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REPORT OF AN EXPEDITION

DOWN THE

ZUNI AND COLORADO RIVERS,

BY

CAPTAIN L. SITGREAVES,

CORPS TOPOGRAPHICAL ENGINEERS.

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ACCOMPANIED BY MAPS, SKETCHES, VIEWS, AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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tary of Salt River. The women and children, engaged in gathering *piñones*, (pine-nuts,) fled at his approach; while the men held themselves aloof, and refused to parley with him or meet his friendly advances. He was compelled, therefore, to return as he went, not venturing to drive the mules into the ravine, and thus give the Indians an opportunity of attacking him at disadvantage. I regretted that he had suffered his men to take from the lodges sundry articles of value to the Indians. Among these were some admirably made baskets, of so close a texture as to hold water; a wicker-jar, coated with pine-tree gum; a large quantity of *piñones* and grass-seed; some bread, made of the mezquit bean; a cake of *mezcal*, (a preparation of the maguey;) and pieces of a substance that had all the appearance of chalk; but as it did not effervesce with acids, was probably an exceedingly pure variety of kaolin.

*October 10, Camp No. 15.*—The mules, having now been two days without water, were, as the last resource, sent back to the river, taking with them some kegs and India-rubber water-bags with which I had fortunately provided myself. They returned in the evening, less three of their number lost by the way, but bringing back an abundant supply of water. In the course of the preceding night, by watching by the spring and dipping up the water by the spoonful as it trickled out, enough had been obtained to furnish each person with a cup of coffee.

*October 11, Camp No. 16.*—As we ascended the mountain the cedar gave place to the nut-bearing pine; and this, when near the summit, to a pine of larger growth with long leaves. Herds of antelope were seen in all directions, but they kept to the open country, and were shy and difficult to approach.

*October 12, Camp No. 17.*—The ascent of the mountain was continued, with the greatest anxiety as to the result of the day's journey; for the mules had drunk but once in more than four days, and the country showed no indications of water in any direction. There was much beauty in some of the glades and mountain glens we passed. The ground was covered with fresh grass and well timbered with tall pines, mingled, after attaining a certain altitude, with aspens of a brilliant yellow.

Crossing the summit we descended gradually to the brow of a precipice overlooking a green vale of five or six miles in extent, but with no appearance of water, and commenced the descent, picking our way with difficulty among the loose rocks, in the belief that there we should be compelled to abandon most of our animals. When half-way down, a

shot from one of the Mexicans on the flank inspired us with hope, for it was the signal fixed upon to notify the discovery of water; but still I observed nothing to warrant it; and it was not until we had reached the bottom of the cliff that I discerned a narrow thread of grass and weeds, greener and ranker than the surrounding growth, winding out from a little nook, and losing itself in the plain. It proved to be a spring of delicious water; and thus providentially terminated our fears and anxieties for the time.

*October 13, Camp No. 17.*—It was necessary to halt here for a day or two to rest the mules and have them reshod. The feet of the sheep, too, had become sore and worn out; and at the suggestion of a Mexican, my *mayordomo*, the cracks in them were filled, by means of a hot iron, with resin and pine-tree gum, by which operation the animals appeared much relieved. Mr. Leroux reconnoitred the route ahead, and found water in several places ten or twelve miles distant. He again surprised a few lodges of Indians, who fled, leaving their effects behind them. This time he did not permit his men to pilfer, but, on the contrary, left at the lodges a small present of tobacco, handkerchiefs, and knives, for the purpose of conciliating the Indians, and inducing them to hold some intercourse with us, by which means we hoped to obtain useful information in regard to the route. The only provisions found in the lodges were piñones and the grass-seed before mentioned.

The box chronometer had been carried in a pannier, carefully packed in wool, and placed on the steadiest mule of the *atajo*, which was always led by the halter; but it was nevertheless found to have stopped, from the roughness of the last day's journey. Independent observations were therefore made for the longitude, the pocket chronometer not having sufficient regularity to be depended on.

During the night we were alarmed by a stampede of the mules. Fortunately they ran into a gorge near the camp, from which there was but the one outlet, and we succeeded in quieting them. The cause of their fright was made apparent by the roaring of a panther, or other large animal, in uncomfortable proximity to the herd.

*October 15, Camp No. 18.*—Our route lay across plains of gentle slope. Mingled with the pines were a few small post-oaks; and in a green glade was found some white clover of a different variety from that common in the States. Flowers and birds were more numerous than upon the northern slopes of the mountain, but no fragments of pottery or other signs of habitation were seen. Our camp was upon the dry bed of a lagoon, a mile in extent, having some small pools of water