

**LEWIS AND CLARK:
MERIWETHER LEWIS
AND WILLIAM CLARK**

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Lewis and Clark: Meriwether Lewis and William Clark by William R. Lighton

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WILLIAM R. LIGHTON

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BY

WILLIAM R. LIGHTON



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LEWIS AND CLARK

CHAPTER I

CHARACTERISTICS

IN the years 1804, 1805, and 1806, two men commanded an expedition which explored the wilderness that stretched from the mouth of the Missouri River to where the Columbia enters the Pacific, and dedicated to civilization a new empire. Their names were Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

As a rule, one who tries to discover and to set down in order the simple signs that spell the story of a large man's life is confused by a chaos of data. No such trouble arises in this case. There is great poverty of fact and circumstance in the records of the private lives of these men; so careless were they of notoriety, so wholly did they

merge themselves in their work. Anything like ostentation was foreign to their taste, and to the spirit of their time, which took plain, dutiful heroism as a matter of course. No one knows any "characteristic anecdotes" of Meriwether Lewis; and the best stories about Clark are those preserved in the tribal histories of Western Indians. The separate identity of the two men is practically lost to all except the careful reader. Each had his baptismal name, to be sure; but even their private names are fused, and they are best known to us under the joint style of Lewis and Clark. In effect they were one and indivisible. For evidence of their individuality we must look to the labors which they performed in common.

When, several years after the conclusion of the great expedition, the manuscript journals were being prepared for publication, the editor could not find sufficient material out of which to make a memoir of Captain Lewis, and was forced to appeal to Mr. Jefferson for aid; for Jefferson had been an early neighbor and friend of the Lewis fam-