

five of my young men whom I give thee to remain with thee and to guide thee when thou shalt wish to leave. I made him a small present to thank him, telling him that he knew that I had sense and that I intended shortly to reward him for his attention. He left with great protestations of friendship. I was notified shortly after that an interpreter whom I had paid liberally to secure him had decamped in spite of all the offers which my son, the Chevalier, had made him, as he was going after an Assiniboine woman with whom he had fallen in love, but who would not remain with him. He was a young man of the Cree nation speaking good Assiniboine. As there were several Mandans who spoke it well enough, I made myself very well understood, as my son spoke Cree and the Cree interpreted into Assiniboine. But here was the height of misfortune, as we could only make ourselves understood by signs and demonstrations. If I had suspected my interpreter, who every day assured me he would always remain with me and never abandon me, I would have taken advantage of the time I had him to make the demands on the Mandans I wished to make. But flattering myself that I had a man on whom I could rely, I put off till after the departure of the Assiniboiness.. All day I was greatly embarrassed; all that I wanted to know and the few questions which I had put were asked in the evening after every one had retired; such as, if there were many people along the river going down, and what nations; if the places at a distance were known. I was answered that there were five forts on the two banks of the river, belonging to their nation, much larger than that in which we were; that a day's journey from the last of their forts were the Pananas, who had several forts; then the Pananis; that these two nations who held much of the country and were ~~now~~ now at war for four years, had always from all time been closely united and in alliance together; that he would tell me afterwards the causes which had set them at variance. The Pananas and Pananis made their forts like them. In summer they grew wheat and tobacco on the lower part of the river, which was very wide, land not being visible from one shore to the other; the water bad for drinking. All these lands are inhabited by whites like us, who work in iron. The word iron among all the nations here means all sorts of metals, which they call iron; that they only marched on horseback, both for hunting and war; that these men could not be killed by arrow or musket, being covered with iron, but that by killing the horse the man could be caught easily, as he could not run; that he had a shield of iron very clear, fought with lances and sabres, with which he was very skilful; the women were never seen in fields; their forts and houses were stone. I asked if there were fine woods, and if the prairie continued in heights and hollows. He answered that the wood was along the river in places and also on the prairies in islands; that the further down the more the hills increased; that many of them were only rocks of fine stone, especially along the river. I asked if it took long to go to where the whites, the horsemen, were. I was answered that the Pananas and Pananis had horses like the whites; it would take ~~the~~ whole summer to make the journey, and that since they were at war with the Pananas the men would not undertake to go far, the roads being closed to them. That cattle were abundant on the prairies, far larger and fatter than those we had seen on their prairies; their coat white and of several colours. He showed us horns split in half, of a greenish colour which hold nearly three pints. In all the huts they have them in use as ladles, proving that they have killed many when the road was open. That was all I could learn even by chance, as I had relied on my interpreter, that I would have time to be thoroughly informed at leisure. Six days after the Assiniboiness left I sent my son, the Chevalier, with Sieur Nolant, six Frenchmen and several Mandans, to the nearest fort, which is on the bank of the river. If well received they were to sleep there, to get the best information of the course of the river; whodwell there; if they are acquainted with the low-

er part, in accordance with what was told us; to learn all that could be ascertained by signs and demonstrations. After their departure, Mr. de la Marque and I walked about to observe the size of their fort and their fortifications. I decided to have the huts counted. It was found that there were a hundred and thirty of them. All the streets, squares and huts resemble each other. Several of our Frenchmen wandered about; they found the ~~the~~ streets and squares very clean, the ramparts very level and broad; the palisade supported on cross-pieces morticed into posts of fifteen feet. At fifteen points doubled are green skins which are put for sheathing when required, fastened only above in the places needed, as in the bastion there are ~~not~~ <sup>at</sup> each curtain well flanked. The fort is built on a height in the open prairie with a ditch upwards of fifteen feet deep by fifteen to eighteen feet wide. Their fort can only be gained by steps or posts which can be removed when threatened by an enemy. If all their forts are alike, they may be called impregnable to Indians. Their fortifications are not Indian. This nation is mixed white and black. The women are fairly good-looking, especially the white, many with blond and fair hair. Both men and women of this nation are very laborious; their huts are large and spacious, separated into several apartments by thick planks; nothing is left lying about; all their baggage is in large bags hung on posts; their beds made like tombs surrounded by skins; all go to bed naked, men and women. These men are always naked, covered only with a buffalo robe; a great part of the women naked like the men, with this difference, that they wear a loose apron, about a hand breadth wide and a foot long, sewed to a girdle in front only; all the women have this kind of protection, although they have a petticoat which gives no constraint, they do not close the thighs; as is the case with other Indian women when they sit down. Several carry a kind of gown of very soft deer skin; there are many deer, they are very small. Their fort is full of caves, in which are stored such articles as grain, food, fat, dressed robes, bear skins. They are well supplied with these; it is the money of the country; they more they have of it the richer they believe themselves to be. They are fond of tattooing, but never more than half the body is tattooed, both of men and women. They make wicker work very neatly, flat and in baskets. They make use of earthen pots, which they use like many other nations for cooking <sup>their</sup> food. They are for the most part great eaters; are eager for feasts. They brought me every day more than twenty dishes of wheat, beans and pumpkins, all cooked. Mr. de la Marque, who did not hate feasts, went to them continually with my children. As I did not go to them, my share was sent to me. The men are stout and tall, generally very active, fairly good-looking, with a good physiognomy. The women have not the Indian physiognomy. The men indulge in a sort of ball play on the squares and ramparts.

On the evening of 4th, the Sieur Nolant and my son arrived, well satisfied with their journey, having been well received and strongly urged to remain longer. The fort is on the bank of the river, as large again as this; the squares and streets very fine and clean; their palisade is in the best order and strength; the whole built in the same fashion as the one in which we were. From what they could hear, all their forts were alike; who saw one saw them all, with this difference, that some were much larger than others; that the last was the largest of all. The nearest to the Pananas that the river appeared to go was, according to the compass, southwest by south, by signs given to them; the lower part may go to the sea to the southwest by ~~south~~ west. They were often amused with broken talk; not being able to answer questions put to them, they answered something else, for want of understanding. The waters of their rivers come down with great rapidity, having many shoals. The water is not good for drinking, being brackish. We have constantly found from the last mountain almost all the marshes and ponds brackish, or sulphurous. What they could understand was, that on the lower part of the river there were men like us, who made cloth and linen, were very numerous, and had wars

with a large part of the Indians. We saw that it was useless to question them, as they could not understand us. We did not cease going to their feasts all the time we were at their fort, but could not attend all those to which we were asked. We noticed that in the plain there were several small forts, of forty or fifty huts, built like the large ones, but no one was there at the time. They made us understand that they came inside for the summer to work their fields and that there was a large reserve of ~~ff~~ grain in their cellars. This is all the information they could give of their journey. On the 8th of December, I ordered my son to take the altitude which was forty-eight degrees, twelve minutes. On the evening of the 7th I had consulted with Mr. de la Marque as to the course we should take. Like myself, he knew that little remained with us for presents, which rendered it impossible for us to go further; the season too trying to be able to undertake anything, and above all, no interpreter nor any hope of getting one during the winter. We had every reason to fear that the roads would become impracticable in spring on account of the waters and with the risk of arriving too late for the setting ~~out~~ of our canoes; the powder I would have would ~~perhaps not~~ be enough to supply all our wants during the winter and with the small quantity of goods remaining we might find ourselves in a difficulty about all our people, having no longer anything to carry us on, as the Indians would only serve us so far as they were paid and that in advance, as they looked on promises as a very small resource. On the other hand, that we had reason to apprehend setting out on a march in the worst season of the year. After having considered the whole, we decided that we must set out, leaving two men fit to learn the language in a short time, one in the fort in which we were and the other in the nearest fort, as being alone they could learn much more quickly and could consequently give all the information. Mr. de la Marque ~~one~~ of his hired men, a man of intelligence, whom he offered me as being one of the most capable, able to write. I accepted him with pleasure and gave him my servant as the second, although he was very useful to me, as well as very useful and attached to my service, I preferred to deprive myself of him for the good he might afterwards render, knowing his strong and quick intellect, with a good memory and facility in learning languages, very wise and fearing God. I gave him full instructions of all he had to do, and on his side, Mr. de la Marque promised to send to look after them next summer. That ended, so far as regarded the two men whom I left, I notified our five Assiniboines, whom I made to understand that I wished to set out shortly, which gave them much joy. I showed them by signs, not being able to make ~~xx~~ myself understood otherwise, that it would be necessary for them to set out with two Frenchmen on the morning of the next day, that everything would be ready for them, so that they might go speedily to the village to warn them to expect us; that I would leave four ~~days~~ after them, so that I might prepare everything for the journey. I then informed the Mandans of my design, which appeared to give them much sorrow, I showed them the two Frenchmen whom I left in my place, recommending that they should be taken good care of. They gave me many thanks, with great protestations of friendship and fidelity. I then let them know that I would not abandon them. I asked the chief to give me meal for the journey. The news soon spread throughout the fort. On the morning of the 8th, I made the two Frenchmen set out, guided by two Assiniboines, [as I have already said, to go to warn the village of my departure. Wheat <sup>[cote]</sup> flour pound-  
ed for the journey was brought, much more than was necessary. I thanked them, giving them some needles which they greatly value. They would have loaded a hundred men for the journey; in a short time all hastened to bring me some. I made all our people take what they wished, which was done in a very short time. Having provided for all that our people needed, I assembled the chiefs and principal Mandans, made them a present of powder, balls and several trifles, which they greatly value, owing to their need ~~of~~ them. I gave the head chief a flag, gave him a leaden ~~pitcher~~

plate, which I had ornamented with ribbon at the four corners. It was put into a box to be kept in perpetuity, in memory of my taking possession of their lands, which I did in the King's name. It will be preserved from father to son, better than if I had put it in the ground, where it would have run the risk of being stolen. I made them understand as well as I could, that I left them that mark in memory of the Frenchmen who had come upon their lands. I very much desired I could have made them understand, in order to tell them many things which might have been very useful to them and to us, which to my regret and to theirs I could not do. I had wrought with so much diligence, that on the evening of the eighth every thing was ready for our departure, which I calculated to accomplish sooner than I had given notice of? During the night, between the 8th and 9th, I was taken ill, and in a very short time was very ill; I did not know what to think of it. I kept my bed for three days. Finding myself better on the fourth, I prepared to set out the next day. I gave the two men enough to defray their expenses liberally, and even to pay a guide, if need were to bring them to our fort; informed them once again of the cause which obliged me to leave them there. So soon as they could make themselves understood, they were to neglect nothing to learn what was the nation of whites, what metal they worked with; if there were any mines to their knowledge; what nations were above, going up the river; if they knew a height of land—in a word, to neglect nothing to obtain all possible information respecting the country.

I set out, although ill, in the hope that it would be nothing and that I would recover at the village my box in which I had put some remedies. On the 13th of December, to the great regret of all the Mandans, a chief ~~came~~ came to conduct us a league and a half's distance, when I sent him back; he testified to me by great demonstrations the regret he felt at my departure, making a sign that I would not abandon him, but return and that he would accompany us. I gave him a small present of powder, once more recommending the two Frenchmen whom I left with ~~them~~ them. He made me a sign that he would take one to his <sup>house</sup> ~~house~~. I dismissed him after giving him ~~thanks~~ <sup>thanks</sup>. In the evening I noticed that we had only two Assiniboines with us. They made me understand that one had remained with our Frenchmen, not wishing to abandon them; that they would return only in summer with them. I arrived at the village on the 24th, still very ill. We had experienced excessive cold, which caused delay. My box was restored to me; nothing had been touched; they had been satisfied with the slave's bag, which was returned to me empty. Having rested a little, I reproached them for lying to me respecting the Mandans; that there was very little truth in all they had told me. They answered, that they had not pretended to speak of the Mandans, saying that they were like us, that they had intended to speak of that nation which is at the lower part of the river, who work in iron. An Assiniboine rose above the others, saying to me: This is the only one who can speak better to thee about it; thou hast not understood properly ~~what~~ what was said to thee; I do not lie. Last summer I killed one who was covered with iron, as I have already said several times. If I had not killed the horse first, I could not have killed the man. I said to him; What hast thou brought of the spoil to show us that thou speakest the truth? As I wished to cut off his head, I noticed men on horseback, who were blocking the way, I escaped with difficulty; I kept nothing to carry off; I threw away everything I had even to my blanket, in my flight. What I say is true, and I will have it told to thee by others who were with me the following spring. They are not here now, but thou shalt see them. What I have said I repeat; the other side of the river cannot be seen; the water is salt; it is a country of mountains; a great extent between the mountains of fine land; many cattle, big and stout, white and of different colours, many stags and deer; I have seen their wheat fields, where no women are to be seen; what I tell thee is without deceit; thou wilt learn further of it afterwards. I con-

tinued my journey after three days rest. I reached the first mountain on the 9th of January, where we remained a long time. Mr. de la Marque made up his mind to go on, seeing me still very ill, in order to send me assistance. He arrived on the first of February; I arrived only on the 10th, greatly fatigued and very ill. I met the assistance he sent me at thirty-five leagues from the fort, which gave me great pleasure, having great need of it. I have never endured so much wretchedness in my life, from illness and fatigue, as in that journey. I found myself, after a fortnight's rest, a little restored. Mr. de la Marque waited my arrival to carry out his design of going to Fort Maurepas, having learned that there were no provisions. I told him that I thought his presence would be very useful in his post? He determined to set out, asking me to leave his brother with a large party of hired men for provisions at my fort, flattering themselves that there was more hope there of seeing people. We were nearly starving, when fortunately two huts of Indians came, whom I stopped at the fort. They supplied us by their hunting moose and deer. We numbered forty-two persons in the fort, which means a large consumption of food. Mr. de la Marque left on the 16th of the month. I received news from him shortly after. He informed me that he dreaded a famine, not seeing Indians. We are now in the 16th of April and have not yet seen any one. I do not know how God preserves us.

I sent my son, the Chevalier, that morning, the 16th of April, with an Indian to go to make a search for the fort of Lake Winipigon, and to take notice of the rivers which fall into it, especially the White River (to which I intend to go on the return of our canoes), from the mine which is in the lake, and from that which is in the White River, from the outlet of the lake, to notice the turn of it, and endeavour to prevent the Indians from going to the ~~XXXIX~~ English, by making them hope for our speedy arrival.

I received a letter from Mr. de la Marque on the 23rd of April, which notified me that he had not yet had any of the Indians; that he has decided to go to find them in the great river Winipigon where they are engaged ~~in~~ building their canoes.

I think he is leaving the post too early; the Indians might arrive from the Red River after his departure. On the 22nd of the present month I learned from an Indian that a large band of Assiniboines had drawn up on the Lake of the Prairies who were working on their canoes to go to the English.

On the 24th I sent Sanschagrin with a hired man to bring them here so as ~~XXXIX~~ turn them from going to the English?

On the 30th five Assiniboines arrived towards evening to let me know that a large number of people was coming; we have much need of them, having done nothing till now.

On the 3rd of May this great band was reduced to ~~every~~ few.

On the 10th, Mr. Nolant, despairing at no more coming, asked leave to set out, representing to me that there were no more provisions and that they could not remain longer. I did my best to induce him to have patience for some time yet, being much vexed that he should go empty.

Seeing him determined to set out, I gave him permission.

On the same day, the 10th, in the evening, fifteen Assiniboines arrived to notify us that there were sixty huts coming and that they had been told we had gone.

I sent them back with tobacco to hasten their coming. They arrived on the 18th and did their trading in a short time. These left. On the 26th, three men arrived to beg me to delay our departure, that thirty huts would arrive. I made them set out with speed, giving them tobacco to tell their people to hasten their coming.

I discovered these days a river flowing to the west. All the lakes and rivers of which I have had any knowledge go to Hudson's Bay, the Northern Sea, except the Mandan River.

I will obtain complete knowledge of it this summer, either by myself or some person on my behalf.

I have deferred the departure of my canoes till the 28th of the month, waiting uselessly for the people to come; only a few arrived, all postponing their coming till summer.

They are so stupid that they think they will be waited for into the summer, and that there will always be time enough to carry off their beavers.

I promised them that as soon as my son and the two men arrived, whom I had left with the Mandans, I would remove from this as quickly as possible.

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