

upon the straight line of 38° and 39°." It probably did not seem such a "safe and easy" thing to the starving and half-frozen men during those fifty days of anguish. At last, after they had

lie in large measure through the country explored by Frémont, sometimes in the very lines he followed; and this is equally true of the highways



INDEPENDENCE ROCK, SWEETWATER RIVER.

been forty-eight hours without a morsel of food, relief came to the party.

Something of the practical value of these explorations may be inferred from the fact that the great railroads connecting East and West

The winter of this last exploration was exceptionally severe; and since the point Frémont wished to demonstrate was the practicability of this route in winter, the season was peculiarly favorable.

M. N. O.

THE ORIGIN OF THE FRÉMONT EXPLORATIONS.

LONG before the words carried their meaning I was familiar with "Oregon occupation" and the "India trade." They connected themselves with big English law-books in my father's library, whose Hogarth-like pictures were a delight to my childhood when there were no picture-books made for children. Many a pleased hour I puzzled over these in that sunny library where I was free to come on condition that I would be "as quiet as a mouse." One of these illustrations, together with my father's many and patient explanations tempered to a child's mind, gave me some ideas which have never faded, but, emerging from childish imaginings and confusings, became strangely interwoven into the very substance of my real life. This favorite picture was that scene of which Macaulay has made so vivid a word-painting, the "Impeachment of Warren Hastings." It became an endless theme between my father and myself, and through it from him

came my earliest impressions of India and Oriental life, and of England's power — her love of justice as well as her love of gain; her daring conquests, and her crushing mastery of a race that were to me then the people of the Arabian Nights, only more warlike, and more splendid. The peacock throne of gold and gems seemed as real to me as the living peacocks that at sunset spread their feathers and screamed on the lawn at my grandfather's house in Virginia. And on the long gallery of our own home in St. Louis, where in the pleasant way of the old French town much life went on in the open air, again England was a household theme. For the British Fur Company, its enmity to the American Fur Company, its harassing opposition to Americans settling in Oregon, were matters of personal interest and necessary consideration to those meeting there.

Chief of the unusual figures frequenting that tree-shaded gallery was the stately and venerable General William Clark, who was ending his



THOMAS H. BENTON.
(FROM A LITHOGRAPH BY LEHMAN & DUVAL, AFTER A DRAWING BY C. FENDERICH,
OWNED BY GENERAL E. F. BEALE.)

honorable days in St. Louis, where he held superintendency over all the Indians of the West. He who had first explored the Columbia to the Pacific, and carried through Jefferson's once defeated plan, was, of right, chief of this informal council. There met the heads of the fur trade—the many Chouteaus, and Ramsay Crooks, who brought Washington Irving when he was collecting material for his "Astoria." At times came picturesque Mexican merchants in gold-embroidered velvet riding dress and great ringing silver spurs; waiting under the shade of our old trees were their horses glittering with silver-mounted saddles and trappings. Nobody walked. There waited also horses with military saddles belonging to officers up from Jefferson Barracks, their riders, in well-worn uniforms and with thinned, sunburned faces, freshly in from prairie chase and sharp skirmish with Black Hawk and his turbulent Indians—these too kept in enmity by the opposing British Fur Company. Black-robed Italian and Belgian dignitaries of the Catholic Church, keeping to their traditions as pioneer travelers, would bring some humble, devoted missionary priest who had his tale to tell and his valuable addition to make to the little known geography of plain and mountain.

Wiry French *voyageurs* in their fringed buckskins, keen-witted and light of heart; and wealthy citizens, Spanish, French, and American, interested in the trade which, crossing Mexico, stretched to the "Sea of Cortez," as the Gulf of California was still called, met there in council, all animated by a common purpose to free our way westward.

Year after year this small but forceful council met with my father in the vacations of Congress, and he carried up to their friends in Washington the knowledge gained among them as an impelling force towards our more energetic occupation of Oregon. In this interest he had visited Mr. Jefferson in his mountain home in Virginia, and gained deeper insight and further purpose from the mind to which we owe our expansion westward.

When in 1840 there came to Washington M. Nicollet, a French *savant* and traveler, and Mr. Frémont, who had been with him on the northwestern geographical surveys, it was of keenest interest to my father to know them, and to follow their travels on their maps in course of construction. This resulted in Mr. Frémont's becoming a part in his long-cherished work for the occupation of Oregon. Now, to his own accumulated knowledge and

the increasing public interest and political reasons, could be joined the experience and love of adventurous travel, the youth and proved endurance, such as Jefferson so long before had secured for Oregon exploration in the traveler Ledyard. And to this was soon added personal and family identity in work and aim, for I by my marriage had become their connecting link.

It would have needed only a request from my father to obtain for Mr. Frémont duty which should keep him in Washington in place of the long absences and dangers of these expeditions; but self-renunciation lies at the root of great work, and this was to be my part in being of use to my father; so that it was but a few months after my marriage that the first of the planned series of expeditions (that of 1842) was in the field. As that proved successful and of sudden and large interest to the country, the second (that of 1843-44) was started off without delay.

The winter of 1842-43 had been used to make out the maps and write the report. In this I was secretary and amanuensis, and had full knowledge of the large scope and national importance of these journeys—a knowledge as yet strictly confined to the few carrying out their aim. Even to the Secretary of War, and to Mr. Frémont's immediate commander, the colonel of the Topographical Engineers, they were only geographical surveys to determine lines of travel. This, the second, was to connect with the survey of the bay of San Francisco made by Captain Wilkes, U. S. N.

President Harrison, being both a Western man and a soldier, would have been friendly to their larger aim, but his death reversed this. Events justified the wisdom of silence until the

fast-coming hour. War with Mexico was nearing, and in that event the ownership of the bay of San Francisco would be open to the chances of war.

In the month of March, 1843, I accompanied Mr. Frémont to St. Louis, where the second expedition was fitted out; that through, he left for the frontier, where the men and animals were gathered. Following out my duty of secretary, I was to open the mail and forward to the camp at Kaw Landing, now Kansas City, all that in my judgment required Mr. Frémont's attention. One day there came for him an official letter from his colonel, the chief of the Topographical Bureau: it was an order recalling him to Washington, whither he was directed to return and explain why he had armed his party with a howitzer; saying that it was a scientific, not a military expedition, and should not have been so armed. I saw at once that this would make delays which would involve the overthrow of great plans, and I felt there was a hidden hand at work. Fortunately my father was absent from St. Louis, and I could act on my instinct. Without telling any one of the order I put it away and hurried off a messenger to Mr. Frémont—one of his men, Basil Lajeunesse, who was to join him with the last things. I feared a duplicate letter might have been sent on to the frontier; but the river mail was very irregular and slow, and I charged Basil to make all haste, for much depended on that letter. I wrote Mr. Frémont that he *must not ask why*, but must start at once, ready or not ready. The animals could rest and fatten at Bent's Fort. "Only go." There was a reason, but he could not know it; my father would take care of everything. And as we acted together unquestioningly, he did go immediately.



AMERICAN, MEXICAN, AND FRENCH PIONEER TYPES.



JESSIE BENTON (MRS. FRÉMONT). (FROM THE MINIATURE ON IVORY BY DODGE.)

We were in that older time when there was no telegraph to paralyze individuality. Else the grand plan with its gathered strength and fullness, ripening and expanding from Jefferson's time to now, almost its culminating hour, would have fallen before petty official routine. I suspected some obscure intrigue, such as had recalled the young traveler Ledyard when he had already crossed Russia into Siberia in carrying out the design of Mr. Jefferson, then minister to France, for opening up the Columbia River—an intrigue that had thus balked and overthrown the foresight of Jefferson, the friendly assistance of the Empress Catherine, and the energetic ambition of Ledyard. It was now my happy privilege to be of use in counteracting a like evil interference. With the distance and the slow mails between the frontier and Washington I could count on gaining time enough for a good start for the party.

Not until after I received the good-by let-

ter did I write in answer to his colonel who had sent the order of recall. Then I wrote him exactly what I had done: that I had not sent forward the order because it was given on insufficient knowledge, and to obey it would break up the expedition; that the journeys to and from Washington, with indefinite delays there, would lose to the animals the best season for grass and throw them, underfed, into the mountains in winter; that the country of the Blackfeet and other fierce tribes had to be crossed, and that Indians knew nothing of the rights of science, but fought all whites; that these tribes were in number and the party not fifty men, therefore the howitzer was necessary; that as I knew a military order must be obeyed, I had not let it be known to any one, but had hurried off the party.

When my father returned he entirely approved of my wrong-doing, and wrote to the



GEORGE BANCROFT. (FROM A DAGUERRETYPE.)

Secretary of War that he would be responsible for my act, and that he would call for a court martial on the point charged against Mr. Frémont. But there was never any further question of the wisdom of his arming the party sufficiently. In fact it had been but a pretext, for which the colonel, a quiet man, had been used. I had so grown into my father's purpose that now, when my husband could be of such large aid to its accomplishment, I had no hesitation in risking for him all consequences. Upon this second expedition hinged great results. It made California known in a way which roused and enlisted our people and led directly to its being acquired during the third expedition (that of 1845-47), and this time there were no "foes in the rear."

With the election of President Polk the way was made free to western expansion, and his having for Secretary of the Navy the historian Bancroft was of determining advantage. Then my father could say in that Senate

where so long ago his voice had plead to dull ears for attention to our Pacific coast, "Now we own the country from sea to sea,—from the Atlantic to the Pacific,—and upon a breadth equal to the length of the Mississippi and embracing the whole temperate zone." From his own hearth had gone the one who carried his hopes to fullest execution and aided to make true his prophetic words, afterward cut into the pedestal of his statue in St. Louis, whose bronze hand points west—

THERE IS THE EAST,
THERE IS THE ROAD TO INDIA.

And the venerable historian who had such deciding part in acquiring California has seen the fulfilment of his large views. His strong, quiet words, the utterance of his eighty-sixth year, are a résumé of the whole and give to this episode of our national history the force of a benediction :

NEWPORT, R. I., 2d July, 1886.

MY DEAR FRIENDS: I have just received the first of your joint tribute to Benton and the path to Oregon. I remember the days when the eyes of the world were turned towards the bold adventurer who was to demonstrate that Oregon can be reached by a mid-winter journey as well as by a trip through the wilderness in summer; and when Benton predicted in the Senate, in the lecture-room, in all companies, the ease with which the East and the Pacific shore could meet together; and the consequent changes in the affairs of the world.

It had been my desire to acquire California by all honorable means much before that time [1846].

I look upon the acquisition of California by ourselves as the decisive point in the perfect establishment of the Union on a foundation that cannot be moved. Up to that time the division was between North and South. From that moment all division,

if there was one, was between the North, Center, and West against the South. Now that we have got rid of slavery, it seems to me that all distinction between North and South has vanished. But the acquisition of California, making our country the highway between Europe and Asia and establishing domestic free trade through our almost boundless territory, promises to our institutions and our Union perpetuity.

Best regards to Mrs. Frémont. Ever yours,
GEORGE BANCROFT.

Rarely does life offer such opportunities; more seldom still do men, each specially fitted to his part, combine to carry out such noble, enduring work — work which time has proved good. And the remembering people feel the truth, "Though the pathfinders die, the paths remain open."

Jessie Benton Frémont.

ROUGH TIMES IN ROUGH PLACES.

A PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF THE TERRIBLE EXPERIENCES OF FRÉMONT'S FOURTH EXPEDITION.

[The earlier explorations of Frémont through the Rocky Mountains and into California—those of 1842, 1843, and 1845—were made under the direction and at the expense of the United States Government, and of these we have full reports. Far less is known of the fourth expedition, which he made in 1848-49, at private expense.

The following article is made up of the records and diary of a member of the party, left at his death, and never before published. It is sent to THE CENTURY by his brother, Mr. C. G. McGehee, of Woodville, Mississippi.

As far as Pueblo, on the Arkansas River, at the entrance to the Rocky Mountains, this party followed very nearly the same line taken by the expedition of 1844, which in the main follows the present route of railway travel on the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé line. The experiences of the party in their slow progress over the plains—their encounters with Indians, buffaloes, elk, antelopes, and wild horses—are not unique, and will, therefore, be omitted. We take up the diary where the old trail is left and the party plunges into the unknown mazes of the Rockies under the guidance of one of the trappers, named Bill Williams,—of a type which has long passed out of existence,—and who is thus described:]



BILL WILLIAMS was the most successful trapper in the mountains, and the best acquainted with the ways and habits of the wild tribes among and near whom he spent his adventurous life. He first came to the West as a sort of missionary to the Osages. But "Old Bill" laid aside his Christianity and took up his rifle and

came to the mountains. He was full of oddities in appearance, manner, conversation, and actions. He generally went out alone into the mountains, and would remain there trapping by himself for several months together, his lonely camps being often pitched in the vicinity of hostile savages. But he was as well versed in stratagem as they, and though he bore the marks of balls and arrows, he was a terror to them in single fight. He had ingratiated himself into the favor of several tribes; he had two or three squaws among the Utahs, and spoke their language and also that of several other tribes.

He was a dead shot with a rifle, though he always shot with a "double wabble"; he never could hold his gun still, yet his ball went always to the spot on a single shot. Though a most indefatigable walker, he never could walk on a straight line, but went staggering along, first on one side and then the other. He was an expert horseman; scarce a horse or mule could unseat him. He rode leaning forward upon the pommel, with his rifle before him, his stirrups ridiculously short, and his breeches rubbed up to his knees, leaving his legs bare even in freezing cold weather. He wore a loose monkey-jacket or a buckskin hunting-shirt, and for his head-covering a blanket-cap, the two top corners drawn up into two wolfish, satyr-like ears, giving him somewhat the appearance of the representations we generally meet with of his Satanic Majesty, at the same time rendering his *tout ensemble*