

with those lateral chains of lakes, pools, swamps and marshes, which extend along the sides of the valley. Their design in leaving the river was to avoid the singular obstruction to the navigation called the Great Raft, having been informed by Mr. Toolan, an old and respected French inhabitant, that it would be impossible for them to pass through it. They had already encountered three similar obstructions, through which they had made their way with extreme toil, by loosening and floating out the logs and trunks of trees that had been piled upon each other in such numbers as to fill the bed of the river from the bottom, usually at the depth of thirty feet, and rising three or four feet above the surface of the water.

The Bayou Datche, as the part of the river is called into which they entered, conducted them to a beautiful lake called Big Broth (Lake Bistineau). It is thus described by Mr. Freeman: "This beautiful sheet of water extends, from the place we first entered it, seventy miles in a northwesterly direction; and, as far as we saw it, is beautifully variegated with handsome clumps of cypress trees thinly scattered in it; on the right-hand side it is bounded by high land, which ascends from the surface of the water, and at the distance of one hundred yards is elevated about forty feet, and covered with forests of black oak, hickory, dog-wood, etc.; soil good second rate. It is bounded on the left by a low plain covered with cypress trees and bushes. The depth of the water is from two to six feet. High-water mark ten feet above the present surface. It is called by the Indians *Big Broth*, from the vast quantity of froth seen floating on its surface at high water. The passage out of this lake is by a difficult communication, through bayous, into another very handsome lake of about one mile wide called Swan Lake, and so on, through long crooked bayous, lakes and swamps, full of dead standing timber." Having made their way for many days along this chain of lakes, they were at length anxious to return to the river. After searching several days for a passage, and finding their pilot incapable to direct them, they resolved to wait while they could send messengers by land to the Coashatay village, and procure a guide. The return of this messenger brought them some information calculated to aid in extricating themselves from the labyrinth of lakes in which they were bewildered, also the promise of the Coashatay chief, that he would join the party himself, and conduct them to the river. This promise, however, it was not his intention to fulfill. The party therefore, on the 20th of June, resumed their search for a passage, returning some distance on their route, on the 25th they discovered a narrow and obstructed channel, through which, after removing

several rafts, trees, etc., they found their way into the river. "Thus," says the journal of the expedition, "after fourteen days of incessant fatigue, toil and danger, doubt and uncertainty, we at length gained the river above the Great Raft, contrary to the decided opinion of every person who had any knowledge of the difficulties we had to encounter."

The distance from Natchitoches to the point where the party entered Red River, above the Great Raft, is two hundred and one miles by the meanders of their route. Above the Raft the river is two hundred and thirty yards wide, thirty-four feet deep, and has a very gentle current. The banks are ten or twelve feet high. On the north side the banks rise considerably at a little distance, and are covered with heavy forests of oak, poplar, and red cedar. At the Coashatay village, about twenty miles above the Great Raft, the commander of the exploring party received information, by an express, from the chief of the principal village of the Cadoes, which is thirty miles further to the west, "that about three hundred Spanish dragoons, with four or five hundred horses and mules, were encamped near that village, with the design to prevent the further progress of the Americans." The Coashatay and Cadoe Indians of this part of Red River are an agricultural, half-civilized people, like the Cherokees.

On the 1st of July a messenger arrived at the encampment of the party, near the Coashatay village, giving information of the near approach of the Cadoe chief, with forty young men and warriors of his village. About noon they made their appearance on the opposite bank of the river, and kept up, for a few minutes, an irregular firing by way of salute. This was returned both from the camp and the village in a manner highly gratifying to the Cadoe party. The customary ceremonies used in meeting Indians being past, an exchange of complimentary speeches followed.

The Cadoe expressed great uneasiness on account of the Spaniards who were encamped near the village. Their commandant, he said, had come to see him, had taken him by the hand, and asked him, if he loved the Americans; he answered, he did not know what to say, but if the Spaniards wished to fight the Americans, they might go down to Natchitoches, and fight them there; but they should not shed blood in his territories. He said he was pleased with what he heard respecting the designs of the exploring party; he wished them to go on and see all his country and all his neighbors. "You have far to go, and will meet with many difficulties, but I wish you to go on. My friends, the Pawnees, will be glad to see you, and will take you by the hand. If you meet with any of the Huzaa's (Osages),

and kill them, I will dance for a month. If they kill any of your party, I will go with my young men and warriors, and we will be avenged for you." The soldiers belonging to the expedition having paraded in open order and single file, the forty young Cadoes commenced on the right of the line, and marching towards the left, shook each man by the hand in the most earnest manner. When their leader had reached the other extremity of the line, they instantly placed themselves in a corresponding line, about three paces distant, and their partisan or principal warrior delivered a short address to the sergeant.

"Here we are," said he, "all men and warriors shaking hands together, let us hold fast, and be friends forever." It was said by the interpreter he prefaced his observation by saying, he was glad to see that his new brothers had the faces of men, and looked like men and warriors.

After a delay of a few days the Cadoe chief, professing the most friendly disposition towards the exploring party, withdrew his young men to his own village. On the 11th of July the officers of the party, having as yet no certain knowledge of the designs of the Spaniards, re-embarked on board their little fleet, and began to ascend Red River from the Coashatay village, having engaged the Cadoe chief to watch the motions of the Spanish troops, and to give timely notice of anything interesting to the expedition. The river above the Coashatay village, became very crooked and wide, and the water was so low that the boats were often aground, though they drew no more than from sixteen to twenty inches of water.

On the 26th of July, in the afternoon, three Indians appeared on the sand beach, who were found to be the runners sent by the Cadoe chief, agreeable to previous engagement. They brought information that the Spaniards had returned to Nacogdoches, for a reinforcement and new instructions; that six days since they had arrived at the Cadoe village, about one thousand strong; that they had cut down the United States flag in the Cadoe village, and had said, it was their intention to destroy the exploring party. They had taken from the Cadoe village two young men to conduct them to a handsome bluff, a few miles above where they were now encamped, to await the arrival of the party.

The Indian messengers, and the Cadoes who had remained with the party, appeared much alarmed, and besought the commanding officer to return, saying, if they met the Spaniards, not one would come back alive. The distance to the Spanish camp was three days' journey. On the following day the party made a deposit of some of their most important papers, with a small stock of