

upper end being closed with logs and billets of wood matted together, as it turned out in the present instance; fortunately, after the labor of an hour, we were able to remove the obstacles, else we should have been compelled to return. Opposite the head of the island there is a tolerable log house, and some land cleared; the tenant, a new comer, with a wife and six children, had nothing to give or sell. Here the banks fell in very much; the river more than a mile wide. A great impediment in opening lands on this river, is the dilapidation of the banks, which immediately ensue when the trees are cut away, from the rapid current acting upon a light soil of a texture extremely loose. It will be found absolutely necessary to leave the trees to stand on the borders of the river. The river exceedingly crooked in the course of this day. A number of plantations on both sides. Having made about fourteen miles, we put to shore, after passing a very difficult embarras. This word needs some explanation. Independent of the current of that vast volume of water rolling with vast impetuosity, the navigation is obstructed by various other impediments. At the distance of every mile or two, and frequently at less distant intervals, there are embarras, or rafts, formed by the collection of trees closely matted, and extending from twenty to thirty yards. The current, vexed by these interruptions, rushes round them with great violence and force. We may now judge what a boat encounters in grappling round these rafts. When the oars and grappling hooks were found insufficient, the towing line was usually resorted to with success. There is not only difficulty here, but considerable danger, in case the boat should swing round. In bends where the banks fall in, as in the Mississippi, trees lie for some distance out in the river. In doubling points, in passing sawyers, difficulties are encountered. The water is generally too deep to admit of poling; it would be absolutely impossible to stem the current further out than a few yards; the boat usually passes about this distance from the bank. Where the bank has not been washed steep, which is most usually the case, and the ground newly formed, the young trees, of the willow, cottonwood &c., which overhang the stream, afford much assistance in pulling the boat along with the hands.

"April 17th. Breakfasted under sail. Passed the Grand river, N. E. side. It is two hundred yards wide at its mouth; a very long river, navigable six or eight hundred miles, and takes its waters with the river Des Moines. The traders who were in the habit of visiting the Mahas, six hundred miles above this on the Missouri, were formerly compelled to ascend this river in order to avoid the Kansas Indians, who were

then the robbers of the Missouri. There is a portage of not more than a couple of days, from the Grand river to the Mahas.

"April 27th. About eleven, met a party of traders in two canoes lashed together, which form a kind of raft, heavily laden with furs and skins. They came from the Sioux, who, they say, are peaceably disposed. Towards evening, passed Benito's island and sandbar, S. W. side, so called, from a trader of that name having been robbed by the Ayuwas of his peltry, and he, with his men, forced to carry enormous burdens of it on their backs to the river Des Moines. Instances of such insults were formerly very usual; several spots have been shewn to me where like acts have been committed, and even accompanied with murder. Having come within two leagues of the Kansas river, we encamped. [At Kansas City, therefore.]

"April 28th. Passed the Kansas, a very large river, which enters on the S. W. side. It heads between the Platte and the Arkansas—the country on its borders is entirely open. The river can be ascended with little difficulty, more than twelve hundred miles. The Kansas nation of Indians reside upon it. In the evening we passed the little river Platte, navigable with canoes fifty or sixty miles, and said to abound with beaver. We encamped near a mile above it, having made about fifteen miles.

"April 29th. Passed in the course of this day, some beautiful country on both sides: the upland chiefly S. W., and a greater proportion of prairie than we have yet seen. The river generally narrow, and the sandbars of great extent. Having made about thirty miles, we encamped a short distance below Buffalo island, opposite a range of hills, and at the upper end of a long view. During the whole of the day we saw astonishing quantities of game on the shore; particularly deer and turkeys. The buffaloe or elk are not yet seen.

"April 30th. Last night there was much thunder and lightning, but little rain. At daylight embarked with a favorable wind, which continued until seven, when, from the course of the river, the wind failed us for an hour. The river extremely crooked. Mr. Lisa and myself went on shore, and each killed a deer. There were great numbers of them sporting on the sandbars. There are great quantities of snipes, of beautiful plumage, being a curious mixture of dove color and white. I saw one of a different kind, which was scarlet underneath the wings. At two o'clock we hoisted sail at the beginning of a long reach, to the great joy of the whole company. High prairies S. W. side—continued under sail through another long reach, and had a view of the old Kansas village at the

upper end of it. It is a high prairie; smooth, waving hills, perfectly green, with a few clumps of trees in the hollows. But for the scarcity of timber this would be a delightful situation for a town."

This seems to be where Doniphan, Kansas, just above Atchison, now stands.

Next day, May 1st, they passed St. Joseph. The site of South St. Joseph, where the packing houses are, seems to have been called "St. Michael's prairie."

"Passed St. Michael's prairie, a handsome plain in front, with variegated hills in the background, and but little wood. At two o'clock we came to a very great bend in the river, but did not get through until evening. The river from being narrow, changes to an unusual width, and very shallow. We were detained about an hour, having been so unlucky as to run aground."

They hurried past the "Nodowa, Nimeha and Tarkio creeks," and came to Nebraska.

"Great exertions have certainly been made and no moments lost, in advancing our voyage, but much of the time we were carried along by the wind, when there was no need for any labor on the part of the men. The weather is now fine, and their labor diversified, when there is no wind, by the pole, the oars, or cordelle, which is little more than a promenade along the sandbars.

"May 6th. About ten this morning, passed a river called Nis-na-botona, after which there are some long reaches very favorable for sailing. At four o'clock arrived at the little Nimeha; the course of the river here is for a considerable distance nearly N. E.—Wind being N. W. were enabled to hoist sail, but having proceeded about a mile, a squall suddenly sprung up from the N.; we were compelled with all despatch to take in sail, and gain the shore S. W. side. Here a dreadful storm raged during the remainder of the evening and the greater part of the night. Our encampment is at the edge of a large prairie, but with a fringe of wood along the bank of the river. The greater part of the country, particularly on the S. W. side, is now entirely open. The grass is at this time about six inches high." This will have been Nemaha City.

"May 7th. Continued our voyage at daylight, the weather fine, though somewhat cool. Wind still continues N. W.—Passed an island and sandbar, and towed along a prairie S. side for nearly a mile. This prairie is narrow, bounded by hills somewhat broken and stony. At ten o'clock arrived at L'isle à beau soleil; [Fair Sun Island; Sonora Island, or very near there] the wind here became so high that we proceeded with great difficulty. In the evening, arriving at the head of the island, were compelled to put to shore. Mr. Lisa