

On the 12th, they reached the Grande Coulée. The common supposition relative to this remarkable geological phenomenon is, that it has once been the bed of the Columbia, and this is what would strike every one at its first view; but, on consideration, it is seen that it is much too wide, and that its entrance is nearly choked up by the granite hills, that do not leave sufficient space for the river to flow through. The walls of the Coulée consist of basaltic cliffs, similar to those of the Palisades of the Hudson, seven hundred and ninety-eight feet high; and where it was crossed by the party, it was three miles wide; but, a few miles farther to the south, it narrowed to two miles. Its direction was nearly north and south, for a distance of at least fifteen miles. In places, the cliffs were broken, and appeared as though tributary valleys had been formed, in like manner, with perpendicular walls, though but of short extent. In the northern portion of it were several granite knolls, resembling islands, capped with basalt, and called *Isles des Pierres*. The bottom of the Coulée is a plain, having some irregularities, but in places, for two miles together, to appearance it was perfectly level. There are in it three lakes: one on the top of the west border, another after descending, and a third between two of the granite islands. The last of these was the largest, being about a mile long, but is not more than three hundred feet broad: these lakes have no visible outlets. Although the soil abounded in the same saline efflorescence that had been remarked on the high prairie, yet the lakes were found to be fresh, and wild ducks were seen in great numbers. In other spots, the earth was damp and overgrown with a rank grass, of the same kind as that growing on the prairie. Next to this, the wormwood predominated.

In the level places the earth was much cracked: incrustations were abundant, which, sparkling brilliantly in the sun, gave the plain somewhat the appearance of being covered with water. Specimens of these were procured, the analysis of which will be found in the Geological Report.

The granite islands, above spoken of, were found to be seven hundred and fourteen feet high. Mr. Johnson named the southern one the *Ram's Head*. Dr. Pickering, who visited the north part, found no regularity of structure. All were satisfied, after leaving the Coulée, that it had been the seat of a lake, in the northern branch of which, some convulsion had caused a breach, through which it had discharged itself into the Columbia. If the Columbia had ever flowed through this channel, it must have worn the rocks, but they exhibit no signs of any such abrasion; and yet it seems remarkable, that the Coulée had extended from one point of the river to another, and, with the excep-