ship the whole, and return by sea, by the way either of Cape Horn, or the Cape of Good Hope, as you shall be able. As you will be without money, clothes, or provisions, you must endeavour to use the credit of the United States to obtain them; for which purpose open letters of credit shall be furnished you, authorizing you to draw on the executive of the United States, or any of its officers, in any part of the world, on which draughts can be disposed of, and to apply with our recommendations to the consuls, agents, merchants, or citizens of any nation with which we have intercourse, assuring them, in our name, that any aids they may furnish you shall be honourably repaid, and on demand. Our consuls, Thomas Hewes, at Batavia, in Java, William Buchanan, in the Isles of France and Bourbon, and John Elmslie, at the Cape of Good Hope, will be able to supply your necessities, by draughts on us.

Should you find it safe to return by the way you go, after sending two of your party round by sea, or with your whole party, if no conveyance by sea can be found, do so; making such observations on your return as may serve to supply, correct, or confirm those made on your outward journey.

On reentering the United States and reaching a place of safety, discharge any of your attendants who may desire and deserve it, procuring for them immediate payment of all arrears of pay and clothing which may have incurred since their departure, and assure them that they shall be recommended to the liberality of the legislature for the grant of a soldier's portion of land each, as proposed in my message to Congress, and repair yourself, with your papers, to the seat of government.

To provide, on the accident of your death, against anarchy, dispersion, and the consequent danger to your party, and total failure of the enterprise, you are hereby authorized, by any instrument signed and written in your own hand, to name the person among them, who shall succeed to the command on your decease, and by like instruments to change the nomination, from time to time, as further experience of the characters accompanying you shall point out superior fitness; and all the powers and authorities given to yourself are, in the event of your death, transferred to, and vested in the successor so named, with further power to him and his successors, in like manner to name each his successor, who, on the death of his predecessor, shall be invested with all the powers and authorities given to yourself. Given under my hand at the city of Washington, this twentieth day of June, 1803.

THOMAS JEFFERSON,
President of the United States of America.

Meriwether Lewis at the Great Falls of the Missouri, 1805

Thursday June 13th 1805.

This morning we set out about sunrise after taking breakfast off our venison and fish. we again ascended the hills of the river and gained the level country, the country through which we passed for the first three miles, the more rol ling than that we had passed yesterday might still with propriety be deemed a level country; our course as yesterday was generally S. W. the river from the place we left it appeared to make a considerable bend to the South. from the extremity of this rolling country I overlooked a most beauti ful and level plain of great extent or at least 50 or sixty miles; in this there were infinitely more buffalo than I had ever before witnessed at a view; nearly in the direction I had been traveling or S. W. two curious mountains presented themselves of square figures, the sides rising perpendicularly to the height of 250 feet and appeared to be formed of yellow clay; their tops appeared to be level plains; these inaccessible hights appeared like the ramparts of immense fortifications; I have no doubt but with very little assistance from art they might be rendered impregnable. fearing that the river boar to the South and that I might pass the falls if they existed between this and the snowey mountains I altered my course nealy to the South leaving those insulated hills to my right and proceeded through the plain; I sent Feels on my right and Drewyer and Gibson on my left with orders to kill some meat and join me at the river where I should halt for dinner. I had proceeded on this course about two miles with Goodrich at some distance behind me when my ears were saluted with the agreeable sound of a fall of water and advancing a little further I saw the spray arrise above the plain like a column of smoke which would frequently dispair again in an instant caused I presume by the wind which blew pretty hard from the S. W. I did not however loose my direction to this point which soon began to make a roaring too tremendous to be mistaken for any cause short of the great falls of the Missouri. here I arrived about 12 O'clock having traveled by estimate about 15 Miles. I hurried down the hill which was about 200 feet high and difficult of access, to gaze on this sublime grand specticle. I took my position on the top of some rocks about 20 feet high opposite the center of the falls. this chain of rocks appear once to have formed a part of those over which the waters tumbled, but in the course of time has been separated from it to the distance of 150 yards lying prarrallel to it and forming a butment against which the water after falling over the precipice beats with great fury; this barrier extends on the right to the perpendicular cliff which forms that board [bound? border?] of the river but to the distance of 120 yards next to the cliff it is but a few feet

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above the level of the water, and here the water in very high tides appears to pass in a channel of 40 yds. next to the higher part of the ledge of rocks; on the left it extends within 80 or ninety yards of the lard. Clift which is also perpendicular; between this abrupt extremity of the ledge of rocks and the perpendicular bluff the whole body of water passes with incredible swiftness. immediately at the cascade the river is about 300 yds. wide; about ninety or a hundred yards of this next the Lard. bluff is a smooth even sheet of water falling over a precipice of at least eighty feet, the remaining part of about 200 yards on my right forms the grandest sight I ever beheld, the height of the fall is the same of the other but the irregular and somewhat projecting rocks below receives the water in its immediate passage down and brakes it into a perfect white foam which assumes a thousand forms in a moment sometimes flying up in jets of sparkling foam to the height of fifteen or twenty feet and are scarcely formed before large roiling bodies of the same beaten and foaming water is thrown over and conceals them. in short the rocks seem to be most happily fixed to present a sheet of the whitest beaten froath for 200 yards in length and about 80 feet perpendicular. the water after descending strikes against the buttment before mentioned or that on which I stand and seems to reverberate and being met by the more impetuous courant they role and swell into half formed billows of great height which rise and again disappear in an instant. this buttment of rock defends a handsome little bottom of about three acres which is diversified and agreeably shaded with some cottonwood trees; in the lower extremity of the bottom there is a very thick grove of the same kind of trees which are small, in this wood there are several Indian lodges formed of sticks. a few small cedar grow near the ledge of rocks where I rest. below the point of these rocks at a small distance the river is divided by a large rock which rises several feet above the water, and extends downwards with the stream for about 20 yards. about a mile before the water arrives at the pitch it descends very rapidly, and is confined on the Lard. side by a perpendicular cliff of about 100 feet, on Stard. side it is also perpendicular for about three hundred yards above the pitch where it is then broken by the discharge of a small ravine, down which the buffaloe have a large beaten road to the water, for it is but in very few places that these animals can obtain water near this place owing to the steep and inaccessible banks. I see several skeletons of the buffaloe lying in the edge of the water near the Stard. bluff which I presume have been swept down by the current and precipitated over this tremendous fall. about 300 yards below me there is another buttment of solid rock with a perpendicular face and about 60 feet high which projects from the Stard. side at right angles to the distance of 134 yds. and terminates the lower part nearly of the bottom before mentioned; there being a passage around the end of this buttment between it and the river of about 20 yards; here the river again assumes its usual width soon spreading to near 300 yards but still continues its rapidity. from the reflection of the sun on the spray or mist which arises from these falls there is a beautifull rainbow produced which adds not a little to the beauty of this majestically grand senery. after weighting this imperfect discription

I again viewed the falls and was so much disgusted with the imperfect idea which it conveyed of the scene that I determined to draw my pen across it and begin again, but then reflected that I could not perhaps succeed better than pening the first impressions of the mind; I wished for the pencil of Salvator Rosa or the pen of Thompson,* that I might be enabled to give to the enlightened world some just idea of this truly magnificent and sublime grand object, which has from the commencement of time been concealed from the view of civilized man; but this was fruitless and vain. I most sincerely regretted that I had not brought a crime obscura** with me by the assistance of which even I could have hoped to have done better but alas this was also out of my reach; I therefore with the assistance of my pen only indevoured to trace some of the stronger features of this scene by the assistance of which and my recollection aided by some able pencil I hope still to give to the world some faint idea of an object which at this moment fills me with such pleasure and astonishment, and which of it's kind I will venture to assert is second to but one in the known world. I retired to the shade of a tree where I determined to fix my camp for the present and dispatch a man in the morning to inform Capt. C. and the party of my success in finding the falls and settle in their minds all further doubts as to the Missouri. the hunters now arrived loaded with excellent buffalo meat and informed me that they had killed three very fat cows about ⅛ of a mile hence. I directed them after they had refreshed themselves to go back and butcher them and bring another load of meat each to our camp determining to employ those who remained with me in drying meat for the party against their arrival. in about 2 hours or at 4 OClock P. M. they set out on this duty, and I walked down the river about three miles to discover if possible some place to which the canoes might arrive or at which they might be drawn on shore in order to be taken by land above the falls; but returned without effecting either of these objects; the river was one continued scene of raptids and cascades which I readily perceived could not be encountered with our canoes, and the Cliffs still retained their perpendicular structure and were from 150 to 200 feet high; in short the river appears here to have worn a channel in the process of time through a solid rock. on my return I found the party at camp; they had butchered the buffalo and brought in some more meat as I had directed. Goodrich had caught half a dozen very fine trout and a number of both species of the white fish. these trout are from sixteen to twenty three inches in length, precisely resemble our mountain or speckled trout in form and the position of their fins, but the specks on these are of a deep black instead of the red or gold colur of those common to the U.’ States. these are furnished long sharp

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* Salvator Rosa, a seventeenth-century Italian landscape painter; generally painted wild, desolate scenes. James Thomson, an eighteenth-century Scottish poet, was a forerunner of the English Romantic movement; his best-known poem was “The Seasons.”

** A camera obscura, basically a box with a lens mounted on one wall, light entering through the lens would project an image on the opposite wall of the dark box, which an artist could then trace, getting an almost photographic image.
teeth on the palate and tongue and have generally a small dash of red on each side behind the front ventral fins; the flesh is of a pale yellowish red, or when in good order, of a rose red.

I am induced to believe that the Brown, the white, and the Grizzly bear of this country are the same species only differing in colour from age or more probably from the same natural cause that many other animals of the same family differ in colour. One of those which we killed yesterday was of a creamcoloured white while the other in company with it was of the common brown or redish brown, which seems to be the most usual colour of them. The white one appeared from its tallons and teeth to be the youngest; it was smaller than the other, and although a monstrous beast we supposed that it had not yet attained its growth and that it was a little upwards of two years old. The young cubs which we have killed have always been of a brownish white, but none of them as white as that we killed yesterday. One other that we killed sometime since which I mentioned sunk under some driftwood and was lost, had a white stripe or list of about eleven inches wide entirely around his body just behind the shoulders, and was much darker than these bear usually are, the grizzly bear we have never yet seen. I have seen their tallons in possession of the Indians and from their form I am persuaded if there is any difference between this species and the brown or white bear it is very inconsiderable. There is no such animal as a black bear in this open country or of that species generally denominated the black bear.

My fare is really sumptuous this evening; buffaloe’s humps, tongues and marrowbones, fine trout parched meal pepper and salt, and a good appetite; the last is not considered the least of the luxuries.

general aspect of the country, except that the isolated knobs and tablelands above alluded to become more frequent and marked, the bluffs by which the valleys of watercourses are bounded present a greater abundance of rocks, stones lie in greater profusion upon the surface, and the soil becomes more sandy and sterile. If, to the character of the above, we add that of an almost complete destitution of wood and (for not more than one thousandth part of the section can be said to possess a timber-growth) we shall have a pretty correct idea of the general aspect of the whole country.

Immediately at the base of the mountains, and also at those of some of the insular table-lands, are situated many remarkable ridges, rising in the form of parapets, to the height of between fifty and one hundred and fifty feet. These appear to have been attached to the neighbouring heights, of which they once constituted a part, but have, at some remote period, been cleft asunder from them by some extraordinary convulsion of nature, which has prostrated them in their present condition.

The rocky strata, of which these ridges are principally composed, and which are exactly similar to those of the insular table-lands, are variously inclined, having various dips, from forty-five to eighty degrees.

Throughout this section of country the surface is occasionally characterized by water-worn pebbles, gravel of granite, gneiss, and quartz, but the predominant characteristic is sand, which in many instances preserved almost to the entire exclusion of vegetable mould. Large tracts are often to be met with, exhibiting scarcely a trace of vegetation. The whole region, as before hinted, is almost entirely destitute of a timber-growth of any description. In some few instances, however, sandy knobs and ridges make their appearance, thickly covered with red cedars of a dwarfish growth. There are also some few tracts clad in a growth of pitch pine and scrubby oaks; but, in general, nothing of vegetation appears upon the uplands but withered grass of a stunted growth, no more than two or three inches high, prickly pears profusely covering extensive tracts, and weeds of a few varieties, which, like the prickly pear, seem to thrive best in the most arid and sterile soil.

In regard to this extensive section of country, I do not hesitate in giving the opinion, that it is almost wholly unfit for cultivation, and of course uninhabitable by a people depending upon agriculture for their subsistence. Although tracts of fertile land considerably extensive are occasionally to be met with, yet the scarcity of wood and water, almost uniformly prevalent, will prove an insuperable obstacle in the way of settling the country. This objection rests not only against the section immediately under consideration, but applies with equal propriety to a much larger portion of the country. Agreeably to the best intelligence that can be had, concerning the country both northward and southward of the section, and especially to the inferences deducible from the account given by Lewis and Clarke of the country situated between the Missouri and the Rocky Mountains above the river Platte, the vast region commencing near the sources of the Sabine, Trinity, Brases, and Colorado, and extending northward to the forty-ninth degree.