Captain Clark. “Some of them may have an opinion to offer.”

“Well, they favor the north fork, I understand,” answered the captain, with a smile. “I’ll be glad to hear what they may say.”

Who was to speak? Patrick Gass, of course. Pat coughed, and saluted.

WHICH WAY TO THE COLUMBIA?

"What is it, Sergeant? Go ahead. Speak up, man."

"It's this way, sorr—Captain, sorr. Yez are the commandin' officers—ye an' Cap'n Clark, an' if yez say the south fork be the Missouri, o' course the Missouri it is, an' we'll all follow yez, sorr. Sure, all we're afraid of, sorr, is that we get down yonder at the foot o' the snowy mountains, an' on the other side there won't be anny C'lumby at all, sorr. But we'll go with yez, sorr, if that's where yez go. Thank yez, sorr." And Patrick saluted again, quite out of breath.

"Captain Clark and I will take the responsibility. We'll try the south fork, men," declared Captain Lewis. "Parade is dismissed."

"Thray cheers for the captains, boys," shouted Patrick Gass. And as the parade broke, into the air was flung every cap and hat and every voice rang true.

Immediately preparations were begun. The heavy baggage and the extra supplies were to be left here, and so was one of the pirogues. Men were set at work digging a large hole in which to store the goods. It was to be kettle shaped—small at the top, then hollowed out, round, until it was six or seven feet deep. The soil was dumped upon blankets and robes, and thrown into the river, so that there should be no trace of any digging, lest the Indians find and rob. The bottom and sides were to be lined with dry brush and hides, to keep the moisture from the goods. The storehouse was called a *cache*, from the French word, "*acher*," to conceal.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

The red pirogue was to be hidden on an island at the mouth of Maria's River.

John Shields, the blacksmith, and Alec Willard worked at bellows and forge, repairing tools and spoons; and William Bratton repaired broken guns.

However, the captains were still cautious regarding the right route to strike the Columbia on the other side of the mountains; and early the next morning, June 11, Captain Lewis took Drouillard, John Shields, George Gibson and Si Goodrich, to scout ahead up that south fork. He promised to send back word to Captain Clark, who was to follow, with the boats and party, as soon as the cache was completed.

On the morning of the twelfth the white pirogue and the six canoes headed up the south fork, before a fair wind.

"We're off," exulted Sergeant Pat.

Everybody was in high spirits—everybody except Chaboneau and Sa-ca-ja-we-a.

"Sa-ca-ja-we-a she seeck," announced Chaboneau. "I do not know what is matter. Mebbe stomick, or mebbe she ketch col' in all dat rain."

Yes, the little sixteen-year-old Bird-woman was feeling very ill. Now for almost a thousand miles she had carried baby Toussaint, had tended the lodge fire and done other Indian woman work; sometimes she had been wet, frequently cold and foot-sore, but she never had complained or lagged.

"You must let her rest, Chaboneau," said Captain

WHICH WAY TO THE COLUMBIA?

Clark, that evening at camp. "Keep her in bed. York, you look after her. Never mind me. Make her some broth. Peter, you help her with little Toussaint. Hold him, if she'll let you."

So Peter took charge of baby Toussaint—who really was a very good baby. He rarely cried, and even rarely smiled. He lay in his swathings of skins and stared with his bright black eyes.

The day had been an easy one for nobody. The river soon had run swiftly; it was broken with many sand-bars and gravel-bars, and by boulders upon which several times the canoes almost capsized.

The next day's voyage was as bad, and worse. Snow mountains appeared on the south as well as at the west. There were numerous islands, more shoals and boulders, and the tow-lines were used. Sa-ca-ja-we-a, lying on a couch of skins in the white pirogue, had not improved. She moaned, and tossed, and babbled strange words. Peter and York watched over her and the baby, although occasionally York had to tumble out and haul on the tow-line.

"Pshaw!" muttered Captain Clark, that night, gazing, non-plussed, at Sa-ca-ja-we-a, who did not recognize him. "We mustn't lose our little Bird-woman. She's to be our guide to her own people, so that they will show us the way across the mountains. In fact, the fate of the expedition may depend upon her."

"I ver' worried," confessed Chaboneau. "Never see her dees way before."

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

The next day the rapids were more severe. Wading breast-deep in the cold water and slipping on the rocky bottom, the men scarcely could haul the boats against the current. All the morning was consumed in making six miles. Just at noon, when halt was ordered, for dinner, a figure was seen, ahead, hurrying down along the banks.

It was John Shields, from Captain Lewis. As he approached, he swung his hat.

"Hurrah, boys!" he shouted. "We're all right. This is the trail. The captain's found the falls!" He came panting and puffing into camp. "It's the true Missouri."

"How far up are the falls, Shields?" asked Captain Clark, eagerly.

"About twenty miles, sir. But you can't get to them with boats."

And that was so. The next day the rapids of the river were more furious, and the men were constantly dodging rattlesnakes on the banks. Shields was sent ahead to tell Captain Lewis that the party were on their way. Captain Clark ordered a noon halt near a large spring of sulphur water, to wait for Captain Lewis. The roaring of the falls had already been heard above the noise of the river.

Sa-ca-ja-we-a was carried to the sulphur spring. She drank quantities of it and soon felt much better.

"Now be very careful what she eats, Chaboneau," warned Captain Clark.

WHICH WAY TO THE COLUMBIA?

At two o'clock Captain Lewis arrived from above. He was enthusiastic over the falls, but he had had several narrow escapes from death, according to Drouillard.

He had been seriously ill, and only choke-cherry tea had cured him. When he had neglected to reload his rifle after shooting a buffalo, a huge "white bear" had charged him, driven him into the river, but had retreated before the captain's leveled pike or spontoon. That same day three buffalo bulls at once had run at him, heads down, until he fortunately had turned on them, whereat they also turned. And that night he slept with a rattlesnake over four feet long coiled on a log just above his head.

"I t'ink de cap'n haf plenty excitement, in one day," declared Drouillard.

XII

SEEKING THE BIRD-WOMAN'S PEOPLE

THERE was a series of five falls, said Captain Lewis, connected by cataracts; and in the top of a tall cottonwood tree on an island at the foot of the uppermost fall an eagle had built her nest. The lowest fall was only five miles above the camp; but the boats would have to be carried around all the falls.

Captain Clark took some of the men, to explore across country, from the camp to the head of the falls, and stake the best route for the portage or carry.

A big cottonwood tree near camp was cut down. Its trunk was twenty-two inches through, and cross-sections were sawed off, to supply wheels for wagons on which the boats should be loaded. The mast of the white pirogue was brought ashore, for wagon axles. The white pirogue was hidden in some willows, and a hole was started, as another cache where more goods were to be left.

The men were told to double-sole their moccasins, because the prickly-pear cactus grew thickly all along the line of march. And hunters were sent out, to get meat and skins.

The captain had fixed upon a spot above the upper fall, opposite several islands, for the end of the portage. It was eighteen miles.

SEEKING THE BIRD-WOMAN'S PEOPLE

"I dunno," commented black York, shaking his woolly head dubiously. "A monster white b'ar done hab dat place already."

For York had been chased clear into camp by a bear; and when the captain had taken three men and gone out to find the bear it had driven another of the hunters, John Collins, into the river.

"Nice quiet place to camp," spoke Dick Windsor.

A quantity of the baggage and one canoe were loaded upon one of the little wagons, and led by the two captains, the men ranged themselves before and behind, to haul and push. Away they went, with the wagon jolting and creaking, and threatening to fall apart.

Chaboneau and York and Peter had been left here at Portage Creek to care for Sa-ca-ja-we-a again. The Bird-woman had improved so much that she was able to walk about—but thereupon she had eaten a lot of dried fish and little ground apples (*pomme blanc*: white apple, Chaboneau called it), which had made her ill once more and also had made the captains very angry at Chaboneau and at Peter too. The Bird-woman was hard to control; she thought she ought to eat, to get well.

In the morning Captain Clark came back down with all the men except Sergeant Pat, Joe Fields and John Shields, after another load. The wagon had broken on the trip up, and they had had to carry the baggage half a mile on their backs. They were very tired.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

“Dat cactus so bad it steeck my moccasin to my feets,” complained Cruzatte.

There was quite a bit of news, time to time, from the White-bear Islands camp, where Patrick Gass and a few other men under Captain Lewis stayed to cover the frame of an iron canoe with skins. The bears were bad. Joe Fields had met three at once and had been chased into the river; had fallen, cut his hand and knee on the rocks and bent his gun. Drouillard and Reuben Fields had climbed a tree, and from it Drouillard had killed a bear with one shot through the head. The bear's nose was as large as an ox's, his front foot measured nine inches wide, his hind foot measured nearly twelve inches long, not counting the claws. That same night another bear entered the camp and carried away some of the buffalo meat. The little black dog was kept busy all the nights, growling and barking.

“Dose islands full of bear,” said old Cruzatte. “I never know bear so mean. Mebbe if we don' go in dere an' clean dem out, dey eat some of us. I sleep on my gun de whole night.”

“One good thing: that pesky swivel's been cached at the foot of the first falls,” quoth Robert Frazier. “We don't have to lug a cannon around any more.”

By the last of June all the stuff had been moved from Portage Creek. But there had been a rain, making the trail soft; so part of the final two wagon-loads was dumped about four miles on the way, and camp

SEEKING THE BIRD-WOMAN'S PEOPLE

was made, with the rest, at Willow Run Creek, two miles further along, inland from the Great Falls.

In the morning everybody except Captain Clark, York, Peter, and the Chaboneau family went back, with one of the two carts, to bring on the baggage that had been left behind on the plain.

"Wouldn't Sa-ca-ja-we-a like to see the Great Falls?" asked the captain, kindly.

The little Bird-woman grinned at the Red Head's notice of her. He was, to her, a big chief. Of course she would like to see the wonders of this medicine river that roared.

"I t'ink I like to see, myself," ventured Chaboneau. "I been so busy I see notting yet."

And that was so, not only with Chaboneau, but with others of the men; for the Portage Creek end of the trail was below the falls and the White-bear Islands end was above the falls, and the trail itself cut across several miles from the river.

"We'll go over, while the baggage is being brought up," said the captain. "York, you come if you want to." He surveyed Peter—anxious Peter. "Peter, I'll have to detail you to guard the baggage here. You must be a soldier. I'll lend you my pistol. You won't need to use it. But keep the stuff spread out to dry. We'll be back soon. It's only three or four miles."

Away they hastened, the Bird-woman carrying small Toussaint in a net on her back. Watching them

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

go, Peter gulped. Was he never to see the roaring falls? Still, he felt proud to be left on guard, like any soldier.

How hot and sultry was the morning! All the landscape of rock and prickly pear and low stiff brush lay smothering, and no sound was to be heard save the dull booming of the river, unseen in the north. Peter sat down, in the shade of the baggage on the wagon.

Presently a black cloud welled over the crests of the shining snow mountains in the west. More rain? Peter watched it vigilantly. It grew swiftly, and rolled into mid-sky. Peter rose with haste and covered the baggage with buffalo hides again. It was a fearful looking cloud, as it bellied and muttered, and let fall a dense veil.

On swept the veil, hanging from the cloud; under the wagon crept Peter. A moment more—and whish! crackle! r-r-r-r-r! Wind! Rain! Hail! The air turned black! Such wind! Such rain! But such hail!!

Listen to the shouts! See! The party sent for the baggage were legging to camp! They had left, trudging gaily, laughing and gamboling and stripped to the waist, because of the heat and the work ahead. And here they were, a confused crowd, heads down, naked shoulders high, beating through the storm for shelter while the fierce hail lashed their skins.

It was rather funny—and it was serious, too. The hail pelted like grape-shot; some of the hailstones were

SEEKING THE BIRD-WOMAN'S PEOPLE

as large as Peter's fist. Ah! One-eyed Cruzatte was down. He could not see very well, anyway, and the hail had knocked him flat and sprawling. Down were George Gibson and John Potts, and Nat Pryor—only, all, to stagger to their feet and lurch onward again.

In charged the crowd, blinded and bleeding, to dive frenziedly underneath the wagon, or to grab right and left for shirts and robes, and crouch, gasping but covered.

"I t'ought I was knock' dead," panted old Cruzatte.

"Feel as though I'd had a lickin'," panted William Werner.

The hail was followed by a furious deluge of rain. The sky cleared—and here came the captain and squad. What a sight they were, not only drenched, but muddy from head to feet. They had been caught in a ravine, near the Great Falls, where they had sought the protection of shelf-rock. But in a twinkling the ravine had filled with water—a rushing mass carrying stones and drift-wood. They tried to climb. The water rose almost as fast as they climbed. The captain and Chaboneau helped the Bird-woman. She lost her net, but saved little Toussaint. The captain lost his compass and an umbrella that he had carried; Chaboneau lost his gun and bullet-pouch and tomahawk. York was up on the plain hunting buffalo, and although badly bruised, fared the best of anybody, except Peter. So, after all, Peter was satisfied that he had not been along.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Willow Run had risen six feet, and now was impassable. Because of that, and the mud, two more days were required, to take all the baggage into the White-bear Islands camp.

That evening, July 2, the captains ordered an attack on the largest island, ruled by a king of the white bears.

"Sure, they're so sassy we got to tache 'em a lesson," quoth Pat.

But although the island was thoroughly searched, by all hands, including Peter, only one bear fell. Drouillard shot him through the heart as he was charging, and he died without doing any damage.

"Have ye seen the falls, boy?" queried Pat, of Peter, the next morning. Peter shook his head. "Well, nayther have I," continued Pat. "I've been workin' too hard—an' so 've ye. But with the permission of the commandin' officers we'll jest take a day off, b' gorry, an' make a tour of inspection. We'll lave the other lads to finish the iron boat."

And inspect the falls they did, from end to end. It was a marvelous spectacle—ten miles of rush and roar and spray and foam. The eagle was on her nest in the top of the lone cottonwood on the island. The Indians at the Mandan and Minnetaree villages had said there would be an eagle.

"An' ten thousand buff'lo!" exclaimed Sergeant Pat, surveying from the brink of one of the falls. "Ten thousand grazin', an' another thousand drowned in the rapids. Sure, they're bein' carried down like chips."

SEEKING THE BIRD-WOMAN'S PEOPLE

To the south and west and north were the mountains, those to the northward snowy, those to the southward more bare.

"An' those are the wans we have to cross, I reckon," sighed Patrick.

But the iron boat did not prove a success. After days of labor at dressing skins, both elk and buffalo, and stretching them over the frame, and cementing the seams with a mixture of beeswax, buffalo tallow and pounded charcoal, she leaked so that she had to be taken apart again and buried.

So Captain Clark, with most of the men, went out in search of trees from which canoes might be hollowed; and it was the middle of July before the expedition was fairly on its way again.

"Faith, we'll be lucky if we reach the Paycific before winter," remarked Sergeant Pat.

The river led southwest, toward the mountains. It grew swifter and shallower, and was frequently broken by islands. There were days of arduous wading, hauling, struggling, sometimes in rain and hail, and again in the hot sun with the thermometer at eighty and above.

The mosquitoes and flies bothered. The shores grew rougher, and higher, until at one spot the river boiled down, 150 paces wide, through a gap in solid cliffs 1200 feet high, black granite below, creamy yellow above. The channel was too deep for wading, or for the poles; and the boats were rowed, a few

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

inches at a time, with the oars. This gap was named the Gate of the Mountains.

"I told you we'd find a gate," reminded Pat, to Peter. "Now what's inside, an' where be the Snakes?"

For this was the Sho-sho-ne country, at last. The Sho-sho-nes were horse Indians. The captains counted on getting horses from them, and leaving the canoes. The firing of guns was limited, lest the Snakes should hear and be alarmed. Indian trails and abandoned camps were passed. The snowy range of the Shining Mountains was nearer, in the west. Captain Clark took Chaboneau and Joe Fields and York and John Potts, and set out ahead, by land, to find some Indians, if possible.

Sa-ca-ja-we-a began to remark familiar places, where she and other Sho-sho-ne women had been, before she was captured by the Minnetarees. Now little flags were hoisted on the canoes, to tell the Sho-sho-nes that the United States soldiers were coming in peace.

"Soon de river make t'ree forks, Sa-ca-ja-we-a say," informed old Cruzatte, at the evening camp after Captain Clark had been gone almost nine days.

"An' which is the trail then, I wonder," mused Sergeant Pat. "Sure we ought to be crossin' the mountains before we get much funder south. It's near August, already."

At breakfast time the next morning, July 27, the crew hauling the leading boat against the stiff current suddenly cheered, frightened the big-horn sheep

SEEKING THE BIRD-WOMAN'S PEOPLE

that had been following along the tops of the cliffs and peeping over curiously, watching the strange white men.

"De Sho-sho-nes!" gasped Lepage, who was on the line of the second boat, wherein Peter sat, fending with an oar. This was Peter's job, when the current was very swift.

"Hooray!" cheered the men all.

Everybody expected to see Captain Clark waiting with some of the Snakes. But the first crew had not cheered because of any Indians. They had cheered because the cliffs ceased, and now there extended a broadly-rolling green meadow-land rimmed about with high mountain ranges white and gray. The mountains closed in behind, on the east and north and west; and the meadow lay before, on the east and south and west. All lovely it looked in the sunrise.

First, a river came in on the left, from the southeast. While breakfast was being cooked Captain Lewis, climbing a rocky outcrop on the bank of this river, saw, beyond, two other forks—a middle fork and a southwest fork, where the Missouri again split.

"The Three Forks, Sa-ca-ja-we-a?" he inquired.

The Bird-woman nodded, smiling.

"We'll breakfast and go on to those upper forks, men," informed the captain. "We may find word there from Captain Clark, as to which is the better. Sa-ca-ja-we-a doesn't know."

So they proceeded. But deserted lay the meadow-

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

land. However, at the juncture of those forks was found a note, stuck in a cleft pole planted on the bank. Captain Clark said that the southwest fork was the better.

Captain Lewis ordered camp made a short distance up this fork, until Captain Clark should return. Right glad were all, including Peter, to rest awhile; eat, sleep, mend the tow-ropes and repair moccasins, and kill meat.

The Bird-woman was especially delighted.

“She say here on dis spot is where de Snake camp was surprise’ by de Minnetaree, five year ago, an’ chase’ into de timber. De Minnetaree keel four warrior, an’ capture four boys an’ all de women,” explained Drouillard. “Sa-ca-ja-we-a was capture’, too.”

That noon Captain Clark returned, with Chaboneau, Joe Fields, John Potts and York. They had not seen a single Indian; but they had had a hard tramp. Chaboneau’s feet had given out several times, and the captain was sick. He thought that he had drunk too much cold water while he was hot.

The first fork was named Gallatin’s River, in honor of the secretary of the treasury of the United States. The middle fork was named Madison River, in honor of James Madison, the secretary of state, at Washington. But the southwest fork was named the Jefferson, in honor of the President himself.

The two captains agreed that the Jefferson River

SEEKING THE BIRD-WOMAN'S PEOPLE

was the main fork of the Missouri; and up the Jefferson they all went.

"Arrah!" groaned Pat. "An' how d' ye like it, Peter? Bad cess to that Bird-woman. Didn't she say we'd meet her people, an' where be they?"

"Those Snakes are a wandering tribe, Pat," answered Sergeant Pryor. "And Sa-ca-ja-we-a hasn't been here since she was a girl, five years ago, remember."

But Sa-ca-ja-we-a was remembering. This was her home country. She pointed out a high shoulder of rock not far from the river, to the west, and exclaimed.

"Dat she say is w'at ze Snakes call ze Beaver's Head," explained Chaboneau. "Ze Snakes spen' deir summer 'cross ze mountains jes' ze odder side, an' she t'ink some sure to be on dis side, too. She t'ink we meet some of dem on dees river, funder up a leetle way."

"To-morrow I'm going in yonder and not come back till I find the Snakes and their horses, Will," declared Captain Lewis.

Immediately after breakfast Captain Lewis resolutely slung his knapsack on his back, donned his cocked hat, and with Drouillard, John Shields and Hugh McNeal, struck into the west.

"Keep traveling up river, Will," he directed, as last word. "I'll stay out this time till I find Indians and horses. You won't see me again, before."

This was August 9. For a week the canoes were

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

hauled and pushed on up the crooked, rapid Jefferson, with never a word from the search party.

"We'll all be turnin' into fishes," groaned Pat. "Me toes are webbed like a beaver's, already. Sure, it's an awful empty country; an' we're thray thousand miles from home."

On August 16 they approached where the river forked once more. It was always forking, decided Peter. Before, not many miles, was a gap in the mountain range. The river seemed to lead for the gap. Were they going to follow it in? And then where would they be? The trees were ceasing. There were only three in sight. What would the camps do for wood? Ahead were brush and rocks; and this night the camp fires were made from willow branches. Whew, but the water was cold—the source of the river evidently was near, in the melting snow.

The river doubled in a great curve, before it reached the forks. Captain Clark had sent Reuben Fields and George Shannon ahead, to the forks, but they reported no news. In the morning he set out, with Chaboneau and Sa-ca-ja-we-a, to walk across the bend, while the boats were hauled around by way of the river.

As all were hauling and puffing, somebody cried aloud. It was Sergeant Ordway, on the foremost rope.

"Look, lads!" he bade. "The captain's sighted something!"

"Look at Sa-ca-ja-we-a! Has she gone crazy?"

"Hooray!" cheered Patrick Gass. "'Tis the In-

SEEKING THE BIRD-WOMAN'S PEOPLE

juns they're meetin'. I see some on horseback. Hooray! Heave, lads, on the lines."

For Sa-ca-ja-we-a had run ahead of the captain—she was dancing—back she ran to him, and danced about him, her fingers in her mouth. Little Toussaint bobbed in his net.

"She suck her finger," proclaimed old Cruzatte. "Dat mean she see her own peoples! Now she point. Dere dey come, on de hoss. Hooray!"

"Chaboneau swings his cap! The captain makes the peace sign!"

"Frinds, lads!" croaked Pat. "Heave, now; heave on the lines, or they'll get away from yez!"

How the men tugged, even Peter laying his weight sturdily to the rope. Yonder, ahead to the left, inside the curve (and a long, vexatious curve it was), half a dozen Indians were galloping for the captain's squad. They met Sa-ca-ja-we-a first, then Chaboneau, then the captain; all mingled together. The Indians were singing and prancing, and taking the captain up toward the forks. One jumped to earth and made the captain sit the horse. Hooray!

"There's a village beyant," gasped Patrick. "Heave, lads, or else we're dreamin'."

"I see Drouillard dere, with dose Injuns," asserted Labiche, whose eyes were keen. "He dress jes' like Injun. I guess he trade clothes."

"Heave, lads!"

The Indian camp grew plainer, as the boats rounded

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

the curve. More Indians were flocking out, afoot and a horse. Sa-ca-ja-we-a and another woman had rushed together; they were hugging each other. But before the canoes could arrive at the bank, the captain and Chaboneau and Sa-ca-ja-we-a had disappeared into a large willow lodge and most of the Indians had flowed in after.

Hugh McNeal met the boats, at the landing, and he had a long story to tell.

XIII

HORSES AT LAST

“ARE they Snakes, Hugh?”

“Yes, of course. But we put in the dag-gonedest time you ever saw, catchin’ ’em,” responded Hugh. “First we had ’em, then we didn’t, next they had us!”

“What’s that around your neck? Where’s your hat?”

“Faith, ye look like a Borneo ape,” added Pat.

Hugh almost blushed through his coat of tan and whiskers. He was bare-headed, and about his neck was a curious object like a tippet or boa. In fact, it was very similar to the fur boas worn by women of to-day. One end was a nose and eyes, the other end was a tail; and all along the edge dangled small rolls of white fur sewed to a white band and hanging eighteen inches long—forming a kind of tassel cloak. The collar itself was brown otter, the border and tassels were ermine. But it was an odd-looking rig.

“Shucks,” apologized Hugh. “We traded clothes with the Injuns, to show good feelin’. The other fellow’s wearin’ my hat. Shields traded his shirt, too. The chief’s got on the captain’s cocked hat. And you ought to see Drouillard. He’s painted, to boot. With all that, we had a narrow squeak, I reckon.”

“How far you been?”

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

“Across the mountains, boys, to the Columby side. We followed up the Missouri, through yonder gap, till it got so small I stood with one foot on each bank. And we went on over, up an Injun trail. Where the waters flowed west we drank of the Columby!”

“Didn’t you meet any Injuns on this side?”

“Yes. I’ll tell you.”

And so he did. On the third day out, the captain had sighted an Indian, through his spy-glass. The Indian was horseback, and looked as though he might be a Snake. But when the captain, calling “Tabba bone,” meaning, in Sho-sho-ne, “white man,” and stripping back his sleeve to show his white skin, was just about to talk with the Indian, John Shields foolishly came in and the Indian galloped away. The captain gave John a proper “dressing down,” for this.

A number of horse tracks were seen, and the captain kept on advancing, following a sort of a road, into the mountains. He ordered a United States flag to be carried, on a pole. Next, two squaws were frightened, and ran away—but only a mile on, down the road, an old woman and a young woman and a little girl were discovered, on a sudden, digging roots. The young woman ran, but the old woman and the little girl squatted and covered their heads, expecting to be killed.

The captain raised them up and gave them presents, and got Drouillard to talk with them in sign language. The young woman came back; and after the captain had painted the cheeks of the three with vermilion, in

HORSES AT LAST

token of peace, the two parties started on, for the village.

Pretty soon, up the road charged sixty other Indians—warriors, on horses, ready for a fight; but the women went ahead, to talk peace, and the captain followed, alone, carrying the flag; and as soon as they knew what to expect, the Indians jumped from their horses and hugged the white men and rubbed faces with them.

“Ah hi e, ah hi e!” said the Indians; meaning: “Glad to see you.”

The chief was Ca-me-ah-wait. In the village the men were given salmon trout to eat, so they knew that they were on the Pacific side of the mountains. The village was friendly, but when the captain asked the Indians to return with him to the east side and meet the other white chief and men, they were afraid again—said the white men might be spies for the Minnetarees. Finally Ca-me-ah-wait was persuaded, and started, with eight warriors.

The women wept and wailed, but after a few hours the village followed.

“Well, our troubles began again,” continued Hugh. “To get those Snakes down here was like haulin’ the barge up-stream in some of those rapids. They turned so suspicious that we traded clothes with ’em. We gave ’em our flag to carry. The cap’n had told ’em that the other white chief was to be found at the forks—but when we sighted the forks, the boats weren’t to be

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

seen, and that made matters worse. Where was the other white chief? Of course, we'd calkulated you fellows might be slow, 'cause of the rapids, but we'd hoped.

"Now we gave over our guns, and the cap'n told the chief to have us shot if there was any ambush. We were terrible afraid the whole pack of Injuns 'd skip and leave us stranded without hosses, or guns either. The cap'n sent Drouillard and an Injun down to the forks, to get a note that had been stuck on a pole there, for Captain Clark. They brought back the note, and the cap'n pretended it was a note put there by the other white chief, sayin' he was comin', but had been delayed. The cap'n wrote another note, by light of a brush fire, telling Captain Clark to hurry. Drouillard and an Injun were to take it down river in the morning.

"That night the Snakes hid out, all 'round us, in the brush, for fear of a trap, while the chief and four or five warriors bunked close beside us. Our scalps felt mighty loose on our heads—and the mosquitoes were powerful bad, too, so we none of us slept much. The cap'n was pretty near crazy. It was touch-and-go, how things 'd turn out. The Snakes were liable to skeedaddle, the whole pack of 'em, and carry us off with 'em. The only reason they were stayin' now, was that Drouillard had told 'em we had one of their women in the main party, and a 'big black medicine man."

"Hoo! Dat am me," asserted York, proudly. "Dis eckspedishun can't get 'long wiffout Yawk."

HORSES AT LAST

“Next mornin’ we were on the anxious seat. The fate of the expedition hung on whether you fellows arrived pretty soon at those forks and proved that the cap’n had spoken truth. The chief sent out a lot of scouts; and Drouillard and one Injun started early with the note, to find you. They hadn’t been gone more than two hours by sun, when in came a scout at a gallop, makin’ signs. He said he’d seen men like us, with skin color of ashes, travelin’ up-river in boats, and they weren’t far away. Hooray!”

“Hooray!” cheered the listeners.

“That settled the business. Old Ca-me-ah-wait hugged us, and the other Injuns danced and sang, and away raced a gang of ’em—and next thing Drouillard and a crowd met Captain Clark. And now here you all are. So I reckon we’re fixed. They’ll trade us hosses.”

The council was still in progress; but while camp was being made under direction of Sergeant Ordway, out from the council lodge came Shields and Drouillard, to the camp. Drouillard was grinning and capering, evidently very happy. His swarthy cheeks were painted with vermilion, he wore a Snake tippet and decorated shirt; he looked exactly like an Indian.

“What news, Drouillard?”

“Ever’t’ing is all right. We are ’mong frien’s. Dey all glad to haf Sa-ca-ja-we-a, an’ she speak well for us. She find one woman who was capture’ same time as she but escape’. An’ dat chief, he her brudder.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Dey haf recognize', an' haf weep togedder under one blanket. I mos' weep too."

"A princess, be she?" exclaimed Sergeant Pat. "Well, well! Good for the little Bird-woman. An' what of hosses?"

"Plenty hoss. No more drag canoe."

The captains came down. They also were dressed as Indians; in their hair had been tied little shells from the "stinking lake," as the Snakes called the far-off Pacific Ocean. The shells had been bought from other Indians and were considered very valuable. A canopy of boughs and sails was ordered erected; under this another council was held. Chief Ca-me-ah-wait promised to furnish horses. The Indian women set about repairing the men's moccasins. They appeared to be a kindly tribe—they wondered much at York, and the battered boats, and the guns, and even at the smartness of the little black dog. But they shook their heads when questioned about the country west of the mountains.

"Dey say it is not ze possible for ze white mans to make travel down ze Columbee by boats, an' ze trail for ze hoss an' ze foot is ver' bad," declared Chaboneau.

"What's the matter with Sa-ca-ja-we-a, Tous-saint?" queried George Shannon, for the Bird-woman's eyes were red and swollen.

"She much cry. Mos' all her fam'ly dead while she been away."

In the morning Captain Clark took Sergeant Pat

HORSES AT LAST

and ten other men, and started over the mountains to explore beyond the Snake village, in hopes of finding a route by water. They were to send back a man to the Snake village, to meet Captain Lewis there and tell him what had been discovered.

Chief Ca-me-ah-wait and all his people except two men and two women started also for the village, with Sa-ca-ja-we-a and Chaboneau, to bring down horses, for Captain Lewis.

Everybody in the camp was put at work making pack-saddles from oar handles and pieces of boxes tied firmly with raw-hide! Out of sight of the Indians a hole was dug in which to cache more of the baggage, especially the specimens that had been collected.

Five horses were purchased, at six dollars each in trade; the canoes were sunk by rocks in the bottom of the river—and the Snakes promised not to disturb them, while the white men were away. On August 24 the march was begun for the village on the other slope of what are to-day the Bitter Root Mountains. The five horses were packed with the supplies; Sa-ca-ja-we-a and little Toussaint rode on a sixth horse that Chaboneau had bought.

Although this was August, the evenings and nights were so cold that the ink froze on the pens when the journals were being written. The village was reached in the late afternoon of August 26. John Colter was here, waiting. He brought word from Captain Clark that canoes would be of no use; the country ahead was

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

fit for only horse and foot, as far as the captain had gone.

“ We had an old Injun for guide who'd been living in another village further west,” related John. “ He says we can't go to the south'ard, for the land's bare rocks and high mountains without game, and the horses' hoofs 'd be cut to pieces, and the Broken Moccasin Indians would kill us. 'Tisn't the direction we want to go, anyhow. The Injuns we met said winter was due, with big snows, and soon the salmon would be leaving for lower country. So the captain decided to turn back and advise Captain Lewis that we'd better tackle another road he'd heard of from the guide, farther to the north, into the Tushepaw country on the big river. After we'd struck the big river, which like as not is the Columby, we could follow it down to the Pacific. Anyhow, the Tushepaws might know.”

Captain Lewis immediately began to bargain for twenty horses. The prices were being raised, so that soon a young horse cost a pistol, 100 balls, some powder and a knife.

Sergeant Pat arrived from Captain Clark's camp below, to ask how matters were shaping.

“ 'Tis a hard road ahead, lads,” he confirmed. “ Cruzatte will tell you that. Sure, wance he was almost lost, himself. I was sint up here to inquire about the prospect of hosses ; but what I want to learn, myself, is : are we have the pleasure of the comp'ny of the little Bird-woman? ”

HORSES AT LAST

“Yes, she’s going.”

For Sa-ca-ja-we-a was. She preferred the white men to her own people.

“Sa-ca-ja-we-a will go. She wants to see the big water,” she had said.

All were pleased that Sa-ca-ja-we-a, the Bird-woman, would take little Toussaint and continue on with them to the Pacific Ocean.

On the last day of August there was a general breaking up at the village. The Sho-sho-nes under Chief Ca-me-ah-wait rode east over the pass which is to-day Lemhi Pass of the east fringe of the Bitter Root Mountains, to hunt the buffalo on the plains of the Missouri. With twenty-seven horses and one mule the white chiefs’ company, guided by the old Sho-sho-ne and his four sons, set out in quest of the Columbia and the Pacific.

The men named the old guide “Toby.”

XIV

ACROSS STARVATION MOUNTAINS

"SURE," said Patrick Gass, "if I wasn't so sore in me feet an' empty in me stomick I could close my eyes an' think myself back in a Pennsylvania barnyard, with the chickens all a-cluckin'."

"But instead, we're four thousand miles from old 'Pennsylvania,' Pat, and in a country where even the dogs are so hungry they eat your moccasins while you sleep," retorted George Shannon. "The pesky brutes stole my best pair last night."

This was the day of September 5. Ca-me-ah-wait and Toby and John Colter and Pat had spoken truly when they had predicted a tough trip. The region west from the Sho-sho-ne village proved impassable. Old Toby had led northward, by hard trail up and down. The two captains rode in the advance; the hunters scouted for game but found little; York's big feet had failed him and he needs must ride until well; Sa-ca-ja-we-a, of course, rode, carrying on her back baby Toussaint; everybody else trudged afoot, each man leading two pack-horses.

The horses soon were worn out by scrambling amidst rain and snow, and falling on the sharp rocks.

What with hauling and shoving and chasing them, the men had decided that boats were easier, after all

ACROSS STARVATION MOUNTAINS

The route had crossed the crooked range, to the east side again, and here had struck a Tushepaw Indian camp of thirty-three lodges. Now the company were lying around, waiting and resting, while the captains traded for more horses.

"I can not onderstan' one word," complained Chaboneau. "Neider can Sa-ca-ja-we-a."

Old Toby himself scarcely was able to interpret for the captains. The language was a curious mixture of grunts and cries. Nevertheless, a kind and hospitable people were these light-skinned Oo-tla-shoots, of the great Tushepaw or Flat-head nation. They were rich in horses, and generous with their roots and berries; and fearing that these strange white men, who rode without blankets, had been robbed, they threw about their guests' shoulders handsome bleached buffalo robes.

These Oo-tla-shoots, who were on their way eastward to hunt the buffalo, signed that the best trail for the big water beyond the mountains was the Pierced Nose trail, northward still. If the white men crossed the mountains by that trail, they would come to a swift river that joined the Big River, down which were falls and a big water where lived other white men.

Old Toby, winking his eyes violently, said that he knew. He once had been upon that trail of the Pierced Noses, by which they hunted the buffalo. His four sons had left him, several days back; but another son had appeared, and he asserted that they two would

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

guide the white chiefs, by the Pierced Nose trail onward from the No-Salmon River, and so to the stinking lake under the setting sun.

“What white men do we find, at the Pacific Ocean, George?” asked Peter; for both the Snakes and the Flat-heads spoke of “white men” down the Columbia, which was known only as the Big River.

“Traders, Peter. White men from the United States, and from other white nations—England and Russia—who sail there in large boats and trade for furs. Perhaps we’ll all return to the United States by one of those boats.”

“At No-Salmon River is where we enter the Pierced Nose trail, is it?” mused Sergeant Nat Pryor. “I reckon that’s a correct name. ‘Cordin’ to Chaboneau and Drouillard the salmon aren’t to be found in any waters east of the Rock Mountains. They all stay west.”

“Oh, murther, an’ aren’t we west o’ the mountains, yet?” exclaimed Pat.

Still north pushed the company, down through the Bitter Root Valley of western Montana, with the line of mountains on the left rising ever colder and higher. In four days’ journey was reached a broad Indian trail, along a river running east. It was the Pierced Nose trail, said old Toby, and the river was the No-Salmon River. The Indian road was to be followed westward, over the mountains, but on the way there would be no game.

ACROSS STARVATION MOUNTAINS

So the captains called the No-Salmon (to-day the Lou Lou) River, "Traveler's Rest Creek," because here camp was made while the men hunted and mended clothes before again climbing the mountains.

The Pierced Nose trail was plain at first, but on the Idaho side of these the Bitter Root Mountains it soon was lost amidst many other trails, and the snows and the thick timber and the bare rocks. Old Toby himself was well-nigh confused; he had not been along the main trail for many years.

The mountains were very broad, very wild. The jumble of high ridges was steep, and constantly drear with rain and snow. The horses strayed, and went lame, and fell down and broke things. The hunters sometimes brought in a lean deer, sometimes a few grouse, and frequently nothing, so then for all hands there were only a sip of canned soup, and berries.

It was on September 14 that the first of the colts was killed, to be eaten. The soup and the berries were making the men ill. He was a nice little black colt, and Peter hated to have him killed; but what else could be done? On this day, also, they arrived at a clear, rocky river down which extended the Indian road.

"Is this the Big River?" asked Captain Lewis, hopefully, of old Toby. "Is this the Big River, with the falls and the white men?"

"Koos koos kee," grunted old Toby. And that was all he would say.

So "Koos-koos-kee" was the river named.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

“Dat one funny name,” chuckled Chaboneau. “Ze ‘Some-odder-river.’” And he laughed. Not for considerable time did he explain to his comrades that “koos koos kee” was only Indian for “This is not the river; it is some other river.”

But the Kooskooskee or Clearwater River does the stream remain unto this day.

“More mountains! Wirrah, more mountains!” lamented Patrick Gass, when the Indian road left the banks of the stony Kooskooskee and through the roughest kind of a country started upward again. “Will we niver be out into some place where it’s open enough to see ’round a corner?”

“Nebber so col’ in mah life befoh,” chattered York, plodding on in frozen moccasins, with snow to his ragged knees. “We got to follow Marse Will an’ Marse Merne—but how do dis hyar Tobe know whar he gwine?”

Sa-ca-ja-we-a pointed ahead from her pony’s back. She had learned to understand even York’s speech. She was very smart and quick.

“Pony rub bark,” she said. For, as anybody ought to be able to perceive, the snow-covered trail was marked above by places where Indian pony packs had scuffed low-hanging branches. This to Peter was very plain.

This night the brown colt was killed, for supper.

“I slept with me heels higher ’n me head,” in the morning announced Pat. “’Tis a fine country where

ACROSS STARVATION MOUNTAINS

a man can't find a level spot to stretch his bones over."

The next day the spotted colt was killed. Some of the men were growing discouraged. After supper Captain Clark, lean but ruddy, his eyes tired but steady, made a speech, with Captain Lewis seconding him.

"We're doing the best we can, men," he said. "We're bound to break our way out into the lower country where there'll be warmth and game and friendly Indians. Why, it may be only a few miles ahead! We can't turn back. Behind us would be only disgrace. Before is glory, and the honor of the flag. To-morrow I'm to scout for a better game country than we are finding. The level grassy plains are the places for game; and I'll send you back word, and as like as not some fat meat, too."

"Hooray," agreed the men, feebly.

"Our hearts be strong but our stomicks be weak," sighed Pat.

"We're nearly at the end of the colts," added Alec Willard. "I'd as soon eat my moccasins as chaw old hoss."

The next morning early Captain Clark, with Drouillard, Joe Fields, Alec, John Colter, Hugh McNeal and George Shannon, the strongest of the men, and good hunters all, rode ahead on picked horses to find, as they expressed, "a level spot and game."

Old Toby and his son continued to guide. They were doing the best they could, too. But surely this Pierced Nose trail was long and difficult.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Now the only food left was some soup and bear-oil. Everybody was feeling weak and miserable. But once the men started a cheer, for they glimpsed, distant before, through a gap, a large broad valley or plain—perhaps the end of the mountains and perhaps the country of the Nez Percés or Pierced Noses. Then the mountains closed again and the valley was swallowed up.

On the third day, about ten o'clock, another shout was given. To a tree beside the trail (the trees were getting larger, showing that the trail was leading downward), in a little draw was hanging the carcass of a horse; and to it was pinned by a splinter a note from Captain Clark:

I am going on to some plains to the southwest.
Will find Indians and collect provisions for you.

W. C.

Sturdy Captain Clark, the Red Head chief! He could always be depended upon. Captain Lewis's thin face brightened under his tattered hat.

"Load the meat, lads," he ordered. "We'll have a rousing dinner, this day."

Ah, but at noon that horse tasted good, after soup and bear-oil! The head was cut off and tossed aside; then with their knives everyone slashed off thick steaks and roasted them on ramrods, over the fires. Peter got his share.

However, just as the march was about to proceed,

ACROSS STARVATION MOUNTAINS

the captain, who, as usual, had paused to cast his eyes keenly along the line, exclaimed sharply:

“Where’s my pack animal, Cruzatte?”

For Cruzatte was supposed to look after this horse and another.

“I t’ought he follow,” stammered Cruzatte, who was quite sick. “I no see heem. My gracious! Mebbe he in brush.”

“Pshaw!” muttered the captain. Then he spoke energetically. “I must have those saddle-bags. They’re of the utmost importance. Fields (and he addressed Reuben), you’re pretty fit. Take a horse and another man and go clear back to where we loaded the meat this morning. That’s likely where the animal strayed, while we halted. Look for his tracks and find him. Be sure and get the saddle-bags, in all events. Their contents are valuable.”

“Yes, sir,” responded Reuben. He looked about him doubtfully. And Peter did an unexpected thing. Peter felt equal to any man. He was young and wiry; his life among the Otoes had accustomed him to all kinds of outdoor hardships. He had not had so much flesh and bones to carry as had the men; he had walked lightly and straight-footed, as Indians walked.

“Take me, Reuben,” he said. “I’m all right. I find the horse.”

“Faith,” supported Patrick Gass, “ye might do worse, Reub. Sure, the lad’s as good as the best.”

“If the captain has no objections——?” proffered

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Reuben, with a grin, "I think we'd make out first-rate."

"An excellent plan," agreed the captain. "Take Peter, by all means. He wants to do his part, and when it's his turn to ride he'll be easy on the horse. He's a regular woodsman, too. Look to your laurels, Reuben."

"Yes, sir," grinned Reuben.

So they set off; Reuben, with his rifle, at first on the horse; Peter, with his bow and quiver, trotting alongside, holding to the saddle thongs. After a time, they changed off; Peter rode and Reuben walked.

They had left about three o'clock. It was dusk when they arrived at the noon camp spot, on the other side of the high ridge. Not even a bird had they seen, to kill for food. They had started in such a hurry that they had brought nothing. But the horse's head was still lying here, untouched.

"We'll have to make shift with the head, Peter," quoth Reuben.

So they built a fire, and roasted the horse's head, and ate it even to the ears. Then they rolled in Reuben's blanket and slept together.

"We'll find that hoss or bust," declared Reuben, as in the morning early, having finished the horse-head scraps, they again took the back trail. Soon they arrived at the place where the horse carcass had been packed—and sure enough, in the brush at one side were the tracks of a horse that had wandered.

ACROSS STARVATION MOUNTAINS

They followed the tracks carefully, and soon they came to the saddle bags, which had been scraped off from the horse's back. Reuben put them aboard the other horse.

"Now for the critter himself," he said.

The tracks led on and on; and not until almost noon did they sight the loose horse, grazing in a small open spot. He was too weak to be wild, and they caught him easily by his dragging neck rope. Reuben transferred the saddle bags, and clambered stiffly on.

"We've a hoss apiece, anyhow, Peter," he proclaimed. "But I'm so empty I don't cast a shadow. Come on, let's take the cap'n his saddle bags."

Empty! Anyway—hooray! And now for "home."

Reuben, who was leading, suddenly pulled his horse short. He slipped off, and resting his rifle on the horse's back, took long aim. Two grouse were sitting on a limb, craning their necks foolishly. Peter could see the rifle muzzle waver; he himself felt as though he could not draw his bow. The rifle cracked—the grouse went hurling. Good! Reuben swiftly reloaded, and aimed—and down spun the other grouse. But when they were picked up, both were in a pulp, from which dangled the heads and legs. Reuben shook his own head dolefully.

"And once I could clip off a bird's head at fifty paces. Well, I was lucky to hit 'em at all, for I can't hold steady."

The two grouse made scarcely a couple of mouth-

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

fuls, so much of the meat had been shot away. The next morning the horses had disappeared, leaving only the saddle bags. Reuben finally shouldered them.

"If we stay looking longer," he said, "we'll starve. I'll tote these as far as I can, Peter; and you can tote 'em as far as *you* can. Between us we'll manage, for the cap'n 's got to have his saddle bags."

"You bet," agreed Peter.

That *was* a journey! They struggled all day. The saddle bags, vowed Reuben, gasping, weighed a ton—and what a ton might be, Peter did not know, but at any rate it must be very heavy. Only toward late afternoon did they sight, below and ahead, the captain's party, on the edge of a plain—the plain.

The party were moving briskly, as if encouraged. The captain was in advance. Reuben and Peter quickened at their best. Would they never overtake the other men?

"Smoke, ain't it, yonder?" panted Reuben.

"Pierced Nose village, maybe, Reuben," answered Peter.

"Don't I see Joe, with that crowd? Yes, and a strange Injun, too!" panted Reuben.

They hastened, dragging their numb legs, and lugging those saddle bags. The party saw them, and halted; gave them a cheer.

"Bully for yez!" greeted Pat. "We've arriv, in a land o' plenty, 'mongst the Pierced Noses. Yez are in time."

ACROSS STARVATION MOUNTAINS

Reuben saluted the captain, who had turned back.

“The saddle bags, Cap’n, but we lost the hosses again.”

“You’ve done well, both of you, lads,” praised the captain. “Joe’s brought us some fish and roots, from Captain Clark. He’s waiting close ahead, with the Pierced Noses. Get on a horse, each of you, and eat as you ride. I think our troubles are over.”

Within an hour they all were at the village of the Pierced Noses, here on the open, fertile prairie of the kamass roots that tasted like pumpkin; and Captain Clark and Chief Twisted-hair made them all welcome.

XV

HOORAY FOR THE PACIFIC!

How beautiful was this broad prairie beyond the mountains, here where lived the Cho-pun-nish or Pierced Nose Indians while they caught salmon in the rivers and the women dug the kamass roots! But the fish and the roots were given so generously that all the party were made ill.

The village was near the banks of the Koos-koos-kee. Twisted-hair, who was the head chief, drew a map with charcoal on a white robe. He showed that not far below, the Koos-koos-kee joined another river, and that this river joined another river from the north, and the two combined flowed west to the big water.

"Tim-tim-m-m-m!" crooned all the Indians, imitating the noise of some great falls that would be met. From the region of these falls and below, came the beads and the brass ornaments traded to Indians by white men.

'Twas time to change from horses to canoes again. Five canoes were hollowed by fire from tree trunks—for only a few of the men were strong enough to swing an adze. All the horses were branded with the army brand which bore the name "Capt. M. Lewis, U. S.," and left in charge of the Pierced Noses. Chief Twisted-hair promised that the horses should be well

HOORAY FOR THE PACIFIC

taken care of, and would be waiting when the white men asked for them again.

"Well, I for one am glad to be away," said George Shannon, when in the morning of October 7 the canoes, laden and manned, their oar-blades flashing, headed into mid-stream. "These Nez Percés are a good people—'bout the best looking Injuns we've seen—but they're mighty independent. They don't give anything for nothing."

"No. And they even hold us to small account because we eat dogs," quoth Joe Fields. "But if a man wants meat, in their village, it's eat fish, hoss or dog—an' dog's the only stuff with any strength."

That was true. Lacking better meat, the captains finally were buying the Pierced Noses' work-dogs—for dog-meat had been found good, back at the Sioux camps on the Missouri. Drouillard and Cruzatte and the other Frenchmen preferred it even to deer. But the Pierced Noses sneered at the white "dog-eaters."

Why they were called "Pierced Noses" nobody could tell. However, old Toby claimed that below there were other, real Pierced Noses, and also real Flat-heads.

Chief Twisted-hair and a second chief, Tetoh, were aboard the captains' canoe, to help the white men pass through the other villages, into the "Tim-tim-m-m" river.

As for old Toby and his son, on the third day out, during a halt they suddenly were espied running away

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

at top speed, and did not so much as turn their heads.

“They’re leaving without their pay! Send and get them, so we can pay them,” cried Captain Lewis.

Chaboneau grinned.

“Dey ’fraid of ze tim-tim rapids. Ze chief say no use to pay dem, anyhow. His people take ever’t’ing from dem when dey go t’rough village.”

Down, down, down with the swift current. The Koos-koos-kee joined the other river, which, the captains figured, was the same river on whose head-waters, far, far eastward, the camp of Chief Ca-me-ah-wait and his Snakes had been located. The Lewis River did they name it, but on modern maps it is the Snake.

Now on down, down, down the rushing Snake. There were rapids, where once or twice a canoe or two was wrecked; but this sort of travel was easier than travel over the mountains, and easier than travel *up* stream. Many Indians were seen, fishing for the salmon. They were friendly, and much astonished. They sent runners to other villages, below, telling of the coming of white men; sometimes Chiefs Twisted-hair and Tetoh also ran ahead, along the bank, that the Indians might be ready. And on shore the Indian women made much of Sa-ca-ja-we-a and little Toussaint.

“If these white strangers travel with a woman and a baby, they cannot be a war party,” reasoned the Indians.

Down, down; until soon after dinner, on October

HOORAY FOR THE PACIFIC

16, this 1805, the course of another large river, coming in from the north, was sighted before. The Columbia! It must be the Columbia, at last! Hooray! Hooray! Hooray! Old Cruzatte, in the leading canoe, struck up a gay French boat-song; Drouillard and Lepage and Labiche and Chaboneau chimed in. Faster flashed the paddles.

“We’ll land yonder,” shouted Captain Lewis, pointing to the right. “At the junction. A lot of Indians seem to be waiting for us.”

“Thanks to Twisted-hair,” jubilated Pat. “Sure, I see him—an’ the other wan, too. When they left they said they’d meet us at the Tim-tim, didn’t they? An’ it’s a big river, by the looks.”

A great throng of Indians collected by Chiefs Twisted-hair and Tetoh had collected on the shore just above where the two rivers joined. A council, opened by a procession with drums, was held. These were Sokulk Indians. They claimed to be kins-folk of the Twisted-hair Pierced Noses, but their foreheads were flattened back so that their heads ended in a peak, and therefore they were more like Flat-heads. They were kind—and not very attractive, because their eyes were sore from water glare and sun glare, and their teeth were bad from eating fish and roots.

Yes, this was the Columbia. The two captains measured it, and the Snake. The width of the Snake was 575 yards, but the width of the Columbia was 960 yards.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

"A noble stream," remarked Captain Lewis. "I wonder how far to the north it penetrates."

"Did you ever see so many fish, dead and alive, in all your life, Merne?" exclaimed Captain Clark. "Why, the water swarms with them, and I understand that the Indians use dried ones for fuel."

"We'll buy more dogs, nevertheless, Will," smiled Captain Lewis. "The men can't row and make portages on fish flesh alone."

A day and a half was spent with the curious Sokulks, here where in southeastern Washington the Snake River unites with the mighty Columbia, in the midst of a flat and pleasant plain. On October 18 the five canoes swept out and down the Columbia itself.

"How far now, Pat?" asked Peter. "To the big ocean?"

"Thirty-seven hundred miles have we come, by the captains' reckonin'," answered Pat. "An' belike 'tis four hundred more to the Paycific."

"What do we do then, Pat?"

"If there aren't anny ships we'll have to stay the winter. An' in the spring, barrin' better luck, 'tis back we track over the four thousan' moils ag'in."

From the Sokulks had been procured another map, of the Columbia. It showed many bad places—rapids and falls. Around some of these the canoes had to be carried; through others they had to be hauled by hand, or carefully lowered with ropes. The Indians ashore seemed very timid, and hid.

HOORAY FOR THE PACIFIC

Captain Clark returned in high humor, from a walk ahead with Chaboneau and Sa-ca-ja-we-a, and Chiefs Twisted-hair and Tetoh. He had shot a white crane, and a teal duck, and then had entered an Indian house that had been closed against him. The Indians had bowed before him, and covered their heads. When he had lighted his peace-pipe with his sun-glass, they had cried aloud in terror.

“They thought me a god, Merne,” he laughed. “They had heard the gun, had seen the two birds drop, and believed that I had dropped, too. When I brought fire out of the sky, that finished the business. But I quieted them with presents.”

However, near the mouth of a river, Chief Yellept of the Walla Walla Indians welcomed the white men, and wished them to stay. Captain Lewis said that they would visit him on their way back.

Chiefs Twisted-hair and Tetoh were sent ahead again, to assure the Indians that the white men intended no harm.

The first big falls, reached on October 23, were not the Tim-tim. The Tim-tim was still below. But Chief Twisted-hair said that the Indians down there were strangers to him, and unfriendly. He had heard that they were planning to attack the white men. And as he could not speak their language he wished to return to his own people.

He was persuaded to stay—and Tetoh also—until the passage of the Tim-tim.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

These first falls or rapids were very difficult; but the captains and old Cruzatte consulted together, and decided to run them with the boats.

"If ever'body follow me an' do as I do, we get t'rough," promised Cruzatte, head boat-man.

So, with Cruzatte leading, down through the wild channel of the first rapids in the Dalles of the Columbia raced the canoes. And from the rocky shores the Eneeshur Indians opened their mouths wide in astonishment.

"The Irish an' Frinch together can lick the world," boasted Pat.

But the place of Tim-tim, or "Timm," for short, was close ahead. It was reached the next evening, and they camped above it, at a village of the Echeloots, or Chinook Indians, who also flattened their hats, and spoke more cluckingly than did even the Oo-tla-shoots.

They were the enemies of the Pierced Noses, but they agreed upon peace, in a council with Chief Twisted-hair. Now, after a final "smoke," Chiefs Twisted-hair and Tetoh left, on horses, for their home. They had been good and faithful guides.

The place of Timm, at the foot of the Dalles of the Columbia, is to-day called the Long Narrows. It was three miles long and in some stretches only fifty yards wide. But the canoes, guided by Cruzatte, went through without one being wrecked. They had been badly battered, however, by the many rocks; and the next day was spent in caulking them. That night

HOORAY FOR THE PACIFIC

Cruzatte brought out his fiddle, a dance was held, about the fire, and the Echeloots appeared much entertained.

In the middle of the night, soon after the camp had gone to bed, Peter was awakened by Pat's suddenly squirming out of the blanket.

"The fleas are 'atin' me entoirely," declared Pat. "Into the river goes ivery stitch o' me clothes."

Peter was glad to follow the example. By morning nearly all the men were stripped, and needs must stalk about in blankets while their clothing was being cleaned.

"'Twas the mosquitoes east of the mountains," laughed George Shannon. "Now 'tis the fleas west of the mountains."

But the fleas were a slight matter, when amidst grand scenery the Columbia River ever bore the canoes onward, toward the ocean and the end of the long, long journey.

After the Echeloots (whom the violin and the dancing had so entertained), more Indians were met. The banks of this Columbia were thickly populated. These Indians lived in wooden houses, too—houses walled and raftered with planks faced and trimmed by fire or by knives and little axes. The houses were furnished with bedsteads.

"As good houses as some settlers' houses back in the Illinois country," declared Captain Clark, who was constantly exploring among them.

The canoes that the Indians cleverly managed were large, hollowed from a single log, with high bows

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

curving upward; farther on down, bows and sterns both were high, and had figures of men and beasts. Some of the Indians owned articles of white men's manufacture, which they said came from below.

"What you say dese hyar Injuns call demselves, Marse Will?" York was heard to ask.

"Skilloots, York."

"An' what were dose we met 'foh we met dese Galoots?"

"The Chilluckittequaws, York."

"Jes' so," gasped York. "But *I* ain't gwine to say it."

On November 2 the canoes were partly carried around, partly slid through, the rapids which formed the foot of other rapids termed by the captains the Great Shute. Presently the river opened two miles wide, and smooth and placid. That night the water rose nine inches on a stake set at the river's edge in front of the camp.

"We're in tidewater, lads!" announced Captain Lewis. "The ocean tides ascend this far. That means there are no more rapids; the ocean itself can't be very distant."

Each night after this a stake was set out and the rise measured. Each day the men sniffed for the smell of salt water and listened for the sound of the surf. Sa-ca-ja-we-a was very much excited; she had come especially to see the big water.

During the night of November 4 the rise from the

HOORAY FOR THE PACIFIC

tide was two feet; the next night's rise was four feet. Ducks and geese were many. But it rained almost every day, and every morning a fog hung low.

On the morning of November 7 the camp rose and breakfasted in a wet mist so dense that it hung on all sides like a gray curtain.

"At this rate," quoth Pat, as the canoes headed out into the silence, "we're liable to get half way to Chiny afore we know we're on the Pacyfic at all."

"I do believe I smell salt, though," asserted George Shannon, sniffing. "Sa-ca-ja-we-a's been insisting, too, that she could hear a 'boom-boom.'"

"Listen!" bade Pat—and they paused on their oars. Peter thought that he also could hear a "boom-boom," low and dull, but he wasn't certain. They went on.

The captains' boat was being piloted by a Wahkia-cum Indian, now: a squat ugly man who wore a queer round jacket that, according to the men, had come from a ship. The river was growing wider, the fog was thinning and lifting—on a sudden the crew of the captains' boat waved their hats, pointed before, cheered wildly. The cheer passed from boat to boat. For the fog ahead had swirled into fragments, and below it was an expanse of tumbling gray water on which the sun was trying to shine. Occasionally sounded a muffled "boom," like the faint growl of summer thunder.

The Pacific Ocean! But they did not reach it this

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

day; the fog closed in again, and the rain. They did not reach it the next day, although the waves were so high in this, the mouth of the Columbia, that half the party were seasick; and the water was salty. They did not reach it the next day, nor the next. Wind and rain kept beating them back. Sa-ca-ja-we-a was frightened.

“The spirits are angry. They do not want us here,” she whimpered, crouching over little Toussaint, under a grass mat raised on a pole.

“The only way we’ll reach the sea is to be washed into it,” groaned Pat. “Sure, don’t the very stones an’ logs come a-rollin’ down the hills? Now for the first time I wish I hadn’t started, an’ here I am at the ind!”

Yes, miserable were they all. There was no chance to dry clothing and food, and scarcely an opportunity to stir. The mouth of the river formed a wind-swept bay miles wide. The captains thought that if camp might only be moved around a point ahead, and to a high sand beach, it would be more comfortable. A deserted Indian village stood there, with no inhabitants “except fleas”; and, as Pat said: “We’ll be all the warmer for the exercise they give us.”

Not until the afternoon of November 15 did the opportunity to move come. The sky cleared, the wind suddenly dropped; the canoes were reloaded in a hurry, and the point was rounded.

Now the ocean was in full sight, outside the bay; from the boards of the Indian houses rude cabins were erected; hunters and explorers were sent out.

XVI

THE WINTER AT FORT CLATSOP

BUT no ships from the United States or any other nation were to be found. Only the long gray swells appeared, as far as eye could see, rolling in to burst thunderously upon the white sands and the naked rocks; and the only people ashore were the Indians. Ships and white men had been here, said the Indians, during the summer; and many of the Indians spoke a curious mixture of English and native words. Captain Lewis discovered a place, in the bay, where white men had camped.

A high point overlooking the lonely ocean was given the name Cape Disappointment.

“Now, wouldn't it have been a fine end to our trip from the Mississippi clane to the Paycific if a nice big ship all stocked with flour an' p'taties an' boots an' socks had been waitin' for us,” quoth Pat. “Sure, mebbe the United States has forgotten us.”

“We'll have to build winter quarters at once, Will,” said Captain Lewis. “The rain is rotting all our goods and clothes, and spoiling our provisions. We must get under cover. There'll be no ships before next summer, according to the Indians.”

“Timber for cabins, wood for fires, game and fresh water for the messes, and shelter from the ocean

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

tides—let's look about, then," answered Captain Clark. "The Indians say that skins and meat are abundant a little way south."

Captain Lewis found it—a good site, on the south side of the bay formed by the mouth of the Columbia, and three miles up a little river called to-day the Lewis and Clark River. It was back ten miles from the ocean, and in the midst of tall pines, with great shaking bogs near, on which elk fed.

The first fair morning, which was December 7, camp was moved to the new grounds.

The walls of the seven cabins rose fast; and when it came time to put on the roofs, Pat, the boss carpenter, was delighted to find a species of pine that split into boards ten feet long, and two feet wide, with never a knot or crack.

"The finest puncheons I iver have seen," he asserted, "for floors an' roofs both. We'll be snug an' dry in a jiffy, an' all ready for Christmas."

"It's a far cry back to last Christmas, Pat," spoke George. "We've come through a lot of country."

"An' here we are," reminded Pat.

Yes; Christmas—Peter's first Christmas—was indeed a long way behind. That Christmas of 1804 had been celebrated in new Fort Mandan among the Mandans and Minnetarees beside the snowy Missouri River. What were Chiefs Big White and Black Cat doing now? Was Fort Mandan being kept ready for the return of the Long Knife and the Red Head?

THE WINTER AT FORT CLATSOP

This Christmas of 1805 was celebrated in new Fort Clatsop, among the flat-headed Clatsops and Chinooks and Cathlamets at the mouth of the rainy Columbia River. The men fired a volley, before breakfast, and in front of the captains' door old Cruzatte, accompanied by Drouillard and the other Frenchmen, sang a lively Christmas song. But there was no feast, because the only food in stock was some roots, pounded fish, and lean elk meat. The captains distributed a little tobacco to the men who smoked, and Peter and the men who did not use tobacco received each a handkerchief.

The rain poured all day, but the cabins were tight above and below, so that everybody stayed dry and warm.

Now the expedition might settle down to the winter's routine. Chimneys were yet to be put up for the men's cabins—fires were tried, in open hearths in the middle of the rooms, Indian fashion, and proved too smoky. A fence of high, close pickets, as at Fort Mandan, needs must be erected to guard against attack.

The captains' cabin had been built around a large stump, smoothly sawed; this was their writing table, on which they spread their maps and journals. Captain Clark had traded with the Indians for a panther skin seven feet long; this made a good rug. York occupied the same cabin. Chaboneau was the captains' cook; he and Sa-ca-ja-we-a and little Toussaint lived in another room, built on. The men were divided into

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

four messes, each with a cook, and the supplies were doled out from the storehouse every morning.

Drouillard, the chief hunter, and George Shannon, John Collins, Francois Labiche and Reuben Fields were sent out to hunt for elk and deer; but the meat spoiled so quickly, even although smoked, in this damp climate, that Joe Fields, William Bratton, Alec Willard, George Gibson and Peter Wiser were ordered to the seashore with kettles, to make salt.

They built a furnace or fireplace, of stones, and boiled down kettlesful of salt water. They brought back a gallon of good salt, for table use and for preserving the meat. All winter the salt-makers were kept at work. Peter served his turn.

The hunters were constantly out, chasing elk over the bogs. The meat not eaten was salted and smoke-dried; from the tallow, candles were run, in reed moulds; and from the hides the men made shirts and trousers and moccasins, in preparation for the next journey. The captains determined that the whole party should return by land, as soon as the travel season opened. No ship was to be expected.

The captains led out exploring parties. Captain Clark gained a great reputation as a shot; with a single ball no larger than a pea he clipped off the heads of geese and ducks.

“Kloshe musquet! Kum-tux musquet!” exclaimed the Indians. “Very good musket! Do not understand this kind of musket!”

THE WINTER AT FORT CLATSOP

Their own guns were rusty flint-locks, loaded with poor powder and gravel. Their bows were beautiful and true, but were not strong enough for killing elk. They were not nearly so strong as the bows of the Otoes and the Sioux, decided Peter; not nearly so strong as his own Mandan bow.

The Indians from all around visited the fort. The Chinooks, under Chief Com-com-ly, who had only one eye ("Same as me," chuckled Cruzatte), lived on the north side of the bay; on this south side lived the Clatsops, under Chief Co-bo-way. Nearer the sea lived the Tilla-mooks. Up the Columbia River lived Cathlam-ets. These all looked much alike, being small, ugly, and flat-footed and crooked-legged from squatting so much in their canoes and by their fires.

They were well acquainted with white men. One squaw had the name "J. Bowman" tattooed on her arm. The captain spent much time talking with them, and learned of the ships and the white traders who had been in here.

"Tyee (chief) Haley; so many mast (and Chief Com-com-ly held up three fingers); stay long."

And——

"Callalamet; wood leg; trader."

And——

"Tyee Davidson; three mast; hunt elk."

And so forth, all of which the captains, particularly Captain Lewis, carefully wrote down.

The visitors brought provisions and goods to trade:

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

fish, a little elk and deer, high-crowned hats woven of grass and bark, grass bowls that held water, so tight they were; grass mats, furs. Some of the chiefs wore splendid robes of sea-otter skin. These were priced very dear, for the Indians were shrewd traders. They wanted fish-hooks, knives, and files, in exchange for ordinary articles; but only blue beads would buy the otter-skin robes.

For one otter-skin robe Captain Clark offered a watch, a handkerchief, a dollar, and a bunch of red beads.

“No, no! Tyee ka-mo-suck!” refused the Indian. “Chief beads.”

But Sa-ca-ja-we-a gave to the captain her own girdle of blue “chief beads,” and for it he bought a robe.

There were several new roots that the men grew to like. One root, sha-na-taw-hee, was a thistle root, purple after it had been roasted.

“Tastes like a parsnip, only swater,” declared Pat.

Another root was cul-whay-ma; two feet long and slender. It also was sweet and wholesome. But the best root was the wappatoo—“a rale Irish p’tatie,” said Pat.

This was brought down by Skilloots and the Wah-ki-a-cums, from up-river. It was a species of lily, and grew in the lakes. The Indian women waded in, breast-deep, and poking with their toes loosened the bulbs, which rose then to the surface. That was cold work.

THE WINTER AT FORT CLATSOP

The wappatoo roots were held at a rather stiff figure, because they could be traded to the other Indians, if not to the white men.

The Clatsops were the best Indians. The Cathlam-ets were treacherous; one would have killed Hugh McNeal had not a Chinook woman warned Hugh. The Chinooks were thievish.

“No Chinook shall be admitted into the fort without special invitation,” finally ordered Captain Lewis.

So after that when Indians appeared outside they always shouted: “No Chinook. Clatsop.” Or “Skil-loot,” or whatever they chanced to be or pretended to be. Another order was issued that no Indians should remain in the fort over night.

The Indians brought many fleas, too—“the wan thing for which we’ve nothin’ to trade,” as said Pat.

The greatest excitement of the winter was the arrival of a whale. Chief Co-bo-way of the Clatsops came with the news, and also with three dogs and some blubber. He said that the whale had been stranded ashore near the Tillamooks’ village down the coast. He was given a pair of old satin breeches, and went away much pleased.

Joe Fields and George Gibson appeared at the fort with the gallon of salt from the salt camp, and with some more of the whale blubber. They said that the Indians all were flocking to the whale and cutting it up. The blubber, when cooked, looked and tasted like beaver tail—it was very good; and Captain Clark immediately

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

organized a party to go to the spot and get what blubber they might.

Naturally, everybody was anxious to see the whale.

“You’d better take Peter, hadn’t you, Captain?” suggested Captain Lewis. “He’s a boy—he ought to see what there is to be seen.”

“By all means,” agreed Captain Clark. “Do you know what a whale is, Peter?”

“A big fish,” answered Peter, eagerly.

“Yes; a big warm-blooded fish; a fish bigger than a buffalo.”

Now, Sa-ca-ja-we-a had heard; she had helped Chaboneau cook the blubber for the captains. But she had not been invited to go. In fact, all this time the Bird-woman had not been even so far as the big water. She had worked in the fort.

Suddenly she did a very surprising thing, for an Indian woman. When she believed that she was to be left out of the sightseeing party, she wept.

“Why you want to go?” scolded Chaboneau. “Ze capitaines no haf time to wait for woman with baby. You stay by ze lodge fire; dat is place for womans.”

Sa-ca-ja-we-a tilted her chin at him and went straight to Captain Clark.

“Capitin! I speak a leetle.”

“What is it, Sa-ca-ja-we-a?”

“I come long way, capitin. I carry baby, I cold, hungry, wet, seeck, I keep up an’ I no complain. I show you trail; when you no know which way, I say

THE WINTER AT FORT CLATSOP

'Snake people here,' an' you find Snakes. When Indians see me, dey say: 'Dis no war party,' an' dey kind to you. When you get hungry for bread, I gif you one leetle bit I carry all way from Mandan town, so you can taste. When you want otter robe, I gif you my belt, an' you get otter robe. I been here all dis time, an' I not yet go near de big water dat I travel many days to see. Now dere is a big fish; odders go, Chaboneau say I mus' stay an' care for Toussaint an' help cook. I feel bad, capitin—I—I——" and poor little Bird-woman hid her face in her shawl and sobbed.

The captain placed his hand kindly upon her shoulder.

"You shall go, Sa-ca-ja-we-a. You shall go with us and see the ocean and the big fish; and Chaboneau can stay by the fire and tend to the baby."

Sa-ca-ja-we-a smiled and dried her eyes. Very proud, she made ready. But Chaboneau went, too—because he, likewise, wished to inspect the great wonder which had been cast ashore.

The whale was 105 feet long. The busy Indians had stripped it to the bones, and with difficulty Captain Clark managed to buy 300 pounds of blubber and some oil.

Thus, with hunting, trading, and making garments of leather, the winter passed. An astonishingly mild winter it was, too, of little frost and wet snow, but of much rain and fog which gave the men rheumatism,

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

and which, by spoiling the food and cutting down exercise, gave them boils and stomach complaint, also.

The captains were constantly hoping for a ship and fresh supplies. None was sighted.

So February merged with March. The elk were retiring from the low country to the high, following the grass. On some days the fort had only one day's provisions in store.

"I can find no elk, notting," complained Drouillard, the chief hunter.

The Indians hoarded their own food very close, to make it last until the salmon began to run again, in the spring.

"Six blue blankets, wan red wan, five striped wans that used to be our big United States flag, some old breeches an' waistcuts, an' Cap'n Clark's artillery dress-coat an' hat—faith, that's all we've got an' at prisent prices they wouldn't buy a square meal," reported Patrick Gass. "We'll be atin' ourselves naked."

"Dose t'ings be need' for boats an' hosses," said Cruzatte. "Of de leetle t'ings we haf scarce one hat full. How we go back four t'ousand miles I do not know."

XVII

FRIENDLY YELLEPT, THE WALLA WALLA

“DROUILLARD,” spoke Captain Lewis, “we must have another canoe. These Indians down here won’t sell us any. Try what you can do up the river.”

It was the middle of March. The captains had intended to wait until at least the first of April, before starting on the back trail, so as not to arrive at the mountains until June. Then the snows would have melted, and there would be game. But meat already was extremely scarce around Fort Clatsop; the expedition would better start at once, and hunt along the way.

“I try de Cath-lam-et—dey haf canoes,” answered Drouillard. “But dey will hol’ dem dear. I t’ink I must take de best t’ings we haf. Mebbe you let me take your lace coat, capitaine?”

“What! My only dress uniform?” exclaimed Captain Lewis. “Why not that artillery coat?”

“But that’s mine!” laughed Captain Clark.

“One day a Cath-lam-et see your lace coat an’ like it. I sure I get canoe for it,” persisted Drouillard.

“All right,” sighed Captain Lewis. “Another canoe we must have. I’ll hold councils in my leather clothes.”

So the canny Drouillard, who was half Indian him-

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

self, went up the Cath-lam-ets and traded the laced dress-coat for a canoe.

Sergeant Pat was ordered to count the moccasins in stock. He reported 338 pairs, manufactured during the winter from the hides of the 131 elk and twenty deer that had been killed.

To Chief Co-bo-way (or Com-mo-wool), of the Clatsops, was given the fort and all its furniture. He had been exceedingly friendly; and now he appeared to appreciate the gift very much.

“I will make my home in the house where the white chiefs lived,” he declared.

Captain Lewis and Captain Clark and several of the men had long before carved their names into trees, as a record for other white men to see. And there, on a rock, also was “PETER.” During the winter Peter had made great progress in reading and writing. However, something more official and explanatory than only inscriptions on trees was needed, that the trading ships which came in might know and might carry the news to the world. Therefore the captains wrote out statements containing the names of the party and maps of the country explored. The notices said:

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 world that the party consisting of the persons whose names are hereunto affixed, and who were sent out by the government of the United States to explore the interior of the continent of North America, did penetrate the same by the way of the Missouri and

FRIENDLY YELLEPT, THE WALLA WALLA

Columbia Rivers, to the discharge of the latter into the Pacific Ocean, where they arrived on the 14th day of November, 1805, and departed the 23rd day of March, 1806, on their return to the United States, by the same route by which they had come out.

One copy was pasted up on a smooth post in the headquarters cabin. Other copies were given to the Clatsops and the Chinooks, who promised to hand them to white traders.

“ Sure, we’ll beat the news home,” asserted Sergeant Pat. “ For the ships ’ll be a long time makin’ it, by Chiny an’ the inds o’ the world, while it’s straight across we go.”

And this proved truth. Had the captains only known, at the very time the notices were being written, the American trading brig *Lydia*, of Boston, Captain Hill, was cruising along the coast, and in the first week of April anchored in the mouth of the Columbia. But the other Americans had been gone two weeks, and Chief Coboway was ruler of Fort Clatsop. So Captain Hill took one of the statements, carried it to China with him, and delivered it at Boston not until May, 1807.

At 1 o’clock of March 23, this 1806, Fort Clatsop was abandoned; out into the little river that flowed past it the five canoes glided, and headed down for the Columbia—thence eastward which was *homerward!*

The men swung their hats, of tattered felt, of furs, and of Chinook weave from grass and bark; and cheered.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

“De nex’ winter we spen’ in de United States,” rejoiced Cruzatte. “I play my feedle at Cahokia an’ make de pleasure dere.”

“We’ve come away with plenty powder and lead, and plenty salt; that’s one good job,” remarked Pat.

The powder, sealed in lead canisters, had kept splendidly. Now there were 140 pounds of it. And as to salt—twelve gallons had been packed.

“It’s been not such a bad winter, after all, even if we did have only six clear days in six months,” laughed George Shannon. “Now we’ll soon be rid of our rheumatism.”

Spring had arrived; for although the weather continued wet and raw, wild fowl were feeding in the ponds, the gooseberry and honeysuckle were leaving forth in the parks, and the frogs were croaking in the marshes. Many Indians were met; they were gathering along the river, to wait for the salmon to run up from the sea.

“Next full moon,” said the Indians. “No salmon till next full moon.”

“The second of May, that is,” figured Captain Lewis. “Well, we can’t wait. We’ll have to depend on our guns; for if we wait, winter will overtake us on the Missouri. Where there’s nothing to shoot, we can live for a time on dogs and horses.”

The Indians seemed poor and starving. Captain Clark was told of a large river emptying from the south: the Multnomah, which is the Willamette. He

FRIENDLY YELLEPT, THE WALLA WALLA

ascended it a short distance, and there found some of the Neer-cho-ki-oo tribe. They refused to sell him any wappatoo roots. But he tossed a match into a fire; it blazed and frightened them. He placed a magnet on his compass, and whirled the compass needle 'round and 'round. The women and children crawled under the bed-covers, and the men piled wappatoo roots at his feet. The captain liked to do this sort of thing.

He returned from among the Multnomahs with roots and five dogs.

The Indians were not all friendly, especially those new tribes who had traveled to await the salmon. The Clah-clel-lahs threw stones at the canoes, and stole things; John Shields had to defend himself with his hunting-knife. The Wah-clel-lahs stole the little black Assiniboine dog. Captain Lewis, who was very fond of the little dog, immediately sent Sergeant Pryor, Drouillard and Hugh McNeal to get it even if they had to shoot the thieves. The thieves ran off and left the dog. And in the village of the Skilloots Captain Lewis knocked down an Indian who was carrying off a valuable piece of iron.

Among the Skilloots, here, quite a number of articles were lost; so that Captain Lewis made a speech, to say that he and his men were not afraid and were able to burn the village if necessary to stop the thieving.

“Yessuh! Dese hyah Galloots 'd better watch out,” agreed York. “Marse Merne an' Marse Will are off-shurs of the 'Nited States ahmy.”

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

However, from the Skilloots ten horses were purchased with blankets and Captain Clark's artillery coat and two kettles, and two more were borrowed. William Bratton was too ill to walk, and rode one of the horses. Nine others were loaded with the baggage, to take it around the rapids. One horse was stolen, and Captain Clark rode the twelfth up to the village of the E-nee-shurs.

Three of the canoes were broken up for fuel. The captains hoped soon to travel altogether by horses; canoe work, against the current, was slow, hard work.

"An amazin' disagrayable people," commented Sergeant Pat, on the Skilloots. "But Twisted-hair and his Pierced Noses 'll be gintlemen."

The E-nee-shurs were no better in manners and honesty. The horse Chaboneau was leading ran away, and spilled his pack; an E-nee-shur made off with a fine robe, and before it was returned Captain Lewis had to utter more threats.

All in all, the trip up-river was very vexing, until, finally having collected enough horses for the baggage, so as to do without any canoes, the party arrived on April 27 at the Walla Walla village where lived Chief Yellept who last October had wanted them to stay longer with him.

"We will visit you on our way back," had promised Captain Clark. Now here they were—and Chief Yellept was glad indeed to see them.

FRIENDLY YELLEPT, THE WALLA WALLA

He met them a few miles below the village.

"Come and stay with me three or four days," he said to the captains. "You shall have more horses, and plenty food. I am wearing the little medal given me from my white father; I hope that you will give me a bigger one."

The village was six miles above, opposite the mouth of the Walla Walla River. Chief Yellept made good his word. He called his people together, to tell them that they must be hospitable to the white strangers; and he set an example by bringing the captains an armful of wood and a platter of three baked fish. Then all the Walla Walla squaws busied themselves with gathering wood for their guests. Dogs were offered at reasonable prices.

"Dese Wallow-wallows 'mos' like home folks," declared York.

Forsooth, it was difficult to get away from the village, so friendly were Chief Yellept's people. The chief appeared to have taken a great fancy to the Red Head, and presented him with a noble white horse.

"If the Red Head will give me a kettle, for my lodge, I will be happy," said Yellept.

Among the Walla Wallas there was a Snake Indian prisoner, with whom Sa-ca-ja-we-a, much to her delight, could talk in Sho-sho-ne; and the Snake could translate for her the Walla Walla speech.

"Tell the Sho-sho-ne to tell Chief Yellept that we have no kettles to give," directed Captain Clark, to the

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

little Bird-woman. "But we will be pleased to give him something else."

"Yellept say he take what you gif." interpreted Sa-ca-ja-we-a.

"He's a fine fellow. You'll have to give him your sword, Will," suggested Captain Lewis. "He's been wanting it, you know."

"All right. Believe I'll do it. I couldn't transfer it to better hands," quoth Captain Clark. "That's the last of my official garb, Merne—and you haven't much left yourself!"

Chief Yellept's eyes shone as he accepted the prized "long knife"; and shone again when to it were added powder and a hundred bullets for his gun. Now he was a big chief, indeed.

The Bird-woman had spread the word that the white chiefs were great workers in medicine: with their magic box and their wonderful knowledge they healed all sicknesses. Now to Captain Clark and Captain Lewis the Walla Wallas brought broken arms, stiff knees, and sore eyes, for treatment. The captains did their best.

Not until the second morning, following a grand dance by the Indians, at the camp, might the expedition start onward. Chief Yellept had informed them of a short cut, across country, from the mouth of the Walla Walla River to the Pierced Nose country at the Kooskooskee; a Skilloot, who had been guiding the expedition by land, said that he knew the trail, and a

FRIENDLY YELLEPT, THE WALLA WALLA

Pierced Nose who, with his family, was returning home from a visit below, volunteered to help also; Chief Yellept lent the captains two canoes, for crossing the Columbia to the south side at the mouth of the Walla Walla, where the new trail began.

“The most hospitable, honest and sincere Indians we have met since leaving the United States, Merne,” asserted Captain Clark, when they had been overtaken, a day’s journey out, by three Walla Walla young men who had hastened after to restore to them a beaver-trap that had been forgotten.

XVIII

THE PIERCED NOSES AGAIN

“THE white men are coming back! The white men are coming!” sped the glad word among the Chopun-nish or Pierced Noses, in their villages 100 miles up, on the Kooskooskee. “They will make us well.”

And the white men were indeed coming, by the trail from the Walla Walla, with the Snake Indian prisoner and Sa-ca-ja-we-a as interpreters; with the Skilloot and the three Walla Walla young men as guides (for the Pierced Nose and family had taken another trail); with some twenty horses, for the baggage, and for William Bratton, and for the men who had sore feet; and with the healing medicine box containing, especially, the celebrated eye-water.

“Let us wance get the horses we left with Twisted-hair an’ we’ll all ride, b’ gorry,” quoth Sergeant Pat, limping along.

“On ze Kamass Prairie dere will be plenty root, plenty game,” rejoiced Chaboneau. “An’ mebbe dere we rest, while leetle Toussaint get well.” For little Toussaint seemed to be ailing.

First they were met, before reaching any village, by an old friend, Chief We-ah-koo-nut, and ten warriors. We-ah-koo-nut was called the Bighorn, because

THE PIERCED NOSES AGAIN

he always wore, hanging from his left arm, the horn of a mountain ram.

"We have heard that you were coming, and have ridden to greet you," said Bighorn. "The sight of you makes our sore eyes well. We have no food for you here, but to-morrow you will reach a lodge where everything will be supplied."

Before breakfast, in the morning, the lodge was found, on the bank of the Lewis or Snake River; but the families living there could supply only two dogs and some root bread.

Next was met Chief Tetoh, or Sky—the honest fellow who, with Twisted-hair, had helped the expedition get through from the Kamass Prairie to the Timm falls of the Columbia.

"Glad to see you. You are welcome," exclaimed Tetoh.

"Where is Chief Twisted-hair? We have come to visit our friends, the Pierced Noses, again, and to get our horses," explained Captain Lewis.

"You must cross the Kin-oo-e-nim (~~Snak~~ River), here, and go to the Kooskooskee," replied Chief Tetoh. "There you will find the Twisted-hair, who has your horses."

So they crossed, in canoes lent to them by Tetoh, and arrived at the Kooskooskee or Clearwater.

"Eye-water, eye-water," begged the Indians. Captain Clark traded a small bottle of the eye-water for a gray mare.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

“ You’re the doctor, Will,” laughed Captain Lewis. “ From now on we’d better charge a fee. We’ll get more meat that way than with our guns or goods.”

Accordingly Captain Clark, who handled the medicines, exchanged his services for provisions. But the Indians appeared to be very poor, and the “ doctor’s ” fees in dogs and horses and roots did not amount to much.

“ Marse Will won’t nebber make a libbin’ at doctorin’, dat’s suah,” finally admitted York, with a shake of his head. “ Anyhow, he ain’t killed anybody yet.”

Chief Twisted-hair’s village was up the Kooskooskee some miles. Chief Sky, and another chief named Cut-nose, rode along with the captains. When questioned about the horses and the saddles, they would give no straight answer ; but——

“ S’pose no get ’um horse, no get ’um saddle,” said Sa-ca-ja-we-a.

“ Why is that? ”

“ Sho-sho-ne say he hear saddles gone, horses gone.”

That was alarming news.

“ An’ Twisted-hair seemed like a fine gintleman,” bemoaned Sergeant Pat.

“ We can get more horses, can’t we, Pat? ” queried Peter. “ We see lots of horses.”

“ Yes, an’ how’ll we buy ’em, when each man of us is down to a couple o’ needles, a bit of thread an’ a yard or so of ribbon, with a pinch o’ paint for an

THE PIERCED NOSES AGAIN

extry?" retorted Pat. "We'll have to cut the buttons off our clothes, I guess. Cross the mountains on foot ag'in we won't an' can't. They're waist-deep in snow."

For the mountains were looming ahead, white and wintry, although this was May.

"The Twisted-hair," announced Chief Sky, pointing before. And Chief Twisted-hair, with six men, met the procession.

Twisted-hair was not at all in a good humor. He refused to shake hands, he scarcely noticed the captains, and suddenly he and Cut-nose (a very ugly man whose nose had been laid open by a Snake lance, in battle) were quarreling in a loud voice.

"What's this all about, Chaboneau?" demanded Captain Lewis. "Ask Sa-ca-ja-we-a to have the Sho-sho-ne interpret."

"Ze Sho-sho-ne will not," reported Chaboneau. "He say dees is quarrel between two chiefs an' he haf no right to interfere."

"We'll go on a bit and camp and hold a council, Will," directed Captain Lewis to Captain Clark. "Then we'll get at the bottom of this business. There's evidently something wrong with the horses and saddles we left."

At camp the captains first smoked and talked with Twisted-hair. He said it was true that the horses were scattered, but Cut-nose and another chief, the Broken-arm, were to blame. They had been jealous of him because he had the white men's horses; and being an

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

old man, he had given up the horses. Some were near, and some were at the village of the Broken-arm, a half-day's march east. As for the saddles, the cache had fallen in and they might have been stolen, but he had hidden them again.

Then the Cut-nose talked. He said that the Twisted-hair was a bad old man, of two faces; that he had not taken care of the horses but had let his young men ride them, to hunt, until the Broken-arm, who was a higher chief, and he, Cut-nose, had forbidden.

"It is not well that the chiefs quarrel," reproved Captain Lewis. "Only children quarrel. We will take what horses there are here and we will go on to the village of the Broken-arm, for the other horses."

This seemed to satisfy everybody. Twisted-hair's young men brought in twenty-one of the forty-three horses and half the saddles, besides some of the powder and lead that had been buried, also. That night Cut-nose and Twisted-hair slept together.

The Broken-arm and his Nez Percés lived in one large straw-and-mud house 150 feet long. Over it was flying the United States flag that had been given to the nation on the way down last fall. Broken-arm ordered a hide tent erected for the white chiefs; his women hastened there with roots and fish; and when the captains offered to trade a lean horse for a fat one which might be killed, Broken-arm declined.

"When our guests come hungry, we do not sell them food," he declared. "We have many young

THE PIERCED NOSES AGAIN

horses. All those you see on these plains belong to me and my people. Take what you need for food."

"Niver before did we have the Injuns offer us somethin' for nothin'," gasped Patrick Gass. "At laste, niver before were we told to go help ourselves!"

"The Walla Wallas were as obliging. Don't forget the Walla Wallas, and Yellept," reminded George Shannon.

Two weeks were spent near the big house of the Broken-arm, for whom another name was Black Eagle. Captain Clark was appointed official doctor; he had fifty patients at a time. Captain Lewis held a council, and told the warriors about the United States. They promised to make peace with the Sho-sho-nes. Labiche killed a bear.

"These are great hunters. They kill the bear, alone," exclaimed the Pierced Noses.

Hunters were sent out every day, to get bear, and deer, and elk—whatever they could. The other men were sent out to trade for roots and fish.

Little Toussaint grew better. William Bratton could not walk, but he was put into a hut of boughs and blankets built over a hole in which there had been a fire. Water was sprinkled into the hole. The hot steam soaked William through and through. He was then plunged into cold water, and sweated again in the hut. This was Indian treatment, not white man's. And it cured Bratton, after even Doctor Red Head had failed.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Most of the saddles and all the horses except two were delivered. These two, said Broken-arm, had been stolen last fall by old Toby and his son on their way back to Chief Ca-me-ah-wait. There now were sixty-five horses on hand—enough for the baggage and for the men. Everybody might ride. So much food had been purchased, that buttons (as Pat had predicted) were being traded in, and John Shields, blacksmith, was making awls out of the links of a beaver-trap chain.

“We must start on, or we won’t reach Fort Mandan before winter,” announced Captain Lewis.

“No, no,” objected Twisted-hair and Sky, and all. “Too much snow. Much water come down. The trail over the mountains is not open. Wait till the next full moon, and the snows will have melted.”

“The salmon will soon be running up the river. Wait, and you shall have food,” said Cut-nose.

“If the white chiefs are hungry, let them kill and eat my horses,” said Chief Ho-has-til-pilp, the Red Wolf, with a wave of his arm.

“We thank the Red Wolf. But we shall need guides. Will the chiefs send some young men with us, to show us the way over the mountains?” asked Captain Lewis.

“When there is grass for the horses, on the Road-to-the-Buffalo, we will send young men,” promised Chief Broken-arm. “But not until after the grand council of all the Pierced Nose nation, on the Kamass

THE PIERCED NOSES AGAIN

Prairie. In the summer we will all go to the buffalo plains of the Missouri, if the white chiefs will protect us from the Snakes and Pahkees."

"Hold high the peace flag we have given you, and it will turn your enemies into friends," instructed Captain Lewis.

The Grand Council was not to be held for two or three weeks yet. By the close of the first week of June the river had fallen six feet, showing that the snows were partially melted. The captains decided to push along without guides.

"We cannot wait till July and the full moon, boys," declared Captain Lewis, in an address to the company. "It's only 160 miles from the Kamass Prairie to our old camp on the other side at Traveler's Rest Creek, and there we'll be done with the snow. If no guides overtake us, Drouillard and Labiche and some of the rest of you are as good trailers as the Indians, and can lead us through."

"Hooray!" cheered all. They were as anxious as the captains to go. They were in fine fettle. They had been playing prisoner's base, among themselves, and had been running foot-races with the Nez Percés, to harden their muscles. In the races only one Indian had proved as fast as Peter and John Colter, the American champions.

Now on June 10 camp was broken, and the march to the mountains begun.

"Ten days 'll see us through," confidently declared Pat.

XIX

BACK ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS

TRAVELER'S Rest Creek, at last! But Pat's "ten days" had lengthened into twenty, for this was June 29.

There had been good reason. To be sure, the Kamass Prairie had been found all abloom with the kamass, so that the host of pale petals had made it look like a lake. The wild roses were in flower; the ground squirrels were busy, and supplied tender tidbits. But when the company tried to climb they encountered snow fifteen feet deep, covering the grass and the trail, and the air was that of winter. Game was very scarce.

The captains shook their heads, and called a council of the company.

"We can't go on in this fashion, men," said Captain Lewis. "Already we're short of food, and so are the horses. Even if we knew the trail, and could travel at our best, we've four days yet until we reach grass on the other side. If we lost the trail, in the snow, we'd be lost, too. So Captain Clark and I have decided that we all must return to the Kamass Prairie, kill more meat, and see if the Nez Percés won't furnish us with guides. The snow holds the horses up, and with experienced guides we can make good time. Failing of guides, we'll try again, anyway—sending our best

BACK ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS

woodsmen ahead to note the marks on the trees and to blaze the trail. But first, Drouillard and Shannon will start back immediately, to the Nez Percé grand council, which is now in session, and offer two guns for some guides. They'll join us on the prairie."

This sounded sensible, although everybody did hate to retrace steps. The going down, amidst snow-hidden rocks and timber, was cruel work.

Drouillard and George Shannon were gone for almost a week. When they reappeared they brought three young Nez Percés warriors as guides. Then a quick trip was made. The first day out the guides set fire to the timber, in order, they said, to "make fair weather." They led rapidly. They never missed the trail. Whenever the snow thinned, in spots, there, underfoot, was the trail, plain to be seen—the great Nez Percé Road-to-the-Buffalo, from the west of the mountains to the east. Even Drouillard and Sa-ca-ja-we-a exclaimed with approval of such accurate guiding.

All the old camps of the fall before were passed. The Hungry Creek camp, where Captain Clark had left the horse hung up, and where Peter and Reuben Fields had supped on the horse's head; the camp of September 17, from which Captain Clark had set out ahead to find the Nez Percés; the camp of September 16, where the spotted colt was killed; the camp of September 14, where the black colt was killed.

"Sure, I'm glad we're goin' the other way," re-

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

marked Pat. "I've no pleasant recollections of the first trip, when we were afoot an' starvin'."

And the other men agreed with him.

On the fifth day the mountains had been crossed. On the sixth day the snow had ceased, and the head of Traveler's Rest Creek was reached. On the next day, June 30, they hastened down the creek, and soon were camped again at its mouth—the camping spot of September 11, before!

"Here we are, back in the Missouri country, boys," cheered Captain Clark. "We've been clear through to the Pacific and not lost a man!"

"An' nebber killed an Injun," added York. "But we mighty nigh had to."

"May have a fight yet," quoth George Gibson. "We ought to have met some of the Oo-tla-shoots hereabouts. The guides are afraid to go on. They claim their friends have been wiped out by the Pahkees or Blackfeet."

"Dey much 'fraid," spoke Drouillard. "Dey see de tracks of two Injuns barefoot."

As Peter himself knew, Indians who were barefoot were likely to be Indians in distress.

However, the captains did not appear to be alarmed. The news was spread that the company were to be divided. Captain Clark and party were to travel southward, along this, the east side of the mountains, get the canoes and other stuff where they had been hidden at the first meeting place with Chief Ca-me-ah-wait's

BACK ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS

Sho-sho-nes. Then half the party, under Sergeant Ordway, were to descend the Jefferson, from there, with the canoes and other stuff, into the main Missouri and on to the White-bear Islands camp at the Great Falls.

The other half of the party, under Captain Clark, were to cross eastward, by land, to the Yellowstone River, and descend that to its mouth in the Missouri.

The Captain Lewis party were to continue eastward from this present camp on Traveler's Rest Creek, and try to follow the Pierced Nose Road-to-the-Buffalo to the Great Falls of the Missouri; there they were to meet Sergeant Ordway, and at the mouth of the Yellowstone they all were to meet Captain Clark.

Now, with which party did Peter wish to go? The Captain Clark trip sounded very interesting—down that Yellowstone River, where no white men had been. Sa-ca-ja-we-a was to guide him, too, across country. But the Captain Lewis trip also sounded interesting—all by land, through another unknown country, to the wonderful falls again. On this trip there would be good hunting—and possibly the Blackfeet Indians.

The Sergeant Ordway trip sounded the least interesting, for it meant merely floating down the same rivers that they had toiled up.

However, Peter was a soldier and had no choice. So he waited anxiously while the captains made their selections. It was like choosing sides in the game of prisoner's base.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

For Captain Clark: Sergeant Ordway, Sergeant Nat Pryor, John Shields, George Shannon, William Bratton, Dick Windsor, George Gibson, Hugh Hall, Francois Labiche, John Colter, the fast runner, John Collins, Tom Howard, John Potts, Baptiste Lepage, Alex Willard, Joe Whitehouse, Peter Wiser, Old Cruzatte, York, Chaboneau, and the Bird-woman.

For Captain Lewis: Sergeant Pat, Joe Fields and Reuben Fields, Drouillard, the hunter, William Werner, Rob Frazier, Hugh McNeal, John Thompson and Si Goodrich.

Then where was Peter? Nobody seemed to want him. But Sergeant Pat made a scrape and a salute.

"Beg your pardon, sorr," to Captain Lewis; "but are we to lave Peter here till we come ag'in?"

"'Pon my word!" exclaimed the captain. "No! He's to come along with us, of course. He's in your charge, Pat, remember."

"Yis, sorr. Thank ye, sorr," answered Pat.

And Peter was glad.

So the parties separated, Captain Clark to the south, and the place where the canoes and goods had been left last August; Captain Lewis to the east and the Great Falls.

"Good luck, boys," was the final word. "We'll all meet at the Missouri. Then down we'll go, for home."

The Pierced Noses who had guided across the mountains went with Captain Lewis a short distance

BACK ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS

still, to show him the shortest route along the Road-to-the-Buffalo. Before they quit, in order to look for their friends the Oo-tla-shoots or Flat-heads, the captain gave them presents of meat, and exchanged names with the leader, who was a young chief.

The young chief was henceforth to be known as the Long Knife, and Captain Lewis was to be known as Yo-me-kol-lick, or White Bear-skin Unfolded.

It proved to be only nine days' travel to the White-bear Islands camp at the head of the Falls of the Missouri, and during all the way not an Indian was sighted, although fresh sign was discovered—"Black-feet!" asserted Drouillard. "De Gros-ventres of de Prairie."

"Those Big-bellies must be bad Injuns, I'm thinkin', by the way everywan's afraid of 'em," said Pat.

"Very bad," asserted Peter. For even the Otoes of the south feared the northern "Gros-ventres" as much as they did the Sioux.

There had been plenty of buffalo, bellowing all the nights; but there had been a tremendous amount of mosquitoes, too, which bit so that even the little black dog howled with pain.

Now, here at the old camp were the "white bears," as pugnacious as before. One treed Hugh McNeal and kept him treed near half a day, after Hugh had broken his gun over the bear's head.

Nobody had disturbed the articles that had been left here last summer. Some things had spoiled from

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

dampness; but the frame of the iron canoe was all right, and so were the cottonwood wagon-wheels.

“Gass, I’m going to leave you in charge, here,” said the captain. “You will wait till the Ordway party come with the canoes; then you will move the canoes and baggage, by the portage trail, to the foot of the falls, and proceed on down the river. I shall take Drouillard and the two Fields, scout northward and strike the Maria’s River, which I wish to follow down to the Missouri. I will meet you at the mouth of the Maria’s River on the fifth day of August—if all goes well.”

“Sure, Cap’n, do ye think three men ’ll be enough for ye?” blurted Pat. “Ye’re goin’ up where the bloody Big Bellies live. Give me Peter alone, an’ take the rist. Peter an’ I are plenty for this camp, till Ordway comes.”

“With Drouillard and the two Fields I’ll stand off the Blackfeet,” laughed Captain Lewis. “Eh, lads?” And he sobered. “If my life is spared, Pat, I’ll meet you on August 5. But if you don’t hear from us, you wait till the first day of September. Then if there’s no word, you will proceed on to Captain Clark at the mouth of the Yellowstone. Tell him that my directions as commanding officer are for him to carry out our program and return to the United States, for I and my party have been destroyed. He already knows that I have planned this side trip to the Maria’s.”

Pat saluted.

BACK ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS

“ Yis, sorr. An’, sorr (his voice was husky), I hope to meet ye safe an’ sound at the mouth o’ the Maria’s.”

The next morning, which was July 16, the captain took Drouillard, and the two Fields, and six horses, and rode away, for the upper Maria’s River in the country of the Gros-ventres of the Prairie.

“ Well, boys,” spoke Pat; “ we’re now siven men an’ four hosses, an’ we’d better be busy fixin’ the carts an’ trainin’ the hosses to drag ’em, ferninst the day when Ordway arrives with the canoes. I’ve no fancy for playin’ hoss myself, when we’ve got the rale animals.”

Nothing especial happened, except the mosquitoes, until the arrival of Sergeant Ordway and party. One trip was made to the lower end of the portage, to examine the white pirogue, and the caches; they all were safe. Harness was manufactured, out of elk hide, for attaching the horses to the wagons.

Sergeant Ordway appeared at three o’clock in the afternoon of July 19. He had with him Colter, Cruzatte, Collins, Potts, Lepage, Howard, Willard, Whitehouse, and Peter Wiser; the six canoes that had been sunk in the Jefferson River, and most of the goods that had been buried in the cache, when last August the company under Captain Lewis had set out to follow Chief Ca-me-ah-wait to the Sho-sho-ne camp on the other side of the pass. Nothing had been stolen or injured.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

The Sergeant Ordway party had separated from Captain Clark and party at the Three Forks, and had come on down without adventure. The captain probably was now on his way down the Yellowstone.

“An’ how were Sa-ca-ja-we-a an’ the little spalpeen?” asked Pat.

“Fine and hearty. The Bird-woman said she knew the way to the Yellowstone. She’d been all through that country, when the Sho-sho-nes hunted the buffalo.”

When the canoes were loaded upon the carts, the horses pulled very well, for buffalo-horses; but, just as a year ago, the rain and the mud interfered, the carts broke; besides, Pat was taken ill; so that five days were required for carrying canoes and baggage around the series of falls, to the old Portage Creek camp at the lower end.

One canoe was worthless, but the others were placed in the water; so was the white pirogue; the blunderbuss or swivel cannon was unearthed and mounted in its bows, as before.

“Faith, we’re gettin’ all our plunder together, wance ag’in,” congratulated Pat. “An’ there’s more of it, an’ the red pirogue, remember, at the mouth o’ the Maria’s, where we’re to meet Cap’n Lewis. Do you be takin’ the canoes down, Ordway, an’ Peter an’ I’ll ride by land with the hosses.”

The mouth of the Maria’s was not far—fifty miles by river, according to Pat’s journal, written on the way up, but less by land. The Maria’s, as Peter recalled,

BACK ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS

was the fork of the Missouri where camp had been made while the captains debated which route led to the Columbia. Captain Lewis had explored up the Maria's and he and Captain Clark had decided that the other fork was the right channel—the "true" Missouri.

Peter and Pat covered thirty miles this first day. They saw thousands of buffalo, and a pack of wolves chasing an antelope. Pat shot an antelope, with his rifle, and Peter killed a buffalo with his arrows; the next morning they killed, together, six antelope and seven buffalo—which was all the meat that they could pack, although, as declared Pat, they might have killed a hundred.

Shortly after noon they came in sight of the mouth of the Maria's. Sergeant Ordway's party with the canoes already were there, and ashore.

"An' ain't that Drouillard, too?" exclaimed Pat. "Yis! An' the cap'n, b' gorry! An' the two Fieldses! Somethin' must have fetched 'em back in a hurry. 'Tis only July 28; they're a week ahead o' time."

He quickened his horse into a trot, and leading each a horse packed high with meat and hides, he and Peter hastened forward to learn the news.

XX

CAPTAIN LEWIS MEETS THE ENEMY

THE party seemed to be overhauling the cache here as if in a great hurry to go on; but the captain waved greeting, and Joe Fields straightened up, to grin.

"Yez got back mighty quick," accused Pat. "Didn't yez go? An' where are the hosses?"

"Sure we went," retorted Joe. "Hosses? We've turned 'em loose, of course; and you'll be turnin' yours loose, too, in a minute. So tumble off and I'll help you unpack. There's no time to waste. You ought to 've been along, Pat. We had a beautiful brush with the Injuns."

"Didn't I tell yez?" reminded Pat. "Annywan hurt?"

"None of us. We wiped two of them out, though—and a ball cut the captain's ha'r. 'Twas this way," continued Joe, as he tugged at a rope end, to release the pack of meat: "On the fust day, 'fore we 'd gone more 'n twenty mile from the falls, we struck Injun sign in shape of a wounded-buffler trail; and after that we kept guard all night, for fear of our hosses. When we got to the Maria's we turned down, after scoutin' 'round a bit. Found a lot of old Injun lodges, but didn't see any Injuns till the 26th. Then the cap'n sighted a bunch o' hosses, thirty of 'em, through his

CAPTAIN LEWIS MEETS THE ENEMY

spy-glass—and next several Injuns, on a hill, lookin' at Drouillard, who was across the river.

“ 'Bout half the hosses were saddled, which meant more Injuns somewhere near. Our hosses were too tuckered to run far, and of course we couldn't leave Drouillard; so the cap'n said: 'We'll go right on to those Injuns, boys; put on a bold front, and we'll have it out with 'em. Don't let 'em think we're afraid. They may not be the Gros-vent's.' When the Injuns fust saw us comin', they acted like they were more afraid of us than we were of them. But we finally got together, the cap'n made the peace sign, and told 'em our other man had the pipe and after he'd come in we'd smoke. So Reub and one of the Injuns went after Drouillard.

“ There were only eight of 'em. They were the Big-bellies, all right, but they had nothin' except two guns, and clubs and bows and arrers. We thought we could take care of ourselves; and that night we all camped together. The cap'n told us in case of trouble to stick up and keep together and save the baggage.

“ We slept in the same lodge with 'em. The cap'n had given three of 'em a flag and a medal and a handkerchief; but he put Reub on guard for the night, and told him to watch sharp and wake us quick, so's to look after the hosses, if the Injuns tried to sneak out. He and Drouillard lay down with the Injuns, and Reub and I stayed at the fire in the lodge entrance.

“ I went to sleep. Just at sunrise I woke up with a

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

jump. Reub had yelled—and there was an Injun runnin' off with my gun and his, and Reub in chase. Drouillard was up and yellin', too—'Let go my gun! Let go my gun!' he bawled, and I see him wrestlin' with another Injun, and the cap'n aimin' at another with his pistol. But I had to have my gun, so I ran after Reub and the fust Injun. Before I got there, Reub had caught him and knifed him, and had both guns. Drouillard had his gun by this time, and all the Injuns came pourin' out of the lodge, makin' for the hosses, with the cap'n and his pistol followin' the third Injun.

“ We drew a bead on the fellow, but he dropped the cap'n's gun, and the cap'n wouldn't let us shoot. ‘ Look out for those other rascals! ’ he ordered. ‘ They're trying to drive off the hosses! ’ So Reub and Drouillard and I ran after six who were roundin' up the most of the hosses; and the cap'n set out after his Injun and another who were drivin' away a bunch. He made 'em leave twelve, but they kept on, with his hoss, and that he was bound to get. He didn't have his bullet pouch or his hat; and when they were just 'bout to disappear in a little gully he told 'em to surrender the hoss or he'd fire. With that they turned on him, and fire he did, downin' one of 'em slick as a whistle, but the fellow had life enough to fire back an' sent a ball through the cap'n's ha'r.

“ The cap'n had only his pistol, now, so he quit, and the other Injun made off with the hoss. Drouil-

CAPTAIN LEWIS MEETS THE ENEMY

lard had turned back to help the cap'n, but Reub and I follered our Injuns till we got four of our own critters, and then we let the rest go. Didn't matter, 'cause there were the twelve left by the Injuns, so we'd come out ahead in the little game. Besides, we had the lodge, four shields, two bows and quivers, and a gun. Likewise the flag we 'd given, and the medal—but we left the medal on the neck of the Injun Reub had killed, so as to show what kind of people we were.

“ Well, we didn't hang 'round there long, you bet. The Injuns had said the main band was only a day and a half away, and when the cap'n had invited 'em to bring their chiefs to council he of course told 'em where our camp was—at the mouth of the Maria's. Now we were desperate afraid the Injuns 'd out-foot us and attack you-all at the river. We took four best horses, and only what meat we could carry, rode a hundred miles, with an hour and a half of rest, camped at two in the mornin', then rode another twenty miles and struck Ordway comin' down with the canoes. We got aboard and here we are—and the cap'n is in a powerful hurry to join Cap'n Clark below.”

That was true; for, as said Drouillard: “ Dose Blackfeet now will hold all white men as enemies.”

This cache had caved in, and much of the supplies had spoiled. The red pirogue also was found to be worthless, except for its spikes. Captain Lewis hustled the work of loading, the rest of the horses were turned loose, and down the river again voyaged all. Sergeant

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Ordway was in charge of the five canoes, Sergeant Pat and squad had charge of the white pirogue, which was the flagship.

A sharp lookout was kept for the Big Bellies on the banks. However, nothing happened. The mouth of the Yellowstone was several days ahead; and when it was reached, no Captain Clark or others of that party appeared in sight. When halt was made, to look for sign, traces of the captain's camp were found, and in the sand Lepage discovered the scrawl:

W. C. a few miles further down on right hand side.

"When was that written, Lepage, do you think?" queried Captain Lewis.

"Mebbe two, mebbe t'ree day ago," said Baptiste. "De rain haf washed it."

"At any rate, he's safe," uttered the captain, with much satisfaction. "I expect the mosquitoes drove him out of here. Whew!" For the mosquitoes were worse than ever. "We'll overtake him to-morrow."

But they did not overtake the captain's party on the morrow, nor on the next day. On the third day, which was August 11, the canoes stopped to take aboard some meat; the white pirogue continued on, until Captain Lewis espied a herd of elk in some willow brush, near the shore.

"Turn in, boys," he bade. "Wait here. Come on, Cruzatte. We'll get a few of those fellows."

Out he leaped, gun in hand; and he and One-eyed Cruzatte disappeared in the brush.

CAPTAIN LEWIS MEETS THE ENEMY

"Faith, let's hope there aren't Injuns there, too," quoth Sergeant Pat. "It's a likely place for an ambush."

"Hardly stands to reason there'd be elk whar there are Injuns," remarked Alec Willard.

Everybody waited anxiously; gazed and listened. Two rifle-shots were heard, distant.

"There's meat, I reckon," said Alec.

Presently another shot; and in about ten minutes out from the willow brush and to the sandy shore burst Captain Lewis. He was running, limping, staggering—he'd been wounded—the left thigh of his leather breeches was stained red!

"To your arms, boys!" cried Sergeant Pat.

Captain Lewis staggered on, to the white pirogue.

"I've been shot, men," he panted. "Not mortally, I think. Indians are in that thicket. Cruzatte is somewhere there, too."

"Did you see any Injuns, cap'n?"

"No; the ball came from ambush, just as I was aiming at an elk. Gass, take the men and follow me. We must rescue Cruzatte. I'd lost sight of him."

"Willard, you and the two Fields," roared Pat, springing into the shallows. "The bloody Big-bellies ag'in!"

But Peter went also, with his bow and arrows. Nobody objected. The captain led on for about one hundred steps, when his leg gave out and he almost fell.

"I can't travel," he gasped. "I'll return to the boat."

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

If you're overpowered, Sergeant, keep your men together and retreat in good order, and we'll fight from the river."

"Yis, sorr." And Pat gallantly plunged ahead, into the brush. "Kentucky an' the Irish ag'in the redskins, lads," he cheered. "But mind your eyes."

This was exciting. The willows were thick—good hiding-place. Where was Cruzatte—poor old Cruzatte with the one eye? Peter stuck close behind Pat. His nostrils were wide, his eyes roved, his every sense was on the alert. He was Oto once more. Now was heard a crashing, before. Elk? Indian? Hah!

"That's a mighty quare sort o' Injun, to be makin' all that noise," muttered Pat, peering, his rifle advanced at a ready.

And through a little open space here came Cruzatte! He was striding along, with stained hands, his rifle on his shoulder, making for the boats and plainly much satisfied with himself.

"Hist!" said Pat. "Cruzatte! 'Asy now."

Cruzatte started, and crouched.

"Have ye seen Injuns?"

"Non," answered Cruzatte. "I shoot one elk, follow 'nodder."

"Come back to the boats with us, an' step lively," ordered Pat. "There be Injuns 'round. They shot the cap'n in the leg."

"My gracious!" stammered Cruzatte. "But I see no sign."

CAPTAIN LEWIS MEETS THE ENEMY

“Nayther do we. Sure, it’s powerful suspicious,” muttered Pat.

They found the captain all prepared to defend himself in the pirogue. He had laid out his rifle, pistol and pike, and was propped behind the air-gun that could shoot forty times.

“What did you discover?” he challenged.

“Not a thing, sorr,” reported Pat. “An’ Cruzatte, here, knows no more about the Injuns than the rist of us.”

“Where have you been, Cruzatte?”

“I shoot wan elk, same time you shoot. Den I see nodder in brush, I shoot at heem, he vaneesh an’ I try to find heem, but he get away.”

“Oh, you did! How much of him did you see when you shot?”

“B’ gorry, you shot the cap’n!” bellowed Sergeant Pat. “That’s what you did. Ye’re blind as a mole! B’ gorry, you shot the cap’n—ye shot your commandin’ officer, an’ by that ye’re to be coortmartialed an’ shot yourself!”

“Non, non!” wailed old Cruzatte, wringing his hands. “I no mean to shoot heem. I see wan leetle brown spot in brush—look jus’ like wan elk-fur, long way off; I take aim, bang!—I t’ink I see elk run, an’ I run to ketch heem. I no mean to shoot my capitaine. It wan grand mistake.”

“Didn’t you hear me call?” demanded the captain. “I suspected maybe that ball came from your

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

rifle and I hallooed as loud as I could. Why, by the shock you couldn't have been more than forty paces!"

"I hear notting. I hear not one word," protested Cruzatte.

"The ball coming from so close, and you not answering, I of course thought of Indians," continued the captain.

"B' gorry, give me wan chance at him an' I'll close his other eye," besought Pat; and all the men murmured angrily, while poor Cruzatte shivered with fright.

"I no mean to shoot my capitaine," he babbled.

"Never mind, men," said the captain. "It was an error. My leather breeches are just the shade of an elk hide, remember. Let's dress the wound. I doubt if it's serious."

The ball had passed clear through his left thigh, and had furrowed the right; but it seemed not to have touched the bone or any artery. After the wounds had been dressed and lint stuffed into the holes, the canoes with the other elk hunters arrived; and not waiting to explain much the captain insisted upon them all pushing along, to catch up with Captain Clark.

Now that he himself was laid up, this was more necessary than before. All he could do was to rest, half sitting, in the stern of the white pirogue. His leg had so stiffened that he could scarcely move it.

XXI

THE HOME STRETCH

CAPTAIN CLARK was safe and well, with all his men, and only a short distance down river! This was learned the next day from two white trappers—the first Americans met in over a year. Their names were Hancock and Dickson. They had left Illinois, of the United States, in the summer of 1804, and had been trapping in the upper Missouri country ever since.

They said that Captain Clark's party had passed them yesterday, but had lost all the horses, by Indians, and were traveling in two wooden canoes and two hide canoes. The captain had the idea that Captain Lewis and party were ahead of him.

Trappers Hancock and Dickson had other news, also. They had seen the barge, under Corporal Warfington, on its way from Fort Mandan, last summer, to St. Louis. All aboard were well. Brave Raven, the Arikara chief, was there, bound for Washington; and so were several Yankton Sioux chiefs, with old Pierre Dorion. But the Mandans and Minnetarees were at war with the Arikaras; and the Mandans and the Assiniboines were at war, too; and the Sioux were "bad." So that the peace talks by the captains had not buried the hatchet very deep.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Anyway, soon after noon, this day, Captain Clark's camp was sighted, before.

"What's the matter here?" demanded Captain Clark, the instant that the pirogue grounded. He saw Captain Lewis lying in the stern.

"Nothing serious, Will. Merely a gun wound, in the thigh. Cruzatte shot me by accident."

"De capitin shot!" cried Sa-ca-ja-we-a, running to him.

"I not mean to," repeated Cruzatte, still in much distress. "I t'ink I see one elk in brush."

"That's all right, Cruzatte," consoled Captain Lewis.

Yes, Captain Clark's party all were here, so that the whole company were united again. The captain had had a successful trip down the Yellowstone. The Bird-woman (who now was applying some Indian salve to Captain Lewis's wound) had proved a valuable guide across country. Captain Clark was emphatic in his praise of her. George Gibson had fallen on a sharp piece of timber and driven it two inches into his thigh. Indians had early stolen twenty-four horses, and had left only a worn-out moccasin in exchange. Labiche had trailed them, but had been obliged to give up.

The Yellowstone was a fine stream, with many beaver, and many bear. At the Missouri the mosquitoes had been so pestiferous that only brief camps could be made. Little Toussaint was bitten so severely that his eyes were puffed shut, and the mosquitoes

THE HOME STRETCH

settled so thickly on the captain's gun-barrel as to prevent his taking aim!

"We achieved one important thing," laughed the captain. "We named a river for York!"

"Yessuh!" gabbled York. "Yessuh! Dar's a ribber up yahnduh 'long de Yallerstone named foh me: Yawk's Dry Ribber."

Sergeant Pryor, George Shannon, Hugh Hall and Dick Windsor had been detailed to drive the remaining fifty horses overland to the Mandan town; but the first night, Indians had stolen every one of these, also, and the squad were obliged to turn back. On the way, while the sergeant was asleep in camp a wolf had bitten him through the hand, and tried to seize Dick, but George Shannon had shot just in time. Back again at the Yellowstone they had manufactured two round canoes, like Mandan canoes, from buffalo hides stretched over basketry, with hoops as top and bottom. In these they had finally caught up with Captain Clark.

"You're in command now, Will," said Captain Lewis. "I can't do much—I can't even write the records. But we're in the home stretch. Let's push on as fast as we can."

The two free-trappers, Hancock and Dickson, came down in their canoe to go with the company as far as the Mandan town.

"Sure, we'll be there in a jiffy," proclaimed Sergeant Pat. "'Tis wonderful good fortune we've had—clane across to the Paycific an' nigh home ag'in, an'

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

only wan man lost an' nobody bad hurt but the cap'n."

Now Sa-ca-ja-we-a, the Bird-woman, was much excited; for she was near home, too. The first day eighty-six miles were covered. The next day, in the morning, they arrived once more at the Minnetaree village, and the village of the Mandans opposite.

"Boom!" signaled the blunderbuss. And then again, and again. The Minnetarees, the Ah-na-ha-ways or Wassoons, and the Mandans flocked to the river banks.

"Our white fathers are back!" they cried, one to another.

The Indians seemed delighted. It was a great triumph—it really was like getting home. Sa-ca-ja-we-a hardly could wait for the boats to land. Landing was made among the Ah-na-ha-ways, but headquarters were immediately established among Chief Black Cat's Mandans. The Bird-woman, carrying little Toussaint, proudly accompanied Chaboneau to the Minnetarees—which was *her* village—to invite them to council with the white chiefs. Drouillard was sent down to get Jessaume and Big White.

Captain Clark held a council in the Black Cat's village. He invited the chiefs to go with him to Washington, and call on the great white father. Black Cat and Le Borgne, the one-eyed Minnetaree head chief, and old Cherry-on-a-Bush and others answered. They said that the Sioux would kill any of them who ventured down the river. The captain answered that all

THE HOME STRETCH

would be protected against the bad Sioux, and would return safe, escorted by United States warriors and loaded with presents.

At last Big White agreed to take his wife and child and accompany the Red Head and the Long Knife.

So much corn was brought to the boats that it all could not be loaded. Captain Clark presented the swivel cannon to the Minnetarees.

“With this big gun we have announced the great white father’s peace words to his red children, all the way up the Missouri,” he said, to Le Borgne. “Whenever it is fired, it will remind you of these good words, and you will think upon them, and live at peace with your neighbors.”

“My ears will always be open to the words of the great white father,” promised One-eyed.

Then the cannon was discharged, and the Minnetarees, much pleased, bore it into their village.

The start was to be made the next day. But John Colter was not going. He had asked permission to turn back, up the Missouri again, with the two trappers, Hancock and Dickson, to hunt the beaver. And Sa-ca-ja-we-a and Chaboneau were not going. The Bird-woman wished to go—she wished to go on with the Red Head, to the country of the white people, and learn more of their ways. Captain Clark offered to take her and little Toussaint and Chaboneau, and put little Toussaint at school when he grew up. However, Chaboneau shook his head.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

“ I t’ank you, capitaine,” he replied. “ But in San Loui’ I haf no ’quaintance, I would haf no means of makin’ my support. I mus’ stay here, where I am known.”

So everybody bid goodby to John Colter, to Chaboneau, Sa-ca-ja-we-a, and little Toussaint, now nineteen months old.

“ Good luck!” to John.

Five hundred dollars in wages, and the blacksmith tools, to Chaboneau.

To Sa-ca-ja-we-a the captains said:

“ The nation of the United States will not forget Sa-ca-ja-we-a, the Bird-woman, who never complained, who carried her baby clear to the Pacific Ocean, who made friends for us wherever she went, and who helped us across the Rock Mountains.”

Sa-ca-ja-we-a wept.

At the village of Sha-ha-ka, the Big White, the chief was found sitting surrounded by weeping women, and taking a final smoke with his relatives and friends. They all feared that they never should see him again. To them, it was a long, dangerous journey for him to take. Chief Le Borgne of the Minnetarees requested that the white chiefs take good care of Big White. And they solemnly promised.

The canoes were lashed together two and two, in order to be steadier and to travel faster. Big White and his wife and child stepped aboard the pirogue. Jessaume and his wife and two children were to accom-

THE HOME STRETCH

pany Big White and speak for him to the great white father at Washington.

With a farewell volley and a cheer the boats entered the current. The Indians had crowded to watch them leave.

"A month more, lads, an' we'll be in St. Louis," jubilated Pat. "Barrin' accident, we're good for sixty miles a day."

Fort Mandan, opposite, was passed; but only a few pickets, and one cabin, were standing. All the rest had been burned in a timber fire. Three traders were met, coming up-river. Two of them were the same who had been at the Mandan town in the winter of 1804. They said that the Sioux were on the war-path against the Mandans and Minnetarees—had already set out, 700 warriors.

"Do not tell Sha-ha-ka," ordered Captain Lewis, to Jessaume. "He would wish to turn back."

This same day the Arikara villages were reached. Some Cheyennes were here, too. Captain Clark held a council with both tribes. They all were very friendly. Big White addressed them, and they listened. They were willing to be at peace with the Mandans and Minnetarees. The Arikaras said that they had refused to join the Sioux, on the war-path. They wished to send more chiefs to the great white father at Washington, but were waiting until Brave Raven, who had gone down on the barge last year, came back with the white father's words. The Cheyennes said that they

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

were afraid of the white people's medicine, but they hoped that the new father would send traders and trappers into their country, to show them how to live and how to catch the beaver.

On the last day of the council, or July 22, Captain Lewis was able to walk about a little, for the first time since he had taken to the boat.

Rapidly traveled the boats. Wild turkeys were seen; ripe wild plums were found; the grasses were high and luxurious.

"We gettin' down into lower country," chattered Drouillard, happily.

There were signs of many buffalo. On July 29, 20,000 in one herd darkened the plain. The day following, halt was made in a wild plum orchard. Everybody ate. But this was Sioux country, and below the wild plum orchard sudden exclamations arose from the boats.

"De Sioux!"

"Look at the bloody rascals!"

"Tetons, aren't they?"

"Mebbe Yankton. They act like they want to talk."

Some twenty Indians had appeared on a high bank opposite. One man with them wore a blanket-coat and a 'kerchief around his head. He might be a French trader. A short distance farther down almost a hundred other Indians emerged, to the shore; from their guns they fired a salute. They all were well armed.

THE HOME STRETCH

“Answer the salute, Captain,” directed Captain Lewis. “It may be a peace signal. And you might go near them and talk.”

Captain Clark took Drouillard, Jessaume and Cruzatte and crossed to a sand-bar. The Indians who met him there said that they were Tetons, under Chief Black Buffalo. Black Buffalo had been the chief who had made trouble two years ago, so Captain Clark declined to have anything more to do with him. He came back and ordered the boats to prepare for an attack and proceed.

“I’d like wan shot at them,” muttered Sergeant Pat.

“Do not fire unless you are fired upon,” enjoined the captains.

As they passed the Sioux collected on the hill, Second Chief Partisan invited them to land. But they knew better; and as they continued, the Partisan struck the earth three times with the butt of his gun, and all the Indians yelled abuse.

“Dey make vow to kill ev’ry white man,” declared Drouillard.

That night camp was pitched on a bare sand-bar in the middle of the river, so as to be safe from attack; but a terrific thunderstorm blew two of the canoes clear across the river. However, no Tetons turned up, which was fortunate.

“The Yanktons next, I suppose,” remarked George Shannon. “They were a pretty good set, two years ago.”

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

A number of lodges of the Yanktons were indeed waiting. They proved very friendly, and Captain Clark held a council with them. They even took Chief Sha-ha-ka by the hand and asserted that they were obeying the words of the great white father and were at peace with the Mandans. They said that as a token they had kept the flag-pole standing, by the big tree of the council ground below, where they had first talked with the white men. And sure enough, when the boats passed the spot opposite the mouth of the James River, the flag-pole showed plainly.

Soon another white man was met. He was James Airs, a trader on his way up from St. Louis, to the Sioux. Being so lately from the United States he gave the captains much news, and they sat up nearly all night with him.

Now the region was very familiar ground, to Peter. The Omaha village was close before. Soon after leaving Mr. Airs they sighted the bluff where Sergeant Charles Floyd had been buried. They landed, to pay the grave a visit, and found that the Indians had opened it. The captains ordered the earth filled in again. That night camp was made on the sand-sprits, at the old Omaha village—the very spot where the council had been held with Chief Little Thief and his Otoes and Missouris, and where Peter had “come aboard.” How long ago that seemed!

The Omaha village was still deserted. In the morning Captain Clark called Peter.

THE HOME STRETCH

"Well, Peter, would you like to go to the Otoes again? Are you tired of being white?"

"No, please," begged Peter. He had been afraid of this—afraid that he would be sent to the Otoes.

"I want to go to St. Louis, please."

"Go you shall," assured the captain. "Go you shall, Peter, and I'll attend to you myself."

Hooray! But, reflected Peter, supposing that Chief Little Thief should appear before they started on. However, no Chief Little Thief, or other of the Otoes and Missouris did appear.

More white traders were encountered. On August 12 there hove in sight two pirogues; aboard them were none other than Trader Gravelines himself, and old Pierre Dorion! Mr. Gravelines said that he had taken Chief Brave Raven, of the Arikaras, clear to Washington, and that the chief had seen the President, but had died just when about to return home. Now Mr. Gravelines was going up to the Arikaras with the President's words, and with presents. Old Pierre Dorion was on his way to the Yankton Sioux again, hoping to get six more of them and take them to Washington.

"The United States has given all you people up for lost," declared Trader Gravelines. "Nothing has been heard from you since you left Fort Mandan. The President and everybody are very anxious. We were asked to inquire about you, among the Indians."

"Faith, an' our welcome 'll be the more hearty," asserted Sergeant Pat, to his fellows.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

Boats containing trading parties were met constantly. Surely, thought Peter, St. Louis cannot be very far ahead. At a fifty-miles-a-day clip the boats proceeded. Soon the captains did not stop even to hunt; and camp was broken before daylight!

August 20 another glad shout arose.

"Cows, boys! Look at the cows! We're near the settlements."

"'Tis the best sight I've seen in better'n two years," proclaimed Sergeant Pat. "Faith, I'm in that state o' mind when I could kiss a cow on the nose!"

"What is cow, Pat?" invited Peter, staring.

"Oh, murther, an' ye don't know!" bewailed Pat. "The cow be the buff'lo civilized, Peter. She be the white man's buff'lo. She gives us milk to drink an' butter to ate, an' the breath of her is swater'n the prairie breeze an' the voice of her is beautiful."

"La Charette! I see La Charette!" cried old Cruzatte.

La Charette was the first white man's village! The captains ordered guns to be fired, and told the men to cheer. Down to the shore hastened the inhabitants. They, too, cheered. They talked part in French, part in United States. What a chatter sounded! They almost carried the men to the houses.

"We nefer expect' to see you again!" they exclaimed. "We t'ink you all scalped. Haf you been far?"

"To the Pacific Ocean," was the answer.

THE HOME STRETCH

“ My gracious! Come an’ tell us.”

Drouillard and Cruzatte and Lepage and Labiche were well-nigh beside themselves with joy. They greeted numerous old friends.

“ Dees is the best part of all de trip,” they laughed, again and again.

Assuredly, the villages of the white men of the United States must be pleasant places, thought Peter.

Sixty-eight miles had been rowed, this day. With difficulty could the men get away from hospitable La Charette, but on the next day forty-eight miles were covered, to another village, St. Charles. Here occurred more excitement, of greetings, and dinners, and good beds. The captains, and all the men, in their elk-hide clothes, and their beards, and their tan, were treated as heroes; and Peter was not overlooked—not by any means. Nor was Sha-ha-ka, the Big White. He, like Peter, for the first time was seeing how the white people lived.

“ Sha-ha-ka say de white people evidently a ver’ good people,” announced Jessaume. “ But he anxious to get on to de beeg village of San Loui’.”

“ How far to St. Louis, Pat? ” asked Peter, eagerly.

“ Only twenty miles. With an ’arly start we’ll ate our dinner there.”

Twenty miles! The last twenty of more than 8000! No wonder that all the men were impatient. They made great plans. At St. Louis they were to be paid off and discharged.

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

“ Extry pay an’ 320 acres of land do we each get,” repeated Patrick Gass. “An’ we’ve earned it. It’s glad I am not to be with John Colter this minute, trapsin’ for the Yellowstone ag’in.”

“ What’ll you do, Pat, after we get to St. Louis? ”

“ Faith, have my whiskers trimmed an’ get my journal published.”

“ I’ve sold my journal to the captains for ten dollars!” boasted Sergeant Ordway. “ It’s more ’n you’ll make with yours, Pat.”

“ I mean to try for an officer’s commission, in the army,” said Sergeant Nat Pryor.

“As soon as I get cleaned up, I’ll strike straight for old New Hampshire, and spin my yarns to the home folks,” said Ordway.

“ I intend to study law. Think I’ll go to college,” said George Shannon.

“ I stay at San’ Loui’ for wan time. Den mebbe I haf money to enter de fur trade,” said Drouillard.

“Captain Clark will send me to school,” piped Peter.

“ That’s right, Peter,” encouraged George. “ You and I’ll go to school.”

Those were long twenty miles. First, the captains did not leave St. Charles until mid-morning, because of the rain and the entertainments. Then, three miles below, was found a big camp of other United States soldiers, and here the captains stopped for the day, at the log house which was the principal quarters.

They took Sha-ha-ka ashore; and when he was next

THE HOME STRETCH

seen by the company, he had been dressed in new clothes—white man's clothes! Of these he was very proud. He strutted more than York had strutted among the Sioux and the Arikaras and Mandans.

"An' why shouldn't he?" demanded Pat. "He's better dressed for polite sassiety than the rist of us!"

Seventeen miles to go! The start was made soon after an early breakfast. All eyes strained ahead; the men pulled lustily on the oars. Houses and small settlements were passed. People ashore cheered. Toward noon another large river was sighted, ahead; its course was marked by lines of trees. The Missouri emptied into it.

"The Mississippi!" cried the men. And then——

The captains stood up in the white pirogue. Captain Clark looked back, at the canoes, and waved his hat, and smiled. Before, on the right, was a great collection of houses set amidst trees—and at the river bank, near where the two rivers joined, loomed a huge (at least, to Peter it seemed huge) whitish stone fort, flying the United States flag. Many boats plied the current. St. Louis!

Captain Clark lifted his hand and called an order. But already every rifle in pirogue and canoes had been leveled, on every trigger was a tense finger—and "Bang!" spoke all together.

"Hooray!"

Before the boats had touched the landing, the people of St. Louis had gathered there like magic; they were

OPENING THE WEST WITH LEWIS AND CLARK

running, shouting, jostling. Exclamations sounded again and again. The air trembled with the excitement. In the boats, the men were agrin—waving, calling, and old Cruzatte capering. Only the captains and Big White stood motionless, as proper for chiefs, waiting until the pirogue made landing.

“Eet ees Lewis an’ Clark!”

“Dey haf return’ from de dead!”

“Huzza! Huzza! Welcome home!”

“Where you been, these two years and a half?”

Important personages pressed forward, to grasp the captains and shake their hands vigorously.

“What news, Captains? What news from beyond the Mandan town? Did you succeed in crossing the mountains?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And how much farther?”

“To the Columbia and the Pacific!”

“Marvelous! Any fatalities?”

“Only the death of Sergeant Floyd, by disease.”

“And what distance traveled?”

“About eight thousand miles.”

“Remarkable! The world shall ring with your story.”

“Yis, we’ve borne the greatest flag in the world to the other side the greatest country in the world; an’, b’ gorry, we’re all here to tell the tale,” pronounced Pat, as following the captains the men (and Peter!) sprang to the waiting arms.

52514110

PS 3537

A3-066

1917

YC 106635

M25172

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

