

the command of this new expedition was confided to Lieutenant FREMONT, who had manifested great zeal, intelligence, and aptitude for such an employment, during his services as assistant to Mr. NICOLLET.

The following narrative will sufficiently manifest Lieutenant FREMONT's worthiness of the trust reposed in him during this and the succeeding expedition. As evidence of the estimate which Government has placed upon his services and labors, it may be here stated, that the President, by and with the consent of the Senate, in March last, bestowed upon Lieutenant FREMONT the brevet commission of Captain, advancing him two grades at the same time—a rare compliment, but one which, we believe, all will unite with us in saying, was well earned and richly deserved.

The publisher thinks that this brief outline of what had been done towards the exploring the Western wilds, previous to the expeditions of Captain FREMONT, will not be uninteresting to the public. He acknowledges his indebtedness for the materials to a communication which appeared in "*The Union*" a few weeks since, and which bears the marks of official correctness.

Captain FREMONT's labors have added much to our previous information in a geographical, commercial, and scientific point of view. The following extract from a review of his "reports," which appeared in the "*National Intelligencer*" during the last month, will prepare the reader for the full development made in the following pages.

"In geographical discovery Captain FREMONT has done much. He has shown that the transit across the Rocky mountains, particularly at the Southern Pass, is comparatively easy; that the proportion of absolutely barren country is small; that, from within one hundred and fifty miles of the Missouri frontier to the longitude of Fort Laramie, (105° 40') there is in general great plenty of the short curly grass called buffalo grass. Westward of Laramie, for a considerable distance, the region is sandy and apparently sterile, and the place of the grass is usurped by the artemisia; other localities, where there is a deficiency of pasturage, are found on both sides of the mountains. These expeditions, however, will furnish to trading caravans, or to emigrating parties, a knowledge of the most practicable routes, where they may most generally find sustenance for their animals, and water and fuel for themselves. The road to Oregon will be made comparatively easy; and although the emigrant who contemplates taking up his line of march to that distant region ought to be apprized of, and guarded against, *the dangers, the difficulties, and the perils which he will have to encounter*, yet he may be cheered by the certainty that he will meet with nothing but what foresight and prudence may in a great measure protect him from, and courage, firmness, and perseverance overcome. He will be called upon to exercise all these qualities; and the most dangerous error into which he can fall is to imagine that the journey is an easy one, and the toil and suffering which he will have to undergo trifling and unimportant.

"The Great Salt Lake, the Bear River Valley, and the rivers, the valleys, and the mountains of Upper California, may be said to be now first brought to the knowledge of civilized man by these expeditions. The correction of our former geographical errors with respect to the river *Buenaventura* we owe to Captain FREMONT; the existence of a great central plain or basin in California is established by him, as is also the important fact that there is no river of any navigable size which has its outlet directly into the Pacific, and communicates with the western slope of our continent, except the Columbia, between fifty degrees of northern latitude and the Gulf of California. In a military point of view, these expeditions point out where forts and posts may be most advantageously established, with a view to the safe occupancy of the country and the protection of the inhabitant, and the trader from Indian outrage, or from aggressions or interferences of any kind. This, we believe, was the professedly authorized object of Captain Fremont's expeditions; but his ardent and active temperament, and his love of science and knowledge, could not rest satisfied with a bare performance of prescribed duties. He has submitted to his countrymen and the world, in his unpretending and modest narrative, a vast body of botanical, geological, and meteorological information. The soil and the mineral waters have been subjected to analysis. More than four hundred and thirty astronomical observations are recorded, the latitude and longitude of important points accurately determined, and the elevation of mountains ascertained. The survey of Captain FREMONT from the eastward meets that of Captain WILKES from the westward, and, so far as is requisite for all immediate practical purposes, the map of Oregon is complete."

One great merit of Captain FREMONT as a traveller is expressed in the concluding sentence of his prefatory notice. He says:

"The report, or narrative, of this extended expedition, like the maps which illustrate it, will be strictly confined to what was seen, and to what is necessary to show the face and character of the country, and to add something to science while fulfilling the instructions of the Government, which