



COLONEL JOHN C. FREMONT.



HE services of Colonel Fremont in his celebrated expedition to Oregon, are too well known to require recapitulation here, and his exploits in California have already been narrated. We propose merely to give in this connection some illustrations of his character, and to express a hope that the result of a court-martial, before which he is now being tried, at Washington, for alleged offences, growing out of the dispute between Commodore Stockton and General Kearny, may not change his pursuit in life.

Pico, the brother of the governor of California, had been dismissed by the Americans on parole, and was recaptured in the act of breaking it. He was condemned by court-martial to death, and twelve o'clock was the hour fixed for his execution. The soldiers were clamorous for his death as a traitor, but the gallant colonel could not bear the thought of killing an enemy in any

other way than on the battle-field, and he was meditating upon the matter with a heavy heart, when a company of ladies and children was led into the room, and on their knees begged the life of a husband and a father. The question was settled. Humanity triumphed over discipline and the laws of war. He raised the mother and exclaimed, "he is pardoned," and sent for the prisoner that he might learn his fate from the happy faces of his friends. He was overpowered with emotion. He had learned his fate with all the pride and dignity of a Spaniard, but he could not bear the news of pardon. He threw himself at the colonel's feet, swore eternal fidelity, and begged the privilege of fighting and dying for him. How firm a friend he has since been may be apparent from the subjoined account of Colonel Fremont's ride, taken from the National Intelligencer. They passed over eight hundred miles in eight days, including two days detention and all stoppages. Don Pico is called by his Christian name Jesus, pronounced *Haisoos*.

"It was daybreak on the morning of the 22d of March, that the party set out from la Ciudad de los Angeles (the city of the Angels,) in the southern part of Upper California, to proceed in the shortest time to Monterey, on the Pacific ocean, distant full four hundred miles. The way is over a mountainous country, much of it uninhabited, with no other road than a trace, and many defiles to pass, particularly the maritime defile of El Rincon, or Punto Gordo, fifteen miles in extent, made by the jutting of a precipitous mountain into the sea, which can only be passed when the tide is out, and the sea calm, and even then in many places through the waves

The towns of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo and occasional ranchos, are the principal inhabited places on the route. Each of the party had three horses, nine in all, to take their turns under the saddle. The six loose horses ran ahead without bridle or halter, and required some attention to keep to the track.

When wanted for a change, say at distances of twenty miles, they were caught by the *lasso*, thrown either by Don Jesus or the servant Jacob, who, though born and raised in Washington, in his long expeditions with Colonel Fremont had become as expert as a Mexican with the lasso, as sure as a mountaineer with the rifle, equal to either on horse or foot, and always a lad of courage and fidelity. None of the horses were shod, that being a practice unknown to the Californians. The most usual gait was a sweeping gallop. The first day they rode one hundred and twenty-five miles, passing the San Fernando mountain, the defile of the Rincon, several other mountains, and slept at the hospitable rancho of Don Tomas Robberis, beyond the town of Santa Barbara. The only fatigue complained of in this day's ride was in Jacob's right arm, made tired by throwing the lasso and using it as a whip to keep the loose horses to the track.

The next day they made another one hundred and twenty-five miles, passing the formidable mountain of Santa Barbara, and counting upon it the skeletons of some fifty horses, part of near double that number which perished in the crossing of that terrible mountain by the California battalion on Christmas day, 1846, amidst a raging tempest, and a deluge of rain and cold more killing than that of the Sierra Nevada—the day of severest suffering, say Fremont and his men, that they have ever

passed. At sunset the party stopped to sup with the friendly Captain Dana, and at nine San Luis Obispo was reached, the home of Don Jesus, where an affecting reception awaited Lieutenant-Colonel Fremont, in consequence of an incident which occurred there, that history will one day record;* and he was detained till eleven o'clock in the morning receiving the visits of the inhabitants, (mothers and children included,) taking a breakfast of honour, and waiting for a relief of fresh horses to be brought in from the surrounding country.

Here the nine horses from los Angeles were left and eight others taken in their places, and a Spanish boy added to the party to assist in managing the loose horses. Proceeding at the usual gait till eight at night, and having made some seventy miles, Don Jesus, who had spent the night before with his family and friends, and probably with but little sleep, became fatigued, and proposed a halt for a few hours. It was in the valley of the Salinas, (Salt river, called *Buena Ventura* in the old maps,) and the haunt of marauding Indians. For safety during their repose, the party turned off the trace issued through a *canada* into a thick wood, and lay down, the horses being put to grass at a short distance with the Spanish boy in the saddle to watch. Sleep, when commenced, was too sweet to be easily given up, and it was half way between midnight and day when the sleepers were aroused by an *estampedo* among the horses and the calls of the boy.

The cause of the alarm was soon found, not Indians, but white bears—this valley being their great resort,

* The pardon narrated before.

having encountered them in great numbers the preceding year. The character of these bears is well known, and the bravest hunters do not like to meet them without the advantage of numbers. On discovering the enemy, Colonel Fremont felt for his pistols, but Don Jesus desired him to lie still, saying that "people could scare bears," and immediately he halloed at them in Spanish, and they went off. Sleep went off also, and the recovery of the horses frightened by the bears, building a rousing fire, making a breakfast from the hospitable supplies of San Luis Obispo, occupied the party till daybreak, when the journey was resumed. Eighty miles, and the afternoon brought the party to Monterey.

The next day, in the afternoon, the party set out on their return, and the two horses ridden by Colonel Fremont from San Luis Obispo, being a present to him from Don Jesus, he (Don Jesus) desired to make an experiment of what one of them could do. They were brothers, one a grass younger than the other, both of the same colour, (cinnamon,) and hence called *el canal* or *los canales*, (the cinnamon, or the cinnamons.) The elder brother was taken for the trial, and the journey commenced upon him at leaving Monterey, the afternoon well advanced. Thirty miles under the saddle done that evening, and the party stopped for the night. In the morning the elder *canalo* was again under the saddle for Colonel Fremont, and for ninety miles he carried him without a change, and without apparent fatigue. It was still thirty miles to San Luis Obispo, where the night was to be passed, and Don Jesus insisted that *canalo* could easily do it, and so said the horse by

his looks and action. But Colonel Fremont would not put him to the trial, and, shifting the saddle to the younger brother, the elder was turned loose to run the remaining thirty miles without a rider.

He did so, immediately taking the lead and keeping it all the way, and entering San Luis in a sweeping gallop, nostrils distended, snuffing the air and neighing with exultation of his return to his native pastures, his younger brother all the while running at the head of the horses under the saddle, bearing on his bit, and held in by his rider. The whole eight horses made their one hundred and twenty miles each that day, (after thirty the evening before,) the elder cinnamon making ninety of his under the saddle that day, besides thirty under the saddle the evening before; nor was there the least doubt that he would have done the whole distance in the same time if he had continued under the saddle.

After a hospitable detention of another half day at San Luis Obispo, the party set out for Los Angeles on the same nine horses which they had ridden from that place, and made the ride back in about the same time they had made it up, namely at the rate of one hundred and twenty-five miles a day."