

**SIXTEEN MONTHS'
TRAVEL, 1886-87**

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Sixteen Months' Travel, 1886-87 by T. Allnutt Brassey

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T. ALLNUTT BRASSEY

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TRAVEL, 1886-87**

*To Mr Charles Fairchild
with best wishes from the
author August 1888*

SIXTEEN MONTHS' TRAVEL

1886-87

BY

T. ALLENUTT BRASSEY

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1888

PREFACE.

THE following rough diary has been printed, partly because friends might be interested to read the impressions of a young traveller put down while they were still fresh, partly because it supplements the account of the voyage which it was my dear Mother's last wish to have published.

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SIXTEEN MONTHS' TRAVEL.

1886-87.

PART I.

AMERICA.

CHAPTER I.

A MONTH IN THE ROCKIES.

I LEFT England on August 12th, 1886, in the 'Umbria.' She is a splendid vessel, and one feels a real sense of power in her when she is steaming against a breeze of wind. Our best runs were 462 and 458 knots on two consecutive days. After ten days at Newport I came back to New York and met father and McLean. We went together to Chicago, and up to Marquette, on Lake Superior. After three days spent looking round the splendid forest on the Michigan Land and Iron Company's property we returned to Chicago. There we separated. Father went back to New York *en route* for England; McLean and I took the train for the Far West. We arrived in Laramie on the evening of Thursday, September 16th. The next day we were in despair, as we found that neither Barclay nor Sartoris was in town or at the Willans's ranch, some twenty miles out, and there was no letter from them. We were determined to try and get some sport, so

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we engaged a man, who was to provide a cook, a wagon, and six horses, to take us into the mountains. We did not expect to see much game, and were talking over our prospects very despondingly at dinner that evening, when who should walk into the hotel but Barclay himself. He had driven in ninety miles, as soon as he got our letters, to look after us. Saturday we spent in buying stores and horses, and in the evening drove out to the ranch, where we found Mr. and Mrs. Fred Willan. It was a comfortable English country house, though of course all built of wood. On Sunday we came back into town, ready for our start the next day, to which McLean and I were both looking forward most eagerly.

Monday, September 20th.—Up at 6. Bought another pony for McLean—a sorrel, price forty-five dollars, and well worth the money. By 10 o'clock we had got all the stores together, and started Sam Fuller and the wagon with his team of four horses. Harbord started about the same time, driving our three pack-animals. We started ourselves an hour later; Barclay on his own horse, McLean on the sorrel, and I on an ancient brown pony, subsequently dubbed 'Old Tom,' who took a good deal of kicking along. For twenty miles the road lay over the open prairie, and we pushed along at a good pace, loping (*Anglicè*, cantering) most of the way. We then came to a stream fringed with bushes, where we watered the horses and were glad to get a drink ourselves. Our broad felt hats we found were the proper drinking cups. We thoroughly inspected Balsh and Bacon's ranch, which lay just across the stream, and very comfortable and neat it all looked. After this we began ascending into the mountains. We pursued a hare for some time, hoping to get a close shot with a revolver, and soon after saw a cayote. About ten miles from Bacon's we pulled up for the night at a small road ranch, where we were fairly well fed, barring the absence of

fresh meat. My feet had got so sore with my new field boots that I had taken them off and had slung them over the saddle in front of me. A small boy asked Harbord who McLean and I were. Harbord replied, 'Tender feet,' the American expression for new chum. The small boy: 'Guess his feet are tender; he can't even wear his boots.' We turned the horses into the corral; Barclay, McLean, and I turned in on the hay outside, McLean and I together, with four blankets over us, a quilt underneath, and a canvas wagon-sheet under and over all. It froze during the night, but I was too warm, and the experience was so novel that I could not sleep.

Tuesday, September 21st.—Under weigh at 7.30. McLean and I on top of the wagon this time. Barclay and Harbord drove the horses. We went uphill for a bit; from the top had a fine view to some snowy mountains on our left; then down into a valley. Going up the steep bank the other side we passed an 'outfit' on the move—men, women, and children. An 'outfit' out west means anything, from a man's rifle or horse to his wife and children; during the time we were out camping we were known as 'Barclay's outfit.' The road then ran through a dense pine forest; it was pretty good, and Sam Fuller took us along at a smart trot on the level. At 12 pulled up for lunch and to rest the horses. An excellent feed, with rolls, bacon, cream and milk, maple syrup, and preserved vegetables. Off again at 2, and after three miles came down into what is called the neck of the North Park. The tints of the aspen were lovely light yellow to a rich old gold. At 3.30 we pulled up for the day at a road ranch, having done twenty-eight miles. After some rifle and pistol practice Barclay and I walked to the top of a hill close by (McLean was too lazy), and had a fine view over the North Park. This is an undulating plain eighty miles long by forty broad, 9,000 feet above the sea level, surrounded by mountains 12,000 to 13,000 feet high, many of them snow-covered, which of course looked no higher than Scotch hills, so high

is the general level of the country. There are now some 1,200 ranches in the North Park, as there is excellent food for cattle. A park out west is not at all what is understood by a park in England; it means an opening in the trees, and may be a hundred yards across, or as big as the North Park. The North Middle and South Parks are all in Colorado. Coming down the hill we struck a covey of six mountain grouse, who sat and looked at us. Barclay at last killed one with a stone; if we had shot better we should have killed the whole covey. Feeding fair, and beds comfortable. One won't sleep in a bed again for some time.

Wednesday, September 22nd.—Under weigh at 7. Barclay took my place in the wagon, Harbord and I drove the horses. At 10 we crossed the North Platte River, which circles round through Wyoming and flows into the Missouri near Omaha. As I was feeling seedy Barclay and I changed places. For the next ten miles we travelled over dry hills covered with sage bush. The sun was very hot. We saw six antelope, and McLean had a long shot. At 12 halted at Lawrence's ranch. Excellent food, including fresh meat (antelope). Both Lawrences were most hospitable. 'Come right in and sit right down,' is the almost invariable form of invitation out west. There was a New York doctor staying at the ranch, expecting some sport later on. He had just bought a splendid bear's hide from an old hunter on his way down from the mountains—beautiful long fur with silver tips, and measuring eight feet by eight; he had only given fifteen dollars for it. Started again at 2. Four miles farther on passed Scrivener's ranch. He seemed to be a big man, as he was at work on a dam to flood the valley up which we drove, and turn it into a hay meadow. Hay will only grow out here on flooded land. After passing Scrivener's we began to ascend into the mountains out of the Park, and at 5 pulled up at Wheeler's. This ranch is in a secluded valley with a splendid natural hay meadow. Wheeler has about two hundred