

REPRINT DEPARTMENT

[Continued From Last Quarterly.]

PART II.

TRAVELS ACROSS THE GREAT WESTERN PRAIRIES AND THROUGH OREGON.

With a description of the line of route, and the distances between the intermediate points from Missouri to the Pacific Ocean.

Also, a full description of the characteristics, capabilities and present condition of the North Western Territory, prepared from the Journal of a member of the recently organized

OREGON LEGISLATURE.

CHAPTER I.

The Start—Arrival at the Rendezvous—The Features of the Gathering—The Rival Fat Gentlemen—The Humors of an Evening in the Camp.

It is not necessary to the object in view, that the writer of this journal should furnish the reason which induced him to turn his face towards the wilderness. Let it suffice that on the morning of the 17th of May, 1843, I (to drop the third person) mounted my horse in Independence, Missouri, and set out for the general rendezvous. This was situated in a small spot about twenty miles distant, in a southeast direction. I did not start alone. A family of the name of Robbins, from the northern part of Pennsylvania, were my companions. This party consisted of a husband and wife, two chubby boys, one six and the other eight years of age, and a bouncing baby of eighteen months, or thereabouts.

After having examined for the twentieth time if all the necessities required for the journey were properly stowed in the wagon, and after having, for the last time, jerked at a trace, settled this and that portion of the harness, looked under the horses, passed his hand over the near one's flank, and walked completely around the whole concern, John Robbins mounted his seat, gave a sonorous ahem! in evidence of his complete satisfaction, and describing a preparatory circle with his lash, was about bringing it down on the backs of his team, when a little circumstance in the body of the wagon interrupted his purpose, and softened the threatening sweep of the gad into an oblique flourish, that spent its elegance in a faint snap near the ground.

He had turned his head for the twenty-first time to see that all was right in the canvas domicile behind, when he discerned that Mrs. Robbins was yielding to the weakness of her bosom

at the separation of the last link that bound her to the associations of early youth, and to the ties of friends and home. The husband kissed away the tears that were tumbling over her full and rosy cheek, spoke a word of encouragement in her ear, and then, with a moistened eye himself, turned hastily to his place, brought the whip sharply down, set his features as rigid as a decemvir's, and rattled off at a pace that soon jolted off every vestige of sadness or depression, amid the cheers of a large circle of friends and well-wishers, who had gathered to see us off, and whose benizons floated after us upon the air, as if they were unwilling to resign this living evidence of their continual guardianship.

The morning was magnificent. The soft, fresh breeze was both bracing and bland, and the sun poured down his brightness with such superior glory that his rays seemed to stream through our very hearts, and to change every doubt and dark foreboding into cheerful hope. As I gazed out upon that lovely landscape and saw every blade and leaf quivering in gold, I ceased to wonder that the savage turned his face above to look for God.

Our course, as I remarked before, lay southwest, along the Santa Fe trail. After we had proceeded on our way for about three hours, the fresh morning air served its challenge on our appetites, and we made a halt in answer to its summons. In compliment to the smooth green sward, the Robbins family tumbled out of the wagon and spread their cloth upon it. Then followed the tin cups and tin plates, and then the edibles. Of the last, we made most speedy disposal. Mrs. Robbins had recovered from her momentary depression, and was now chatting away in high glee, only pausing occasionally to tickle the baby in the neck, to knead its stomach with her fists, or to roll it over and over on the grass. The two boys had left the meal with their cheeks yet full, and were now scampering away after each other in a race over the fields, while one other member of the party, whom I must apologize for having overlooked, sat beside the hearty John Robbins, looking like the impersonation of Gravity itself. This was a large white dog, named Jack, who I understood had long been a member of the family. He appeared to perfectly understand his social position, for though there was no evidence of improper levity in his character, or any indication of intemperate importunity in his manner, one might see by the decided cock of his head, and the equally decided interest he bestowed upon every movement of John Robbins' knife and fork, that he knew his rights to a hair. His calculations were not disappointed, and his lunch finishing the meal, I mounted my horse, the Robbins stowed themselves away under the canvas canopy, and off we jogged once more, to the great delight of Jack, who went gamboling away before us.

We had not proceeded far before we were met by a wagon returning from the rendezvous to Independence.

[To be continued.]