

WESTERN AMERICA—Mr. Jedediah S. Smith who has been engaged for several years hunting and trapping in the Upper Missouri writes as follows to Gen. Clark, superintendent of Indian Affairs:—

" My situation has enabled me to collect information respecting a country which has been, measurably, veiled in obscurity, and unknown to the citizens of the United States. I allude to the country South West of the Great Salt Lake, and West of the Rocky Mountains.

About the 22d of August, 1826, I left the Great Salt Lake, accompanied with a party of fifteen men, for the purpose of exploring the country to the south west, which was entirely unknown to me, and of which I could obtain no satisfactory information from the Indians who inhabit the country on its north east borders.

My general course on leaving the Lake was S. W. and W. passing the Little Uta Lake, and ascending Ashley's river, which empties into it where we found a nation of Indians, calling themselves Sumpatch, who were friendly disposed towards us. After leaving the Little Uta Lake I found no further sign of Buffalo—there was however, a few of the Antelope and mountain sheep, and an abundance of black tailed hares. Leaving Ashley's River, I passed over a range of mountains, S. E. and N. W. and struck arriving S. W. where I named Adams River in compliment to our President. The water of this river is of a muddy cast, and somewhat brackish. The country is mountainous to the east and on the west are detached rocky hills and sandy plains. Passing down this river some distance, I fell in with a nation of Indians, calling themselves Pa Utches. These Indians, as well as the Sumpatch, wear robes made of rabbit skin, they raise corn and pumpkins, on which they principally subsist—except a few hares, very little game of any description is to be found.

About ten days march further down, the river turns to the S. E. where on the S. W. of it, there is a remarkable cave, the entrance to which is about ten or fifteen feet high, and five or six feet in width; after descending about fifteen feet, it opens into a large and spacious room, with the roof, walls and floor of solid rock salt, (a piece of which I send you, with some other articles which will hereafter be described.) I followed Adams river two days travel, further, where it empties into the Seeds Keeder, which I crossed and went in a south course down it, through a barren, rocky and mountainous country. In the river are many shoals and rapids. Further down a valley opens, from five to fifteen miles in width—The land on the river bank is fertile and timbered. I here found another tribe of Indians who call themselves Animuchiebes. They cultivate the soil, and raise corn, beans, pumpkins and melons in abundance, and also a little wheat and cotton. I was nearly destitute of horses, and had learned what it was to do without food; I therefore concluded to remain here fifteen days, to recruit my men; and in the mean time, succeeded in changing my few remaining horses, and was enabled to purchase others, from a party of runaway Indians, who had stolen them from the Spaniards. I here obtained some information respecting the Spanish country—obtained two guides—recrossed the Seeds Keeder, and travelled a west course fifteen days, over a country of complete barrens, and frequently travelling from morning until night without water. Crossed a salt plain eight miles wide and twenty long. On the surface of the ground is a crust of white salt, underneath is a layer of yellow sand, and beneath the sand a few inches, the salt again appears. The river Seeds Keeder, I have since learned empties itself into the Gulf of California about 800 miles from the Ammuchiebes and is there called Colorado.

On my arrival in the province of Upper California, I was eyed with suspicion, and was compelled to appear in the presence of the Governor residing at St. Diego, from whence by the assistance of some American gentlemen, [and particularly Capt. W. H. Cunningham, of the ship Courier, from Boston,] I was enabled to obtain permission to return to my men, by the route I had come. I also obtained permission to purchase such supplies as I stood in need of. As the Governor would not permit me to travel up the sea coast towards Bodago, I proceeded eastward of the Spanish settlements. I then turned my course N. W. keeping from 150 to 200 miles from the sea coast. I travelled three hundred miles in this direction, through a country somewhat fertile, and inhabited by a great many Indians, mostly naked and destitute of fire arms, and who subsist upon fish, roots, acorns and grapes. These Indians, unlike, in this respect, any others that I have seen, cut their hair to the length of three inches.

I afterwards arrived at a river, which I name [after a tribe of Indians residing on its banks] Wimmel-che. I found here a few beaver and elk—deer and antelopes in abundance. I made a small hunt, and then attempted with my party, to cross Mount Joseph, and join my partners at the Great Salt Lake. In this, however, I was disappointed. I found the snow so deep on the mountain, that my horses could not travel. Five of my horses having already perished for want of food, I was compelled to return to the valley.—Here leaving my party, I set out on the 20th of May, accompanied by two men, and taking with us seven horses and two mules, which were laden with hay and provisions for ourselves, and in eight days we succeeded in crossing Mount Joseph, with the loss of only two horses and one mule. The snow on the top of this mountain was from four to eight feet deep, but so solid that our horses only sunk into it, from six to twelve inches.

After travelling twenty days from the east side of Mount Joseph, I struck the S. W. corner of the Great Salt Lake. The country between the mountain and this Lake, is completely barren and entirely destitute of game. We frequently travelled two days without water, over sandy deserts, where no sign of vegetation was to be seen. In some of the rocky hills we found water; and occasionally small bands of Indians, who appeared the most miserable of the human race. They were naked, and subsisted upon grass seeds, grass-hoppers, &c. On arriving at the Great Salt Lake, we had but one horse and one mule remaining, and they so poor they could scarce carry the little camp equipage we had with us. The balance of the horses we were compelled to eat as they gave out."