

On they came—those Northern horsemen—on like eagles toward the sun,
Followed then the Northern bayonet, and the field was lost and won.

Rio Bravo! Rio Bravo! minstrel ne'er sung such a fight,
Since the lay of Roncesvalles sang the fame of martyred knight.

IV.

Rio Bravo! fatal river! saw ye not while red with gore,
One cavalier all headless quiver, a headless trunk upon thy shore!

Other champions not less noted, sleep beneath thy sullen wave,
Sullen water, thou has floated armies to an ocean grave.—
Rio Bravo! Rio Bravo! lady ne'er wept such a sight,
Since the moon of Roncesvalles kiss'd in death her own loved knight.

V.

Weepest thou, lorn lady Inez, for thy lover 'mid the slain?
Brave La Vega's trenchant sabre cleft his slayer to the brain.
Brave La Vega, who all lonely, by a host of foes beset,
Yielded up his falchion only, when his equal there he met.
Oh! for Roland's horn to rally his Paladins by that sad shore!
Rio Bravo, Roncesvalles, ye are names linked ever more.

VI.

Sullen river! sullen river! vultures drink thy gory wave,
But they blur not those loved features, which not Love himself could save.

Rio Bravo, thou wilt name not that lone corse upon thy shore,
But in prayer sad Inez names him, names him praying evermore.

Rio Bravo! Rio Bravo! lady ne'er mourned such a knight,
Since the fondest hearts were broken by the Roncesvalles fight.

KIT CARSON.

ONE of the most remarkable characters in Fremont's expedition is "Kit Carson," lately made a lieutenant by the President. The following description of him, though rather long, we insert, because it not only gives a very satisfactory view of the expedition itself, but may be considered a type of each of the hardy adventurers who conducted it.

"This singular man left Washington this morning, in company with Mrs. Fremont, for the West. On entering the War Office yesterday, we were asked: 'Have you seen Kit Carson? He has this moment left my room; and a singular and striking man he is! Modest as he is brave, with the fire of enterprise in his eye—with the bearing of an Indian, walking even with his toes turned in—I wish you could have seen him.' We were so unfortunate as to miss him, though our curiosity was greatly excited; but, in the course of two hours, a gentleman who had seen much of Carson, waited upon us and politely furnished us with the following description of this singular man. The portrait is admirably drawn, and it gives us great pleasure to lay it before our readers. It is the character of one of those bold and enterprising spirits of the West, whom the peculiar influences of the frontier settlements—between the white man and the red man—are so well calculated to produce. Carson, however, is a master spirit, whose habits we like to understand, and whose adventures we delight to hear.

"Kit Carson, within a few years, has become quite

familiar to the public, mainly through his connection with the expeditions of Fremont, one of the best of those noble and original characters that have from time to time sprung up on and beyond our frontier, retreating with it to the West, and drawing from association with uncultivated nature, not the rudeness and sensualism of the savage, but genuine simplicity and truthfulness of disposition, and generosity, bravery, and single-heartedness, to a degree rarely found in society. Although Kit has only become known to the reading people of 'the States' and of Europe through Fremont's reports, he was long ago famous in a world as extended, if not as populous; famous for excelling in all the qualities that life in the trackless and vast West requires and develops. He has been celebrated (though now aged only 37 years) as a hunter, trapper, guide or pilot of the prairies, and Indian fighter, uniting to the necessary characteristics of that adventurous and sturdy class, a kindness of heart and gentleness of manner that relieves it of any possible harshness or asperity. He is now in 'the States,' having recently arrived with despatches from California; and I have taken the opportunity to extract from him a few incidents of his eventful life. He is worthy of an honorable and more extended memoir; and were his adventures fully written out, they would possess an interest equal to any personal narrative whatever.

"Christopher Carson was born in Kentucky, in the year 1810, or 1811, his father having been one of the early settlers, and also a noted hunter and Indian fighter. In the year following Kit's birth, the family removed, for the sake of more elbow-room than the advancing popula-

tion of Kentucky left them, to the territory of Missouri. On this frontier, bred to border life, Kit remained to the age of fifteen, when he joined a trading party to Santa Fé. This was his introduction to those vast plains that stretch beyond the state of Missouri. Instead of returning home, Kit found his way, by various adventures, south, through New Mexico, to the copper mines of Chihuahua, where he was employed some months as a teamster.

"When about seventeen years old, he made his first expedition as a trapper. This was with a party which had been induced, by favorable accounts of fresh trapping grounds on the Rio Colorado of California, to an adventure thither; so that Kit's first exploits were in the same remote and romantic region where, during the last year, he and all his comrades, with their commander, have earned imperishable honor. The enterprise was successful, and Kit relates many interesting anecdotes of the hardships of the wilderness, and of the encounters of his party with the Indians. The Mexican authorities and settlers in California were even at that time jealous of the Americans, and threatened to seize even this inoffensive and roving party of beaver-catchers. They made good their return, however, to Taos, in New Mexico; whence, soon after, Kit joined a trapping party to the head-waters of the Arkansas (likewise a region embraced, since the last published expedition, in the surveys of Col. Fremont). Without recrossing the prairies, Kit went northward to the region of the Rocky Mountains that gives rise to the Missouri and Columbia rivers, and there remained near eight years, engaged in the then important occupation of trapping. The great demand for

the beaver, and the consequent high prices at that time paid for the peltries, gave an additional stimulus to the adventurous spirit of the young men of the West; and drew nearly all who preferred the excitements and hazards of life in the wilderness to quieter pursuits, into the recesses of the Rocky Mountains.

"Here a peculiar class was formed; the elements, the sturdy, enterprising, and uncurbed character of the frontier; the circumstances that influenced and formed it, nature in her wildest, roughest, and grandest aspects—savages, both as associates and foes, of every cast, from the wretched Root-diggers to the vindictive Black-feet, and the courageous and warlike Crows—and a vocation of constant labor, privation, and peril in every shape, yet of gains of a nature and degree to give it somewhat of the characteristics of gambling.* The decrease of the beaver before a pursuit of the poor animal so ruthless as was thus stimulated, and the substitution of other commodities for the beaver fur, have left trapping scarcely worth following as a vocation; and the race of trappers has nearly disappeared from the mountain gorges, where they built their rude lodges, where they set their traps for the wily beaver, and where were their frequent combats with the savages, and with wild beasts

* Six dollars was the price paid to the trapper, at that time, for a beaver skin—and a good backwoodsman would secure from four to seven beavers of a night; so that, notwithstanding the exorbitant charges of the companies for every necessary or luxury furnished to the trappers, (for example, twenty dollars for a blanket, two dollars for a tin-cup full of brown sugar, and the same for the same measure of coffee,) the trappers were still incited by the frequent receipt of such sums as gave additional zest and fascination to the pursuit.

not less formidable. In the school of men thus formed by hardship, exposure, peril, and temptation, our hero acquired all their virtues and escaped their vices. He became noted through the extent of the trapping-grounds, and on both sides of the Rocky Mountains, as a successful trapper, an unflinching shot, an unerring guide, and for bravery, sagacity, and steadiness in all circumstances. He was chosen to lead in almost all enterprises of unusual danger, and in all attacks on the Indians. At one time, with a party of twelve, he tracked a band of near sixty Crows, who had stolen some of the horses belonging to the trappers, cut loose the animals, which were tied within ten feet of the strong fort of logs in which the Indians had taken shelter, attacked them, and made good his retreat with the recovered horses; an Indian of another tribe, who was with the trappers, bringing away a Crow scalp as a trophy. In one combat with the Black-feet, Carson received a rifle-ball in his left shoulder, breaking it. Save this, he has escaped the manifold dangers to which he has been exposed, without serious bodily injury. Of course, in so turbulent and unrestrained a life, there were not unfrquent personal rencounters among the trappers themselves, nor could the most peaceably-disposed always avoid them. These were most frequent and savage at the periods when the trappers went into the 'rendezvous,' as were called the points where the companies kept their establishments for receiving the peltries and supplying the trappers. Here a few days of indulgence were commonly allowed himself by the trapper; and there was much drinking, and gambling, and consequently fighting. Feuds grow-

ing out of national feelings, would also naturally enough sometimes occur among the trappers—there being Canadians and Mexicans, as well as the Americans; all having pride of race and country. On one occasion, a Frenchman, who ranked as a bully, and had whipped a good many Canadians, began to insult the Americans, saying they were only worth being whipped with switches. At this Carson fired up and said, 'He was the most trifling one among the Americans, and to begin with him.' After some little more talk, each went off and armed himself—Carson with a pistol, the Frenchman with a rifle—and both mounted for the fight. Riding up until their horses' heads touched, they fired almost at the same instant; Carson a little the quickest, and his ball passing through the Frenchman's hand, made him jerk up his gun, and sent the ball which was intended for Carson's heart grazing by his left eye and singeing his hair. This is the only serious personal quarrel of Carson's life, as he is, like most very brave men, of a peaceable and gentle temper.

"Colonel Fremont owed his good fortune in procuring Carson's services, to an accidental meeting on a steamboat above St. Louis—neither having ever before heard of the other. It was at the commencement of Fremont's first expedition. Carson continued with it, until, in its return, it had recrossed the mountains. His courage, fidelity, and excellent character, so far conciliated the good will of the commander, that in his second expedition, he gladly availed himself again of Kit's services, on meeting with him, as he chanced to do, on the confines of New Mexico. Kit again left the

party after its arrival this side of the mountains—not, however, until Fremont had obtained a promise from him to join the third expedition, in case one should be organized. Some incidents will be interesting, connected with this latter expedition, which was interrupted in its purely scientific character, by the treachery of the Mexican chief (Castro) compelling Fremont to change his peaceful employment, and which, owing to the continuance of the war with Mexico, is not yet completed.

"In the interim between Fremont's second and third expeditions, Carson had settled himself near Taos, and had begun to farm, preparing to lead a quiet life, when he received a note from Fremont, written at Bent's Fort, reminding him of his promise, and telling him he would wait there for him. On this occasion Carson showed his strong friendship for his old commander, and the generous and unselfish nature of his feelings. In four days from receiving the note, Carson had joined the party, having sold house and farm for less than half the sum he had just expended upon it, and put his family under the protection of his friend, the late Gov. Bent, until he should return from a certainly long and dangerous journey. This protection, unfortunately, was taken from them, in the late massacre at Taos, when Carson's brother-in-law was also one of the victims to the fury of the Mexicans, against all connected with the Americans. Mrs. Carson saved her life by flight, leaving them to rob the house of every thing. Kendall, and all others who have written of their adventures in New Mexico, ascribe the highest character to the women of that country for modesty, generosity, quick sympathy, and all feminine virtues. To

this amiable class belongs the wife of Carson, who has paid so dearly for her affection for him.

"The route of the third expedition led the party to the southern and western side of the Great Salt Lake—a region entirely unexplored, and filled, according to the superstitions and tales current among the Indians and trappers of the mountains, with all imaginable horrors. A vast desert, void of vegetation and fresh water, abounding in quicksands and in brackish pools and rivers, with only subterranean outlets. This was the reputed character of the country, justifying at least the apprehension of lack of those indispensables to the voyageur of the wilderness—water and grass. In truth, the southern border of the lake was found to be skirted with a salt plain of about sixty miles in width. Over this, as elsewhere, Carson, in his capacity of scout, was always with the advance party, to search for water and convenient places for camp—the usual signal of the prairies, a fire, serving, by its column of smoke, to point out where the advance were halting.

"The neighborhood of the Rio Colorado and the Sierra Nevado, of California, is infested with Indian tribes of Hippophagi, or Horse-Eaters (as they well may be called), who keep the northern parts of California in alarm, by sweeping down into the settlements, and carrying off horses and mules, which they use for food. With these savages the expedition had several skirmishes; but, owing to the perpetual vigilance which was exercised, neither man nor animals fell into the hands of the savages.

"When Fremont's party, in May, 1846 (not knowing of the existence of the war with Mexico), retired from

California, they proceeded north as far as the Tlamath lake, in Oregon, proposing to explore a new route into the Willameth valley.

"A courier having overtaken Col. Fremont there, to say that Mr. Gillespie and five men were endeavoring to overtake him, he took ten men and returned sixty miles with the courier; making all haste, in order to reach them before night, and prevent any attack which the Indians might be tempted to make on a small party. These Tlamath Indians, by nature brave and warlike, have now a new source of power in the iron arrow-heads and axes furnished them by the British posts in that country. Their arrows can only be extracted from the flesh by the knife, as they are barbed, and of course are not to be drawn out. The events of that night and the days following illustrate so fully the nightly danger of an Indian country, and the treacherous nature of savages, that I will give them, and in Carson's own words:—

"Mr. Gillespie had brought the Colonel letters from home—the first he had had since leaving the States the year before—and he was up, and kept a large fire burning until after midnight; the rest of us were tired out, and all went to sleep. This was the only night in all our travels, except the one night on the island in the Salt Lake, that we failed to keep guard; and as the men were so tired, and we expected no attack now that we had sixteen in the party, the Colonel didn't like to ask it of them, but sat up late himself. Owens and I were sleeping together, and we were waked at the same time by the licks of the axe that killed our men. At first, I didn't know it was that; but I called to Basil, who was

that side—'What's the matter there?—what's that fuss about?'—he never answered, for he was dead then, poor fellow, and he never knew what killed him—his head had been cut in, in his sleep; the other groaned a little as he died. The Delawares (we had four with us) were sleeping at that fire, and they sprang up as the Tlamaths charged them. One of them caught up a gun, which was unloaded; but, although he could do no execution, he kept them at bay, fighting like a soldier, and didn't give up until he was shot full of arrows—three entering his heart; he died bravely. As soon as I had called out, I saw it was Indians in the camp, and I and Owens together cried out 'Indians.' There were no orders given; things went on too fast, and the Colonel had men with him that didn't need to be told their duty. The Colonel and I, Maxwell, Owens, Godey, and Stepp, jumped together, we six, and ran to the assistance of our Delawares. I don't know who fired and who didn't; but I think it was Stepp's shot that killed the Tlamath chief; for it was at the crack of Stepp's gun that he fell. He had an English half axe slung to his wrist by a cord, and there were forty arrows left in his quiver—the most beautiful and warlike arrows I ever saw. He must have been the bravest man among them, from the way he was armed, and judging by his cap. When the Tlamaths saw him fall, they ran; but we lay, every man with his rifle cocked, until daylight, expecting another attack.

"In the morning we found by the tracks that from fifteen to twenty of the Tlamaths had attacked us. They had killed three of our men, and wounded one of the Delawares, who scalped the chief, whom we left where

he fell. Our dead men we carried on mules; but, after going about ten miles, we found it impossible to get them any farther through the thick timber, and, finding, a secret place, we buried them under logs and chunks, having no way to dig a grave. It was only a few days before this fight that some of these same Indians had come into our camp; and, although we had only meat for two days, and felt sure that we should have to eat mules for ten or fifteen days to come, the Colonel divided with them, and even had a mule unpacked to give them some tobacco and knives.'

"The party then retraced its way into California, and two days after this rencontre they met a large village of Tlamaths—more than a hundred warriors. Carson was ahead with ten men, but one of them having been discovered, he could not follow his orders, which were to send back word and let Fremont come up with the rest in case they found Indians. But as they had been seen, it only remained to charge the village, which they did, killing many, and putting the rest to flight. The women and children, Carson says, we didn't interfere with; but they burnt the village, together with their canoes and fishing nets. In a subsequent encounter, the same day, Carson's life was imminently exposed. As they galloped up, he was rather in advance, when he observed an Indian fixing his arrow to let fly at him. Carson levelled his rifle, but it snapped, and in an instant the arrow would have pierced him, had not Fremont, seeing the danger, dashed his horse on the Indian and knocked him down. I owe my life to them two, says Carson—the Colonel and Sacramento saved me. Sacramento is

a noble Californian horse which Captain Sutter gave to Colonel Fremont, in 1844, and which has twice made the distance between Kentucky and his native valley, where he earned his name by swimming the river after which he is called, at the close of a long day's journey. Notwithstanding all his hardships, for he has travelled every where with his master, he is still the favorite horse of Colonel Fremont.

"The hostile and insulting course of Castro drew Fremont into retaliatory measures; and, aided by the American settlers, he pursued the Mexicans for some time; but, being unable to make them stand and fight, they always flying before him, the flag of independence was raised at Sonoma, on the 5th of July, 1846. Learning soon after of the existence of the war, the American flag was promptly substituted, and the party proceeded to Monterey, where they found the fleet under Commodore Sloat already in possession. Castro, with his forces, had retreated before Fremont, and, to prevent their escape into Sonora, Colonel Fremont with a hundred and sixty men, were offered the sloop of war Cyane to carry them down to San Diego and facilitate the pursuit, as he hoped by that means to intercept Castro at Pueblo de los Andelos. Then Carson, for the first time, saw the blue ocean, and the great vessels that, like white-winged birds, spread their sails above its waters. The vast prairies, whose immense green surface has been aptly likened to the sea, together with all objects ever seen upon it, were familiar to him; but it proved no preparation for actual salt water, and the pride and strength of the backwoodsmen were soon humbled by the customary

tribute to Neptune. The forces were landed, and raised the flag at San Diego, and then they proceeded jointly to the capital, Ciudad de los Angeles, where, although from the detention at sea, Castro had escaped, American authority was also established.

"From this point on the 1st of September, 1846, Carson, with fifteen men, was despatched by Fremont with an account of the progress and state of affairs in that distant conquest. Carson was to have made the journey from Puebla to Washington city and back in 140 days. He pushed ahead accordingly, not stopping even for game, but subsisting on his mules, of which they made food as the animals broke down in the rapidity of the journey. He had crossed the wilderness, as he expected, in thirty days, when, meeting with Gen. Kearney's company, within a few days of Santa Fe, he was turned back by that officer, to whose orders he believed himself subject, and with infinite reluctance resigned his despatches to another, and returned to guide Kearney's command into California.

"General Kearney entered California without molestation until the fight of San Pasqual; an official account of which has been published. In the charge made upon the Mexicans, Carson, as usual, was among the foremost, when, as he approached within bullet range of the enemy, who were drawn up in order of battle, his horse stumbled and fell, pitching him over his head, and breaking his rifle in twain. Seizing a knife, he advanced on foot, until he found a killed dragoon, whose rifle he took, and was pressing on, when he met the mounted men returning from the charge, the Mexicans having galloped off. At

the instance of Carson, the American party then took possession of a small rocky hill, near the scene of the battle, as the strongest position in reach. Not being in a situation to go forward, they encamped here; and the enemy collecting in force, they remained in a state of siege. There was little of grass or water, on the hill, and soon both animals and men began to suffer. The way was so thickly beset with the enemy, that the commander doubted the propriety of attempting to cut a passage through, when after a four days' siege, Carson and Passed Midshipman Beale, of the navy (who had been sent to meet Kearney, with some thirty men, as a complimentary escort to San Diego), volunteered to go to Captain Stockton, at that place, and bring a reinforcement.

"This daring enterprise these intrepid and resolute young men, accompanied by a Delaware Indian, who was attached as a spy to General Kearney's command, successfully accomplished, but not without extreme suffering and peril. The distance between the camp and San Diego was but thirty miles; but as they had to make long detours, they travelled nearer fifty. They left the camp in the night of the 9th of December, crawling in a horizontal position through the enemy's lines. Their shoes made some noise, for which cause they took them off, and during the night, unfortunately lost them. Lying by all day to avoid the enemy, they succeeded by the end of the second night in reaching their destination, and procuring the necessary reinforcement. Their feet and flesh torn and bleeding from the rocks and thorny shrubs, haggard from hunger, thirst, anxiety and sleeplessness, they were again, nevertheless, in full per-

formance of duty at the battles of the 8th and 9th of January.

"When Fremont, after meeting with, and accepting the surrender of the Mexican forces, reached Los Angeles, Carson immediately returned to his command, and in the ensuing month was again selected to cross the desert, the wilderness, the mountains, and the prairies, to bring news of those far-off operations of its agents to the government in Washington. Leaving the frontier settlements of California, on the 25th of February, Carson arrived in St. Louis, about the middle of May—making the journey, notwithstanding the inclemency of the season, and an unavoidable detention of ten days at Santa Fé, in a shorter time than it was ever before accomplished. The unsettled state of the country—the war with Mexico inciting the savage tribes to unusual license and daring—added much to the inevitable hazard and privations of the journey, rendering the most unceasing vigilance necessary, night and day; while the speed with which the party travelled debarred them from the usual resource of travellers in uninhabited regions; they were fain to resort to the unsavory subsistence of those Hippophagi of the Sierra Nevada; only converting the poor beasts to food, however, when they were travel-worn and exhausted.

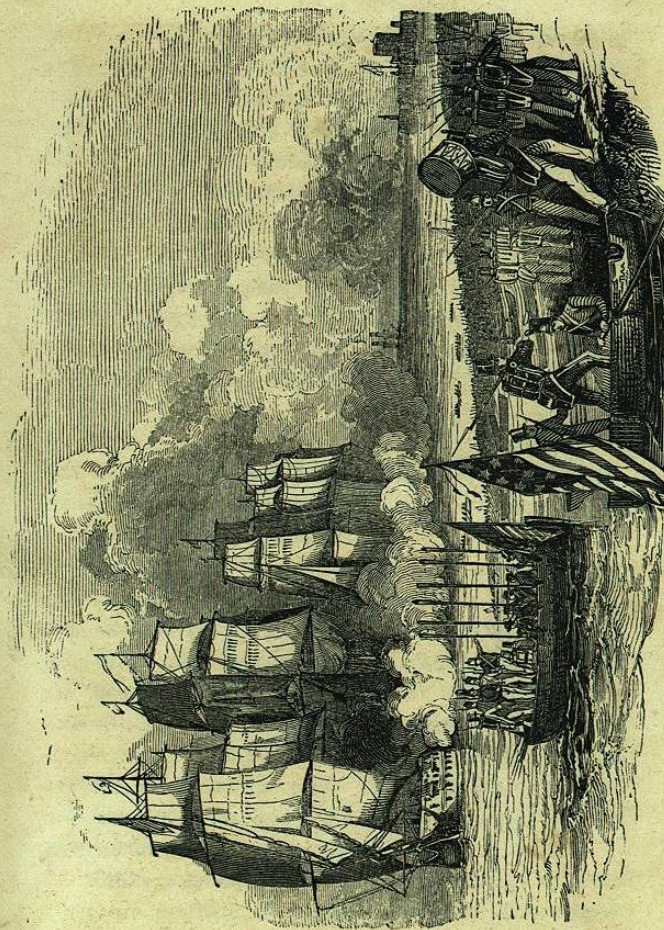
"Fortunately, the journey was made in its extent without serious mishap, and Carson, with Lieutenant Beale, his comrade in the night-march to San Diego, and Lieutenant Talbot, the young gentleman who led the gallant retreat of the little party of ten through the enemy's midst, a distance of three hundred miles from Santa Barbara to Monterey, are all now in Washington.

"Since Carson's arrival, solely through the appreciation by the President of his merit and services, he has received a commission of lieutenant in the rifle regiment of which Mr. Fremont is the lieutenant-colonel. The appointment was unsolicited and unexpected—the suggestion entirely of the President's own recognition of the deserts of this man of the prairies—a fact that is most honorable to the Executive, and makes the favor the more gratifying to the friends of Carson."

VERA CRUZ.

VERA CRUZ is noted for its strong castle, its architectural beauty, the unhealthiness of its climate, and for the various sieges it has sustained. The first thing visible in Mexico, upon approaching the city from the sea, is the Peak of Orizaba, which, by an optical illusion, often appears transplanted above the clouds, and even intervening between the sun and the spectator. As the stately domes, towers, and battlements one by one heave in sight, guarded by the old grim castle of San Juan de Ulloa, the view is grand and pleasing. Perhaps the first idea that strikes the beholder, when within a proper distance of the city, is the thought of its immense strength.

The streets are mostly wide, straight, and well paved, though generally in a very filthy condition. The stones are laid out in squares, and present a handsome appearance. The houses are mostly two stories in



Landing of the American Troops at Vera Cruz.