

has two Brigs in the Island trade, our expenses for exportation will be trifling:—

Just say (for me) to the young men of old Milton, Don't live & die in sight of your Father's house, but take a trip to Oregon! you can perform the journey in two years & I am sure you will never regret spending the time. But, if they should come to *settle here*, I would advise them, to bring a wife along, as ladies are (like the specie) very scarce. And if you have any *maiden* ladies about dying in despair, just fit up their teeth well, & send them to Oregon.

I shall have an opportunity to write to you again when our ships leave, which will be in July or August. T. B. WOOD."

[Printed in the New York Herald in 1844-45.]

LETTERS OF PETER H. BURNETT.

Burnett in his "Recollections of an Old Pioneer," page 177, says: "During the winter of 1843-44 I had, while at Linnton, written some hundred and twenty-five foolscap pages of manuscript giving a description of the journey and of the country along the route, as well as of Oregon. I had stated the exact truth to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief; and my communications were published in the *New York Herald*, and were extensively read, especially in the western states."

The *Herald* (daily) of Saturday morning, December 28, 1844, says editorially: "We received yesterday, and publish in our columns this morning, some very interesting intelligence from the Oregon Territory, which is now a subject of very important negotiation between our government and that of England, and will probably be a matter of great debate in Congress."

The *Herald* published five different sections of the Burnett material in the form of five letters, four in the daily and one in the weekly. In addition to this, the weekly of December 28, 1844, published the same matter found in the daily of the same date. The daily of January 6, 1845, published the second and fourth sections—two letters in the same issue. It is evident that the *Herald* rearranged

Peter Burnett - Mattes 4 ~~4~~ for diary
Weston (May 8) Ft Van Couver

the order of the sections in printing. It printed first—the installment of December 28, 1844—what was probably the closing portion of the manuscript. The sections are given below in what appears to be their natural order—the order in which they were composed. This Burnett material was sent to New York naturally under one enclosure.

If Burnett wrote at this time "some hundred and twenty-five pages of foolscap," as he says he did, not more than half of his manuscript was printed by the *Herald*. For that number of pages of foolscap published would have filled at least fifteen columns of the *Herald*, whereas the matter printed constituted hardly seven and one fourth columns; and I shall point out later that it is almost certain that this Burnett manuscript, as a whole, was used for the Wilkes' account of the migration of 1843, and Wilkes covers the whole trip, and not merely a portion of it, as do the *Herald* letters.

In his "Recollections," page 101, Burnett says: "I kept a concise journal of the trip as far as Walla Walla, and have it now before me." This journal no doubt furnished the basis of his narrative in the first four letters and of the twenty-seven pages in his "Recollections" in which he describes the trip. In fact, the resemblance between this part of the "Recollections" and these letters is so striking and of such a character as to suggest that this part of the "Recollections" was written up from a first draft of the letters, which he would naturally have retained and preserved when sending the letters to the *Herald*. The historical significance of this probability is that it makes this portion of the "Recollections" virtually a contemporary source for the whole of the migration of 1843.

The last date on the journey given by the letters is June 27th. Yet it seems almost certain that the copy sent by Burnett to the *Herald* covered the whole trip. One reason

These are
letters
written
in 1844-5.
Contains
rules of
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page 82, he says: "The region we passed through from the thirtieth of July up to the twenty-ninth of August, comprised all the passes through to Rocky Mountains, and was by far the most arduous and difficult portion of the whole journey." Between these dates the emigration proceeded from the headwaters of the Sweetwater to Fort Hall; but Burnett, in his "Recollections," as explicitly affirms that the most difficult and arduous portion of the journey was not encountered until the emigration had passed Fort Hall. The editor thought it worth while to go into the question of the relation of these important sources, that are now being made generally accessible, to one that should be condemned. His conclusions have important applications to the Whitman controversy.

The conclusions are (A) that the more important contemporary sources, so far as known, of data on the migration of 1843 and of Doctor Whitman's services to it are (a) Burnett's Journal (unpublished) in the possession of his descendants; (b) the Burnett *Herald* letters given below; (c) the letter of Tallmadge B. Wood, printed for the first time in this number of the QUARTERLY; (d) a letter by M. M. McCarver, dated November 6, 1843, to Hon. A. C. Dodge, delegate to Congress from Iowa, printed in the *Burlington Gazette* and reprinted in the *Ohio Statesman*. This letter will be reproduced in the next number of the QUARTERLY. (e) Excerpt from *New Orleans Picayune*, November 21, 1843, reprinted in QUARTERLY, vol. I, pages 398-401. (B) The account given in Part II of Wilkes' History of Oregon, purporting to be a faithful rendering of a contemporary journal is a more or less garbled version of the Burnett manuscript sent from Linnton to James G. Bennett which fell into the hands of Wilkes.

[The editor is indebted to Professor Joseph Schafer for the data of this criticism.]

[From New York Herald, January 5, 1845.]

LINNTON, Oregon Territory, January 18, 1844.

James G. Bennett, Esq.—

DEAR SIR: Having arrived safely in this beautiful country, and having seen, at least, its main features, I propose to give you some concise description of the same, as well as a short history of our trip. I reached the rendezvous, twenty miles from Independence, on the seventeenth of May, and found a large body of emigrants there, waiting for the company to start. On the 18th we held a meeting, and appointed a committee to see Doctor Whitman, for the purpose of obtaining information in regard to the practicability of the trip. Other committees were also appointed, and the meeting adjourned to meet again, at the Big Spring, on the 20th. On the 20th, all the emigrants, with few exceptions, were there, as well as several from the western part of Missouri. The object of the meeting was to organize, by adopting some rules for our government. The emigrants were from various places, unacquainted with each other, and there were among them many persons emulous of distinction, and anxious to wear the honors of the company. A great difference of opinion existed as to the proper mode of organization, and many strange propositions were made. I was much amused at some of them. A fat, robust, old gentleman, who had, as he said, a great deal of "beatherlusian," whose name was Mc-Healy, proposed that the company, by contribution, should purchase two wagons and teams for the purpose of hauling two large boats, to be taken all the way with us, that we might be able to cross the streams. A red-faced old gentleman from east Tennessee state, high up on Big Pidgeon, near Kit Bullard's Mill, whose name was Dulany, generally styled "Captain," most seriously proposed that the meeting should adopt the criminal laws of Missouri or Tennessee, for the government of the company. This proposition he supported by an able speech, and several speeches were made in reply. Some one privately suggested that we should also take along a penitentiary, if Captain Dulany's proposition should pass. These two propositions were voted for by the movers alone. A set of rules were adopted, a copy of which I send you. Capt. John Grant [Gant?] was employed as our pilot, and a general understanding that we should start on the 22d.

On the twenty-second of May, we commenced one of the most arduous and important trips undertaken in modern times. We traveled fifteen miles, to Elm Grove, where we encamped for the night. The road and weather were most delightful, and the place of encampment most beautiful. There are only two trees in this grove—both elms—and I have learned for the first time that two trees could compose a grove. The small elm was most beautiful, in the wild and lonely prairie, and the large one had been so, but its branches had been cut

off for fuel. A few small swamp dogwood bushes supplied us with fuel—and we found fuel scarcer at no place on the road than at this point. The weather since the thirteenth of May had been fine. I have never witnessed a scene more beautiful than this. Elm Grove stands in a wide, gently undulating prairie. The moon shed her silvery light upon the white sheets of sixty wagons; a thousand herd of cattle grazed upon the surrounding plain; fifty camp fires sent up their brilliant flames, and the sound of the sweet violin was heard in the tents. All was stir and excitement—

“The scene was more beautiful far to my eye,
Than if day in its pride had arrayed it;
The land breeze blew mild, and the azure arched sky
Looked pure as the Spirit that made it.”

At the rendezvous, as well as elsewhere, we were greatly amused by the drolleries of many a curious wag. Among the rest was J. M. Ware, a most pleasant fellow, droll, original, like no one else, who had seen some of the world, and whose mimicry, dry wit, graphic descriptions, and comic songs, afforded us infinite amusement. Many of our friends, who came to visit us at the rendezvous, will never forget the pleasant evenings they spent, while witnessing the exhibitions of this comical fellow. Ware was an old bachelor, with all the eccentricity usually belonging to that sweet class of fellows. The whole camp were constantly singing his songs, and telling his tales. Among the rest he sang—

“If I had a donkey that wouldn't go,
Do you think I'd wallup him? no! no! no!”

And also—

“A gay young crow was sitting on an oak.”

I remember well his description of George Swartz, a Dutchman, in Kentucky, who turned out a preacher. Ware said he knew him well, and was present and heard George preach his first sermon. He said George gravely arose in the pulpit, and after gazing some time around him, in a loud and commanding voice he commenced: “Me tinks I hear my Savior say, ‘Shorge, what you doin’ up dar in dat bulpit?’ Me say neber mind Shorge—he knows what he’s ’bout—he’s goin’ breachin; brethren, let us bray. I tank de, O Lort Got, dat a few names of us have come up to worship in dy house, through the inclemency of de mud.” I will just say that Ware is here, safe and sound, and I expect to hear him repeat many of his comicalities. A few such men, on a trip like this, can beguile many a lonesome hour, and soften the asperities of the way.

The following are the rules and regulations for the government of the Oregon Emigrating Company:

Resolved, Whereas we deem it necessary for the government of all societies, either civil or military, to adopt certain rules and regula-

tions for their government, for the purpose of keeping good order and promoting civil and military discipline. In order to insure union and safety, we deem it necessary to adopt the following rules and regulations for the government of the said company:—

Rule 1. Every male person of the age of sixteen, or upward, shall be considered a legal voter in all affairs relating to the company.

Rule 2. There shall be nine men elected by a majority of the company, who shall form a council, whose duty it shall be to settle all disputes arising between individuals, and to try and pass sentence on all persons for any act for which they may be guilty, which is subversive of good order and military discipline. They shall take especial cognizance of all sentinels and members of the guard, who may be guilty of neglect of duty, or sleeping on post. Such persons shall be tried, and sentence passed upon them at the discretion of the council. A majority of two thirds of the council shall decide all questions that may come before them, subject to the approval or disapproval of the captain. If the captain disapprove of the decision of the council, he shall state to them his reasons, when they shall again pass upon the question, and if the same decision is again made by the same majority, it shall be final.

Rule 3. There shall be a captain elected who shall have supreme military command of the company. It shall be the duty of the captain to maintain good order and strict discipline, and as far as practicable, to enforce all rules and regulations adopted by the company. Any man who shall be guilty of disobedience of orders shall be tried and sentenced at the discretion of the council, which may extend to expulsion from the company. The captain shall appoint the necessary number of duty sergeants, one of whom shall take charge of every guard, and who shall hold their offices at the pleasure of the captain.

Rule 4. There shall be an orderly sergeant elected by the company, whose duty it shall be to keep a regular roll, arranged in alphabetical order, of every person subject to guard duty in the company; and shall make out his guard details by commencing at the top of the roll and proceeding to the bottom, thus giving every man an equal tour of guard duty. He shall also give the member of every guard notice when he is detailed for duty. He shall also parade every guard, call the roll, and inspect the same at the time of mounting. He shall also visit the guard at least once every night, and see that the guard are doing strict military duty, and may at any time give them the necessary instructions respecting their duty, and shall regularly make report to the captain every morning, and be considered second in command.

Rule 5. The captain, orderly sergeant, and members of the council shall hold their offices at the pleasure of the company, and it shall be the duty of the council, upon the application of one third or more of the company, to order a new election for either captain, orderly sergeant, or new member or members of the council, or for all or any of them, as the case may be.

Rule 6. The election of officers shall not take place until the company meet at Kansas River.

Rule 7. No family shall be allowed to take more than three loose cattle to every male member of the family of the age of sixteen and upward.

I propose to give you a very concise description of the route, some of the most prominent objects we saw upon the way, and a statement of the distances from point to point. I will here remark, once for all, that the distances were estimated by me every evening when we encamped; and that I put them down in my journal fully as great as I think they ought to be. They are not ascertained by admeasurement,

but are merely guessed at. I will now give you a table of the distances, etc., at this point, that you may the better understand what I shall afterwards relate :

	Miles.
From Independence to Rendezvous.....	20
Rendezvous to Elm Grove.....	15
Elm Grove to Walkalusia.....	22
Same to Kansas River.....	31
Kansas River to Big Sandy.....	31
Sandy to Hurricane Branch.....	12
Hurricane Branch to East Fork of Blue River.....	20
East Fork to West Fork of Blue River.....	15
West Fork to where we came in sight of the Republican Fork of Blue River.....	41
Up Republican Fork of Blue to where we left it to cross over to Big Platte.....	66
Blue to Big Platte.....	25
Up Platte to where we saw first herd of buffalo.....	56
Up same to crossing on South Fork.....	117
Crossing to North Fork of Platte.....	31
Up North Fork to Cedar Grove.....	18
Up North Fork to Solitary Tower.....	18
Up North Fork to Chimney.....	18
Up North Fork to Scott's Bluffs.....	20
Up same to Fort Larimer.....	38
Fort Larimer [Laramie?] to Big Spring, at foot of Black Hills.....	8
To Keryan on North Fork.....	30
To crossing on North Fork.....	84
To Sweetwater.....	55
Up Sweetwater to where we first saw the eternal snows of the Rocky Mountains.....	60
To main dividing ridge of the Rocky Mountains.....	40
To first water that runs into the Pacific.....	2
To Little Sandy.....	14
To Big Sandy.....	14
To Green River.....	25
Down same.....	12
To Black's Fork of Green River.....	22
To Fort Bridger.....	30
To Big Muddy.....	20
To Bear River.....	37
Down Bear River to range of hills which run up to the river.....	57
Down Bear River to Great Sadspring [Soda Spring?].	38
To Partnith [Portneuf?], first water of the Columbia.....	25
To Fort Hall on Snake River.....	58
To Partnith [Portneuf?] again.....	11
To Rock Creek.....	87
To Salmon Falls on Snake River.....	42
To crossing on Snake River.....	27
To Boiling Spring.....	19
To Boisé River (pronounced Boa-sic).....	48
Down same to Fort Boisé on Snake River.....	40
To Bunt River.....	41
Up same.....	25
Cross to Powder River at "Lane Pens".....	18
To Grande Ronde.....	15
To Uvilla [Umatilla?] River over Blue Mountains.....	43
To Doctor Whitman's.....	29
To Walla Walla.....	25

Making in all about one thousand seven hundred and twenty-six miles from Independence to Fort Walla Walla on the Columbia River. From Walla Walla to the Methodist Mission, at The Dalles, is about one hundred and twenty miles, and from The Dalles to Vancouver it is called one hundred miles, making the distance from Independence to Vancouver, by route we traveled, one thousand nine hundred and forty-six miles. I am well satisfied that the distance does not exceed two thousand miles, for the reason that ox teams could not have traveled further than we did, traveling in the manner we did.

Your friend,

P. H. B.

[From New York Herald, January 6, 1845.]

LINNTON, Oregon Territory, 1844.

James G. Bennett, Esq.—

DEAR SIR: In my former communication I gave you some account of our trip as far as Elm Grove, fifteen miles from the rendezvous. On the twenty-fourth of May we crossed the Walkalusia, a tributary of the Kansas, about twenty yards wide, clear running water, over a pebbly bed. We let our wagons down the bank (which was very steep) with ropes. There was, however, a very practicable ford, unknown to us, about one hundred yards above. We here saw three Potawatomie Indians, who rode fine horses, with martingales, bridles, and saddles. We found very few fish in this stream. On the twenty-sixth of May we reached Kansas River, which was too high to ford; and we prepared a platform, by uniting two large canoes together—and commenced crossing on the 29th. On the 27th we held a meeting, and appointed a committee of three to make arrangements for crossing the river. The committee attempted to hire Pappa's platform (a Frenchman who lived at the crossing,) but no reasonable arrangement could be made with him. Before we had finished our platform, some of the company made a private arrangement with Pappa for themselves, and commenced crossing. This produced great dissatisfaction in camp. On the 28th Pappa's platform sank, and several men, women, and children came near being drowned, but all escaped with the loss of some property. As yet no organization, and no guard out. Wagons still coming in rapidly. On the thirtieth of May two Catholic missionaries to the Flathead Indians arrived and crossed the river. The Kansas is here a wide stream, with sandy banks and bottom. I suppose it to be about a quarter mile wide at this point. The water was muddy, like that of the Missouri River. We finished crossing on the thirty-first of May. Our encampment was on Black Warrior Creek; very uncomfortable, as our stock were constantly sticking fast in the mud upon its banks. On the first of June we organized the company, by electing Peter H. Burnett commander in chief and Mr. Nesmith orderly sergeant. On the 4th we crossed Big Sandy, a large creek with high banks. Last night we had a hard rain. Last evening we saw several of the Kansas chiefs, who visited our encampment. Our usual mode of encampment was to form a hollow square with the wagons. When we organized we had about one hundred and ten wagons and two hundred and sixty-three men, all able to bear arms. On the 5th we crossed the East Fork of Blue, a large creek, and a tributary of the Kansas, and on the 6th, in the evening, we crossed the West Fork of Blue, a small river, about fifty yards wide. Contrary to our expectations, we found it fordable, by propping up our wagon beds with large blocks of wood. We encamped for the night on a level prairie, dry and beautiful. In the night we had an immense thunderstorm, and

* PAPPIN, JOSEPH.

torrents of rain. Half the tents blew down, and nearly the whole encampment was flooded with water eight inches deep. We were in a most uncomfortable predicament next morning, and nearly all wet. We this day met a war party of Osages and Kansas Indians, consisting of about ninety warriors. They all rode ponies, were painted, and their heads shaven, and had one Pawnee scalp, with the ears still to it, and full of wampum. This scalp had tolerably long hair upon it, and they had divided it into some five or six different pieces, some with an ear to them, and some with part of the cheek. The Kansas and Osages are the most miserable, cowardly, and dirty Indians we saw east of the Rocky Mountains. They annoyed us greatly by their continual begging. We gave this war party bread and meat, and a calf; they said they had eaten nothing for three days. Two of this party were wounded severely, one in the shoulder and the other in another part. They had killed but one Pawnee, who had wounded these two before he fell. The Kansas Indians, however, did not steal from us, except perhaps a horse or two which were missing, but which might have escaped back to the Kansas River. On the 7th we removed our encampment one half mile to a place we supposed to be dry; but in the night another severe storm of rain succeeded, and again flooded half the encampment. On the 8th we traveled five miles to a grove of green elm trees, and it again rained in torrents, but our encampment was upon high ground this time. P. H. Burnett this day resigned the command of the company in consequence of ill health. On the 9th the clouds dispersed, and we traveled five miles to find wood, where we dried our clothes. The company now separated into two parties, one under the command of Capt. Jesse Applegate, and the other reorganized by electing William Martin commander. Martin's company had about seventy-two wagons and one hundred and seventy-five men. On the 10th we met a company of four wagons from Fort Larimer [Laramie], with furs and peltries, going to Independence. They had with them several buffalo calves. As yet we saw no game of any kind, except a few straggling deer. This day Mr. Casan and others saw the corpse of an Indian in the prairie; his head had been cut off and was badly scalped, and left to be eaten up by the buzzards. This, no doubt, was the same Indian killed and scalped by the war party of the Osages and Kansas. On the 11th we had a fall of rain in the evening, before dark, but none in the night. On the 12th the whole company were thrown into a state of great excitement by the news, which reached us, that Captain Gant and some others had killed a large buffalo. He was a venerable old bull, by himself, and was discovered by the hunters at about one mile distant; they run upon him with their horses and shot him with their large horse-pistols; seven balls were fired into him before he fell. The animal was not very fat, and was tough eating. He had, no doubt, been left here in the spring by other buffaloes. These

animals frequently come down upon the waters of Blue River to spend the winter among the rushes, which are abundant in the bottoms near the stream; but they return in the spring. On the fourteenth of June we passed over a level plain of rich prairie land, equal to any in the world for farming purposes; but it was wild, solitary prairie.

On the 15th one of the company killed an antelope—an animal not very plenty in this region, but seen occasionally for the last three or four days. June 16th, one deer and one antelope were killed, and we had a most beautiful race between an antelope and some fleet dogs. The animal ran down the line of wagons for about two miles, in full view, about two hundred yards from us; and as fast as he would leave one dog behind, another would come in from the wagons. Why the animal did not change his course, I can not tell, unless perhaps he was too much confused. Perhaps no animal in the world is so fleet as this beautiful creature. He will weigh about as much as a deer, has hair of much the same length and color, is formed a little like the goat, but is much more slender and neat in his form. The bucks have horns, with several prongs to them, not so long as the horns of a deer, and of a black color. The bucks have black stripes, about an inch wide, running down from under each ear, and continuing under each eye toward the nose. These stripes, and thin black hairs, give the animal quite a fanciful appearance. Nothing is more beautiful and graceful than the movements of this active animal. He runs very smoothly; not in irregular bounds, like the deer. Mr. Lindsay Applegate, who had two very fleet greyhounds with him, stated to me that he one day witnessed a race between his best greyhound and an antelope. He said the antelope and dog were running at right angles towards each other, and the antelope did not discover the dog until the dog was within twenty feet of him. The struggle then commenced, and they ran about a quarter of a mile, each doing his utmost; but the antelope outran the dog so far, that the dog stopped still, and looked after the antelope in utter astonishment. The dog had often run upon deer and wolves with ease. The antelope is a very wary animal, and difficult of approach. His curiosity is, however, very great; and the hunter, adapting himself to the habits of the animal, conceals himself behind a hillock of sand, or other object, and putting his hat, cap, or handkerchief upon the end of his gunstick, he raises it about two feet, gently waiving it backward and forward. As soon as the antelope sees it, he approaches gradually nearer and nearer, making a sort of snorting noise, and alternately approaching and retreating, until he comes within reach of the hunter's trusty rifle. He is not very tenacious of life, and a small wound will disable him, so that he surrenders. The antelope, though exceedingly fleet, can be run down on horseback, when very fat, by continuing the chase about twenty miles. Mr.

Nolan, who had been in the region of the Rocky Mountains several years, so informed me; and he also stated that the wolves very frequently run them down, and that he had often fell in with the wolves and the antelope when the latter was much jaded with the race, and had then caught the antelope himself. June 17th we encamped for the last time on Blue River. Our course since the 13th has been up the Republican Fork of Blue. Here we saw a hunting party of Pawnees, who were returning from a buffalo hunt south. They had not their heads shaved like the Kansas Indians; but their hair was cut like white men, and they were fine looking fellows. They had many packs of buffalo meat, which they cure by cutting it into very thin, long, and wide slices, with the grain of the meat, and then drying it in the sun. After it is dried they have a mode of pressing it between two pieces of timber, which gives it a very smooth and regular appearance. Of this meat they gave us very liberally. They amused themselves very much, by imitating our driving of cattle and teams. We informed them of the war party of Kansas and Osages that we had seen, and they were much excited, and vowed to take vengeance upon their enemies. They did not interrupt us, or our stock, but were very kind and friendly. The road from independence to this point is generally through prairie and a most excellent road, except the fords upon the streams, which are miry, and difficult to cross. The Kansas country as it may be called, is nineteen-twentieths prairie, generally fertile, but destitute of timber, except upon the streams. This timber is elm, low burr oak, and small swamp ash, along the margin of the streams. I saw only a very few places where good farms could be made, for want of timber. This whole country has very little game of any kind, except a very few wild deer and antelope. We saw no squirrels on Blue, and very few birds, except a small species of snipe. I remember a wild-cat, killed by some of the company, that was a mere skeleton, from starvation, no doubt; but few fish were found in the stream.

Your friend,

P. H. B.

[From New York Weekly Herald, January 18, 1845.]

LINNTON, Oregon Territory, 1844.

James G. Bennett, Esq.—

DEAR SIR: In my letter of the 26th instant, I continued my account of our trip to our last encampment on the waters of the Blue. On the eighteenth day of June we crossed the main dividing ridge between the waters of Kansas and the Great Platte. We traveled twenty-five miles over the finest road imaginable, and our eyes first beheld the wide and beautiful valley of the Great Platte just as the sun was going down behind the bleak sand hills. We encamped in the bottom, about two miles from the river, without fuel. Next morning we

started, without any breakfast, and traveled a few miles, where we found willows for fuel, and where we took a hearty meal. We struck the river near the head of Grand Island, which is seventy-five miles long, covered with timber, and several miles wide, varying greatly, in places, as to width; but what was strange, there was not a solitary tree on the south side of the river where we were. The river above the island, as far as the Forks, is generally about two miles wide. Perhaps this is one of the most remarkable rivers in the world. Like the Nile, it runs hundreds of miles through a sandy desert. The valley of this stream is from fifteen to twenty miles wide, a smooth level plain, and the river generally runs in the middle of it, from west to east. The course of this stream is more uniform than any I have ever seen. It scarcely ever makes a bend. The Platte River was very high until after we had passed Fort Larimer [Laramie?]. This river has low, sandy banks, with sandy bottom, and the water muddy, like that of the Missouri. The current is rapid, and the river being very wide, is very shallow, and easily forded, except in high water. It is full of most beautiful islands of all sizes, covered with beautiful trees, contrasting finely with the wild prairie plains and bold sand hills on each side of the river. The plain on each side of the river extends out to the sand hills, which are about three miles through them, when you ascend up to a wide prairie plain of almost interminable extent. Upon this plain, and sometimes in the sand hills, we found the buffalo, and numbers of white wolves. In the plains, near the river, we generally found the antelope. When the season is wet, as was the case this season, the buffalo resort to the plain beyond the sand hills, where they find water in the ponds. As the summer advances, and the ponds dry up, they approach the river, and are found in the plain near it. You have, perhaps, often heard of buffalo paths. As you go from the river out to the wide plain, beyond the sand hills, through which you must pass, you will find valleys among those hills leading out toward this plain. These valleys are covered with grass, and the buffalo have made numerous paths, not only in these valleys, but over all the hills, where they could pass at all (and they can pass almost anywhere), leading from this wide plain to the river, where they resort for water, in the dry season. These paths are very narrow, and are sunk in the ground six or eight inches deep. In traveling up the Platte, almost every thirty yards we had to cross a path, which was about all the obstruction we met while traveling up this gently inclined plain. While hunting, there is no danger of being lost, for you can find a buffalo path anywhere, and they always lead the nearest route to the river. All the plains are covered with grass; but the plain upon the river has not only the greatest variety, but the most rich and luxuriant grass. The greatest general scarcity of wood we found upon the Platte, before we reached Fort Larimer [Laramie?]. We sometimes found bunches of dry willows, often Indian wigwams