

Message

no one could say they had ever treated a peace commission with contempt, or had ever given them aught but kind words. Our hearts welcome you. The Sitting Bull sent a friendly message to Father De Smet. All were now cheerful. After a short time the delegation formed a circle, then for Father De Smet. One of them spoke in the name of the Chiefs, who had sent him. Said he, "I am well formed by nature, half soldier and half chief. I fear not to meet my enemies in the field, in the Camp I fear not. I and my comrades have come to see, and shake you by the hand, and are happy to meet you, and hear your good words. Though they have preceded you many months, they have made our hearts feel glad. I hope you will have the good fortune to hear the same, from our people. You shall have water to drink and meat to eat, and return with your heart full of gladness. Your coming seems like a dream. We can hardly realize or understand this unexpected meeting. This all I have to say." They all repaired to Running Antelope's tent where a feast was prepared for them. After eating and drinking until dark they sang their song of joy. All of ~~this~~ this conjured up strange thoughts to me in the far off lands of the Dacotates. Hardly had their voices died away ere the howling of the wolf, and hooting of the owl, was wafted to my ears. A strange medly, the only sound breaking the stillness of the tomb. Father De Smet procured a fine specimen of the Sage here.

Wednesday, 17th

Broke Camp at 4³⁰ o'clock, pushed up to the heights that divide waters of the Yellowstone from those of the Little Missouri de Gross Ventre. About ten miles from last Camp, from this height, we beheld the most desolate country that imagination could picture. Away in front, and far below us perhaps 500 feet not a living creature could be seen to animate the aspect of the dreary waste; like the bed of some vast lake, or sea, it lay before us. We struck the Cottonwood at its very source, a very appropriate name, from the quantities of the timber on it. The hills are covered with cedar and some pine, here and there. After a hard struggle among the hills we reached the River bottom, which was covered with cactus; little other vegetation could be found. We continued our journey until one o'clock; first one side of the bottom, then the other. Timber becomes more abundant, and of better growth. Made twenty five miles. Our visitors from the Camp are rather wild, and hardly know what to make of our visit.

Thursday, 18th

At an early hour we were off again, following the cottonwood until ten o'clock, then taking a due west course toward the Yellowstone. Crossed several streams, tributaries of the Patton Wood River. (*This stream is hard to locate on maps. On an early one of the collection mentioned there is a river shown with a name that has the two leading letters defaced. It is either "Patton Wood" or "Cotton Wood," and since it bears the locality passed by the travellers, the editor is inclined to identify it with the former.) After twenty five miles travelling with little or no water we were gratified to find ourselves in Sage Creek where there was an abundance of grass. (Sage Creek easily identified.) At 3 P.M. we camped on the above mentioned Creek, which is about five miles from the Yellowstone River. We are all cheerful, and hope to reach the end of our long journey by 10 tomorrow morning. Several of the newcomers have gone on ahead to announce our coming.