

The image shows a close-up of a book cover. The cover is a deep red color with a marbled or textured pattern. The title 'THE JOURNAL OF JULIUS RODMAN' is printed in a serif font, and the author's name 'EDGAR ALLAN POE' is visible at the bottom. In the background, there is a blurred image of a plant with green leaves and yellow flowers, and a bookshelf with other books. The overall lighting is soft and warm.

***EDGAR
ALLAN POE***

***THE JOURNAL
OF JULIUS
RODMAN***

Edgar Allan Poe

The Journal of Julius Rodman

The Story of the First Passage across the Rocky Mountains

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Table of Contents

[Chapter I](#)

[Chapter II](#)

[Chapter III](#)

[Chapter IV](#)

[Chapter V](#)

[Chapter VI](#)

Chapter I

[Table of Contents](#)

What we must consider an unusual piece of good fortune has enabled us to present our readers, under this head, with a narrative of very remarkable character, and certainly of very deep interest. The Journal which follows not only embodies a relation of the first successful attempt to cross the gigantic barriers of that immense chain of mountains which stretches from the Polar Sea in the north, to the Isthmus of Darien in the south, forming a craggy and snow-capped rampart throughout its whole course, but, what is of still greater importance, gives the particulars of a tour, beyond these mountains, through an immense extent of territory, which, at this day, is looked upon as totally untravelled and unknown, and which, in every map of the country to which we can obtain access, is marked as "an unexplored region." It is, moreover, the only unexplored region within the limits of the continent of North America. Such being the case, our friends will know how to pardon us for the slight amount of unction with which we have urged this Journal upon the public attention. For our own parts, we have found, in its perusal, a degree, and a species of interest such as no similar narrative ever inspired. Nor do we think that our relation to these papers, as the channel through which they will be first made known, has had more than a moderate influence in begetting this interest. We feel assured that all our readers will unite with us in thinking the adventures here recorded unusually entertaining and important. The peculiar character of the gentleman who was the leader and soul of the expedition, as well as its historian, has imbued what he has written with a vast deal of romantic fervor, very different from the luke-warm and

statistical air which pervades most records of the kind. Mr. James E. Rodman, from whom we obtained the MS., is well known to many of the readers of this Magazine; and partakes, in some degree, of that temperament which embittered the earlier portion of the life of his grandfather, Mr. Julius Rodman, the writer of the narrative. We allude to an hereditary hypochondria. It was the instigation of this disease which, more than any thing else, led him to attempt the extraordinary journey here detailed. The hunting and trapping designs, of which he speaks himself, in the beginning of his Journal, were, as far as we can perceive, but excuses made to his own reason, for the audacity and novelty of his attempt. There can be no doubt, we think, (and our readers will think with us,) that he was urged solely by a desire to seek, in the bosom of the wilderness, that peace which his peculiar disposition would not suffer him to enjoy among men. He fled to the desert as to a friend. In no other view of the case can we reconcile many points of his record with our ordinary notions of human action.

As we have thought proper to omit two pages of the MS., in which Mr. R. gives some account of his life previous to his departure up the Missouri, it may be as well to state here that he was a native of England, where his relatives were of excellent standing, where he had received a good education, and from which country he emigrated to this, in 1784, (being then about eighteen years of age,) with his father, and two maiden sisters. The family first settled in New York; but afterwards made their way to Kentucky, and established themselves, almost in hermit fashion, on the banks of the Mississippi, near where Mills ' Point now makes into the river. Here old Mr. Rodman died, in the fall of 1790; and, in the ensuing winter, both his daughters perished of the small-pox, within a few weeks of each other. Shortly afterwards, (in the spring of 1791,) Mr. Julius Rodman, the son, set out upon the expedition which forms the subject of the following pages. Returning from this in 1794, as

hereinafter stated, he took up his abode near Abingdon, in Virginia, where he married, and had three children, and where most of his descendants now live.

We are informed by Mr. James Rodman, that his grandfather had merely kept an outline diary of his tour, during the many difficulties of its progress; and that the MSS. with which we have been furnished were not written out in detail, from that diary, until many years afterwards, when the tourist was induced to undertake the task, at the instigation of M. Andre Michau, the botanist, and author of the *Flora Boreali-Americana*, and of the *Histoire des Chênes d'Amerique*. M. Michau, it will be remembered, had made an offer of his services to Mr. Jefferson, when that statesman first contemplated sending an expedition across the Rocky Mountains. He was engaged to prosecute the journey, and had even proceeded on his way as far as Kentucky, when he was overtaken by an order from the French minister, then at Philadelphia, requiring him to relinquish the design, and to pursue elsewhere the botanical inquiries on which he was employed by his government. The contemplated undertaking then fell into the hands of Messieurs Lewis and Clarke, by whom it was successfully accomplished.

The MS. when completed, however, never reached M. Michau, for whose inspection it had been drawn up; and was always supposed to have been lost on the road by the young man to whom it was entrusted for delivery at M. M.'s temporary residence, near Monticello. Scarcely any attempt was made to recover the papers; Mr. Rodman's peculiar disposition leading him to take but little interest in the search. Indeed, strange as it may appear, we doubt, from what we are told of him, whether he would have ever taken any step to make public the results of his most extraordinary tour; we think that his only object in retouching his original Diary was to oblige M. Michau. Even Mr. Jefferson's exploring project, a project which, at the time it was broached, excited almost universal comment, and

was considered a perfect novelty, drew from the hero of our narrative, only a few general observations, addressed to the members of his family. He never made his own journey a subject of conversation; seeming, rather, to avoid the topic. He died before the return of Lewis and Clarke; and the Diary, which had been given into the hands of the messenger for delivery to M. Michau, was found, about three months ago, in a secret drawer of a bureau which had belonged to Mr. Julius R. We do not learn by whom it was placed there — Mr. R.'s relatives all exonerate him from the suspicion of having secreted it; but, without intending any disrespect to the memory of that gentleman, or to Mr. James Rodman, (to whom we feel under especial obligation,) we cannot help thinking that the supposition of the narrator's having, by some means, procured the package from the messenger, and concealed it where it was discovered, is very reasonable, and not at all out of keeping with the character of that morbid sensibility which distinguished the individual.

We did not wish, by any means, to alter the manner of Mr. Rodman's narration, and have, therefore, taken very few liberties with the MS., and these few only in the way of abridgment. The style, indeed, could scarcely be improved — it is simple and very effective; giving evidence of the deep delight with which the traveller revelled in the majestic novelties through which he passed, day after day. There is a species of affectionateness which pervades his account, even of the severest hardships and dangers, which lets us at once into the man's whole idiosyncrasy. He was possessed with a burning love of Nature; and worshipped her, perhaps, more in her dreary and savage aspects, than in her manifestations of placidity and joy. He stalked through that immense and often terrible wilderness with an evident rapture at his heart which we envy him as we read. He was, indeed, the man to journey amid all that solemn desolation which he, plainly, so loved to depict. His was the proper

spirit to perceive; his the true ability to feel. We look, therefore, upon his MS. as a rich treasure — in its way absolutely unsurpassed — indeed, never equalled.

That the events of this narrative have hitherto lain perdus; that even the fact of the Rocky Mountains having been crossed by Mr. Rodman prior to the expedition of Lewis and Clarke, has never been made public, or at all alluded to in the works of any writer on American geography, (for it certainly never has been thus alluded to, as far as we can ascertain,) must be regarded as very remarkable — indeed, as exceedingly strange. The only reference to the journey at all, of which we can hear in any direction, is said to be contained in an unpublished letter of M. Michau's, in the possession of Mr. W. Wyatt, of Charlottesville, Virginia. It is there spoken of in a casual way, and collaterally, as “a gigantic idea wonderfully carried out.” If there has been any farther allusion to the journey, we know nothing of it.

Before entering upon Mr. Rodman's own relation, it will not be improper to glance at what has been done by others, in the way of discovery, upon the North-Western portion of our continent. If the reader will turn to a map of North America, he will be better enabled to follow us in our observations.

It will be seen that the continent extends from the Arctic ocean, or from about the 70th parallel of north latitude, to the 9th; and from the 56th meridian west of Greenwich, to the 168th. The whole of this immense extent of territory has been visited by civilized man, in a greater or less degree; and indeed a very large portion of it has been permanently settled. But there is an exceedingly wide tract which is still marked upon all our maps as unexplored, and which, until this day, has always been so considered. This tract lies within the 60th parallel on the south, the Arctic Ocean on the north, the Rocky Mountains on the west, and the possessions of Russia on the east. To Mr. Rodman, however, belongs the honor of having traversed this singularly wild