

and turned over to the commissary department.

The general and a few of his staff officers, myself included, went up the stream to a high mesa some three miles above camp and got a beautiful view of the country and the surrounding hills, when we ran upon a monstrous grizzly, who took shelter in a little plum patch covering about an acre of ground. One of our party, Trainmaster Wheeling, with more daring than the rest of us cared to exhibit, rode up to within a few rods of the patch; the bear would rush out after him, when he would turn his mule so quickly that the bear could not catch him, the bear close to his heels snapping and growling, at the same time receiving the fire of our Sharpe's rifles. After receiving same, Mr. Grizzly would retire and again Wheeling would draw him out of the plum patch, and again we would pour cold lead into his carcass. The fight was intensely interesting. When we downed grizzly we found we had perforated his hide with twenty-three balls. The animal was one of the largest of its species; according to the very best estimate it weighed about 1,800 pounds.

From this point on to Montana, in fact all along the whole base of the Rocky Mountains to the British possessions, the country is perfectly charming, the hills are all covered with a fine growth of grass, and in every valley there is either a rushing stream or some quiet babbling brook of pure, clear snow water, filled with trout, the banks lined with trees -- wild cherry, quaking asp, some birch, willow, and cottonwood. No country in America is more picturesque than the eastern slope of the Big Horn mountains.

August 25. -- Broke camp at the usual hour; pushed on north, passing along the base of the Big Horn mountains. Crossed several streams, one of which we named Coal creek, because of the fact that near the center of the stream lay a block of coal about twenty-four feet long, eight feet thick, and twelve feet wide, the water having washed through a vein of coal that cropped out at this point. We found coal here enough to supply our forges and to enable the blacksmith to do some needed repairs. Seven miles from Clear fork we came to a very pretty lake, about two miles long and about three-fourths of a mile wide, which Major Bridger told us was DeSmet lake, named for Father DeSmet. The lake is strongly impregnated with alkali, in fact so strong that an egg or potato will not sink if thrown into the water; large red bluffs are to be seen on both sides, and underneath the lake is an immense coal vein. Not many miles from this lake is a flowing oil well. A scheme might be inaugurated to tunnel under this lake, pump the oil into the lake, set the tunnel on fire and boil the whole body of alkali water and oil into soap. We made our camp on the Piney fork of the Powder river, about two or three miles below Fort McKinney, where there is now a flourishing city known as Buffalo, county seat of Johnson county, Wyoming. Just after we had gone into camp a large band of buffalo that had been aroused by our flankers came charging down the hill, directly into our camp. Many of them turned aside, but several passed through among the wagons, much to the dismay of our animals, most of which were tied to the same, taking their evening meal of grain. One monstrous bull got tangled in the ropes of one of our tents, and was killed while trampling it in the dust.

August 26. -- Left Piney fork at 6 o'clock A. M.; traveled north over a beautiful country until about 8 A.M., when our advance reached the top of the ridge dividing the waters of the Powder from those of the Tongue river. I was riding in the extreme advance in company with Major Bridger. We were two thousand yards, at least, ahead of the general and his staff; our Pawnee scouts were on either side and a little in advance; at that time there was no advance guard immediately in front. As the major and myself reach the top of the hill, we involuntarily halted our steeds; I raised my field glass to my eyes and took in the grandest view I had ever seen. I could see to the north end of the Big