

P R E F A C E .

In sending out the following sheets, the Author has done what a year ago was as far removed from the path of his intentions, as the theatre of the incidents related is from the fireside at which they were written. But who can estimate the force of circumstances in shaping his destiny?

I wrote my *Travels in the Great Western Prairies, &c.*, with little belief that they would excite any attention beyond the circle in which personal friendship would in some sense link the reader with the events narrated. I did not comprehend the extensive interest felt in journeyings over the wild and barren realms of uncultivated Nature. I did not suppose that the dim outline which words could give of the snow-clad peak, the desert vale, and the trials and dangers which crowd about the pilgrim on the Western Deserts and Mountains, could be made sufficiently distinct to convey even a satisfactory shadow of their sublime, fearful nature. But the very unexpected favor with which that work has been received, has led me to conclude that such matters, related as far as they may be at all, with fidelity, are valued as useful knowledge. Indeed, we may learn much from the pulseless solitudes—from the desert untrodden by the foot of living thing—from the frozen world of mountains, whose chasms and cliffs never echoed to aught, but the thunder-tempests girding their frozen peaks—from old Nature, piled, rocky, bladeless, toneless—if we will allow its lessons of awe to reach the mind, and impress it with the fresh and holy images which they were made to inspire.

The work now presented is another attempt of the same kind. It differs from the previous one, however, in many particulars. The Great South Sea, the Hawaiian Islands, and the Californias are its