was the root of discord, and I had never given thought to its material side. My opinions on this subject grew out of my education, which had inculcated intolerance of oppression in every form and that love of the common country which in America was part of a boy's growth. In this condition of mind when General Jackson's course drew the line in South Carolina, I had joined the party of Mr. Poinsett and gave unwavering allegiance to the Union.

I was now settled down to regular work. There was always in this the interest of a problem to be worked out. There is pleasure in labor which is sure of a result, and this was as sure as the stars which had their part in it.

I have said that our settlement was near the Capitol, and some of the leading subjects of discussion there had special interest for us as being kindred to our own occupation and looking to its continuation.

Members of both Houses occasionally came to see the progress of Mr. Hassler's coast surveys, and usually extended their visit to our rooms. We were not yet at work on the map. There was a mass of astronomical and other observations to be calculated and discussed before a beginning on this could be made. Indeed, the making of such a map is an interesting process. It must be exact. First, the foundations must be laid in observations made in the field; then the reduction of these observations to latitude and longitude; afterward the projection of the map, and the laying down upon it of positions fixed by the observations; then the tracing from the sketch-books of the lines of the rivers, the forms of the lakes, the contours of the hills. Specially is it interesting to those who have laid in the field these various foundations, to see them all brought into final shape—fixing on a small sheet the results of laborious travel over waste regions, and giving to them an enduring place on the world's surface.

Mr. Benton had expected to find the map in progress, and was disappointed to see only the blank projection. But his disappointment gave way to interest of another kind when he saw spread out on the tables the evidences of the material first to be digested. His visit was not simply one of intelligent curiosity, but there was purpose in it, as indeed, I found when afterward I came to know him, there was in all that he did. The character of his mind was to utilize, and what he could not assimilate he did not touch. He knew well to use information and give it point. The results of our journeys between the two great rivers had suggested to him the same work for the broader field beyond the Missouri. His inquiries on this occasion were all of distinct pertinency. They were directed to know about our means and manner of travelling, the nature of the work required to be done, and the instruments employed. In the course of his inquiries he dwelt on the unoccupied country beyond the Missouri and

the existing uncertain and incomplete knowledge concerning it. The interview left on me a profound impression and raised excited interest. The ideas suggested remained fixtures in my mind. The thought of penetrating into the recesses of that wilderness region filled me with enthusiasm—I saw visions. Formerly I had been entirely devoted to my intended profession of engineering. The lives of great engineers had been my treasured exemplars. But strict engineering had lost its inspiration in the charm of the new field into which I had entered during the last few years.

In this interview with Mr. Benton my mind had been quick to see a larger field and differing and greater results. It would be travel over a part of the world which still remained the New—the opening up of unknown lands; the making unknown countries known; and the study without books—the learning at first hand from nature herself; the drinking first at her unknown springs—became a source of never-ending delight to me. I felt that it was an unreasonable pleasure to expect that it might happen to me to be among the very few to whom the chance had fallen to work with nature where in all her features there was still aboriginal freshness.

This interview with Mr. Benton was pregnant of results and decisive of my life. In what way it brought these results about, and how important they were, will be seen as we go on.

His visit, returned by Mr. Nicollet and myself, led into others and grew into intimacy. Congress was in session, and at his house I often met western members; all, at that time, being "west" which lay beyond Pennsylvania. Often, on such evenings, we being present, the conversation turned upon our surveys and naturally led to the subjects which so much interested Mr. Benton and his western colleagues. Among those who were more especially his personal and political friends were his fellow-Senator from Missouri, Lewis F. Linn, and Senator Dodge, the elder half-brother of Mr. Linn—a man with such composure of natural dignity, in aspect and manner, that he was known among his friends as "the Sachem." There was great love and unity between the brothers, who were in appearance very different: Senator Dodge, of powerful build and unusual height, his quiet strength of manner indicating the thoughtful, commanding habit of his mind; Senator Linn, of moderate size, but with a beauty as complete as it was remarkable—a head and features resembling the young head of Byron, but made winning by the expression of kind feelings and the play of a quick mind.

In these unpremeditated talks, where unstudied expression gave the color of every man's mind and bits of information found receptive place, plans were of easy digestion. And in this way measures were conceived

and perfected which, by the strength behind them, carried their own fulfilment. And gradually, as being kindred with our thoughts and present occupations, they engrossed our minds and settled into practical shape.

The months passed, and carried with them labor done. Our preliminary work had been in greater part completed, and we had begun on the map, Mr. Scammon and I. Meantime, Mr. Nicollet's health was being steadily undermined. He had grown restless, and made frequent visits away from Washington; I think usually to some quiet retreat among his friends in Baltimore, where, too, was a physician who had his confidence. He was not in condition to reduce into shape the materials for his report, which were varied and interesting and embraced the labor of years of thought and study following upon most interesting travel. And, waiting for the return of nerve and strength which were slow in coming, his writing was delayed. No second hand can do this like the first. The impressions made by the visible objects, the pleasure of the first experience and the anticipations of roused curiosity, the sense of danger threatened and met, the relief from obstacles overcome, cannot be transfused into a mind that is cold and unexcited. The lights and shadows are all lost on the level plane; and to such physical description, the eye that has not seen cannot bring a mind to feel and comprehend. And so Mr. Nicollet waited, hoping for the health that did not return.

In the family of Mr. Benton were four sisters and but one son, Randolph, then twelve years old. It fell to each of the sisters to have a marked life; and, as they grew into womanhood, they were separated far apart, as often happens in this large country of ours. All of them had strong, high character, and capacities carefully cultivated; and among them rare musical talent. Randolph died when just entering into what promised to be a distinguished life.

Jessie was the second daughter.

I went with the eldest of the sisters to a school concert in Georgetown, where I saw her. She was then just in the bloom of her girlish beauty, and perfect health effervesced in bright talk which the pleasure of seeing her sister drew out.

Naturally I was attracted. She made the effect that a rose of rare color or beautiful picture would have done. Months passed before, in the vacation time, I saw her again, at her father's house which already I had come to frequent. She was happy in the return to her home, and my first impressions of her were made in the unreserve of family life, where the real nature most readily expresses itself. Her beauty had come far enough down from English ancestry to be now in her that American kind which is made up largely of mind expressed in the face; but it still showed its Saxon descent. At that time of awakening mind the qualities that made

hers could only be seen in flitting shadows across the face, or in the expressions of incipient thought and unused and untried feeling. So in writing here I give what after-knowledge made known to me. Nor would it be possible to disentangle the interwoven threads of memory and confine impressions to the time when they were made. There are features which convey to us a soul so white that they impress with instant pleasure, and of this kind were hers. As, too, in the daily contact there are others from which to receive pleasant words or kindly acts gives the sort of agreeable surprise we feel when suddenly we come upon patches of bright, particolored phlox growing on naked rocks. The phlox loves the naked sand or rock, but the difference is in the warmth it finds there. In the human rock there is no heart to replace the sun.

Her qualities were all womanly, and education had curiously preserved the down of a modesty which was innate. There had been no experience of life to brush away the bloom. She had inherited from her father his grasp of mind, comprehending with a tenacious memory; but with it a quickness of perception and instant realization of subjects and scenes in their completed extent which did not belong to his; and with these, warm sympathies—a generous pity for human suffering, and a tenderness and sensibility that made feeling take the place of mind; so compelled was every impulse to pass through these before it could reach the surface to find expression. There was a rare union of intelligence to feel the injury of events, and submission to them with silence and discretion; and withal a sweet, and happy, and forbearing temper which has remained proof against the wearing of time.

Insensibly and imperceptibly, in these frequent meetings, there came a glow into my heart which changed the current and color of daily life and gave beauty to common things. And so it came that there was no room for reason, which found a cold and dull ear that heard, but did not listen.

For the rest, I think I may leave what more I might say to the record as it goes along. I find that, in undertaking to write a life-history which shall truly give the complexion of the minds and events of which I know, I have set for myself a difficult task. To speak of friends who have been dear to me in the intimate relations of life; of events in which I had part, and of the persons concerned in them with me—and it is precisely of these that I have undertaken to write—is hedged with obstacles which oppose my pen at every line. And the occurrences in even a few lives through fifty years are long to give, though the very details, which for various reasons are forced from the page, are just what might prove interesting as making up our human life. Still, I console myself with thinking that this perhaps would be a life-picture that no living man might draw.

And yet I thought to do it.

The winter work of making up charts required the rooms we had been using at the Coast Survey building. This, with the frequent and prolonged absences of Mr. Nicollet, brought about a change in our establishment to smaller but comfortable quarters at the foot of the Capitol. And so there the work was continued through the winter, without event, until the death of President Harrison. For the day of the funeral ceremonies, I cleared our work-room and made it gay with plants and flowers; for from its windows the family of Mr. Benton had consented to view the procession. The death of a President so suddenly following his accession to power was a shock to the community. As yet no President had died in office; and there was sincere personal feeling for General Harrison, who was a brave and amiable man. The funeral pageant was something to see and remember, as an event of the time. I was to take part with my corps in the ceremonies, but I procured leave and went back to be with my friends; for to me the funeral occasion proved, as I had hoped, to be my red-letter day.

All this time Mr. Nicollet's health was not mending. The writing of his report was still delayed.

In the surveys that had been made during his last expedition, the upper part only of some of the larger rivers had been embraced. The Des Moines was one of these; and at his request I was sent, in July, to make such a reconnoissance of its lower course as would nearly complete it. Whether or not this detachment of myself from Washington originated with Mr. Nicollet I do not know, but I was loath to go.

I had again with me on this survey one of my companions of the former expedition in Mr. Charles Geyer, who accompanied me as botanist. I established the course of the river upward from its mouth about two hundred miles, which brought the survey to the Racoon Forks; and Mr. Geyer did all that the season and time allowed for botany. It was here that Geyer found the snake under his flowers. There were many snakes along the river, and botany became a hazardous pursuit. As had been proposed, our examination was confined to the immediate valley of the river, but we frequently ranged into the woods, where deer and wild turkey were abundant; and the survey was a health-giving excursion, but it did not cure the special complaint for which I had been sent there.

The influence of women is a force sometimes dangerous. Mrs. Benton was not friendly to my suit, though to me she always was. She thought her daughter much too young—she was but sixteen—and, beyond this, that the unsettled life of an army officer was unfavorable to making such a home as she wished for her. She had herself, for seven years, delayed to marry Colonel Benton until he resigned from the army.

Mrs. Poinsett and Mrs. Benton were on friendly terms, and Mr. Poinsett was Secretary of War and my friend. The charge of this reconnoissance,

in connection with Mr. Nicollet's important work, was an advance for me, and accordingly I was sent. But it did not take long to get through with it. I returned to Washington and set about reducing to shape the new material just collected, in order to add the results to Mr. Nicollet's map.

I was leading a busy, working life; what was immediately at hand and what projected should have been enough to occupy my thoughts and time. A probation of a year had been agreed upon, but, as sometimes happens, the most important events of our individual life come upon us suddenly and unpremeditatedly; and so it was with our marriage, which was on October 19, 1841.

Mr. Nicollet was ill in Baltimore, and we went there to see him at the house of his friend Professor Ducatel. Our visit pleased and roused him. The nervous exhaustion which was a feature of his illness made everything seem a task. He had come to remain late in bed, sometimes doing his writing there and not rising at all during the day. He had formed an ideal to himself for his work, which he was never satisfied to have reached when he got his thoughts on paper.

In reality, the material which his science had enabled him to gather was so interesting that to barely set down the facts in the light of his own knowledge would have made a great work.

In intervals of revived health he came to Washington, coming always to us—to him we were "*mes enfants.*" But he was fixedly morbid about the impediments and discouragements which he fancied in the way of getting out his work.

I was now busily occupied in office-work every day while the light lasted, hurrying to put in good order what remained for me to do in connection with Mr. Nicollet's surveys. As I have said, the discussions among the western members had taken shape; they were agreed that the time had come to put into action their views concerning Oregon.

I knew that Mr. Benton was decided that an expedition ought to be sent to open the way for the emigration through the mountains; and I knew, also, he intended Mr. Nicollett should be at its head, and that I should be his assistant.

This expedition was intended to be "auxiliary and in aid to the emigration to the Lower Columbia;" it was to indicate and describe the line of travel, and the best positions for military posts; and to describe, and fix in position, the South Pass in the Rocky Mountains, at which this initial expedition was to terminate. At this time the South Pass, at the head of the Platte River, was the one most available for our emigration and already used.

With this knowledge, and the hope of having part in such an expedition, I worked unremittingly to have the way cleared of previous work; leaving only the brief evening hours for the new home just begun for me.

I felt I was being drawn into the current of important political events: the object of this expedition was not merely a survey; beyond that was its bearing on the holding of our territory on the Pacific; and the contingencies it involved were large.

One stormy evening near Christmas, when we were quietly enjoying the warm glow of firelight, a note was brought in to me from Mr. Hassler. The bearer was a strange figure—a shock of light curly hair standing up thick about his head, and a face so red that we attributed it to a wrong cause instead of to the cold and the nervousness and anxiety which turned his speech into stammering. Under the first impression I went outside with him. I found that he was a German, a skilled topographer, who came to me with this letter from Mr. Hassler requesting employment for him if we had any to give. I brought him in again, and sat him down by the fire while I thought over what might be done to have the pleasure of meeting Mr. Hassler's wish. I found that he was actually without means of support. The failure of an appropriation had thrown him out of his regular work, and the needs of his little family were immediate. He was divided between their want and his own natural pride, and asked of me to go with him to verify their condition, which I did; and their Christmas was made comfortable.

There were astronomical observations remaining unreduced. That work, I told him, I could get for him. This he said he was not able to do. His profession was topography—in this he excelled, but that was all. The only thing I could devise was to get for him this astronomical work and do it myself, which I could by working in the evenings. It troubled him greatly that I should have to do this for him, but it was the only way I could come in aid; and so it was done. This was Preuss; and this was the beginning of our long friendly comradeship. The little service which I was able to render him he amply repaid by years of faithful and valuable service as topographer on my journeys, during which his even temper and patient endurance of hardship earned my warm regard. Preuss had the endurance in working with an aim that so characterizes his nation, and with it a cheerful philosophy of his own which often brightened dark situations. He was of those who were comrades, and part with me, in the life of which I am writing.

Therefore I give them their place, not content to leave them on the page merely as a bodiless name which awakens no interest. I wish to give enough of their personality to individualize them, and make them known as I came to know them, so that hereafter when from time to time they reappear in the narrative, it will be as familiar figures in whom something of the interest of old acquaintance may be felt.

The year which had been so eventful to me was drawing to its close,

and the Christmas time which smooths its end was at hand. Mr. Hassler offered us his carriage to make the New Year's visit of ceremony to the President, and to please him we accepted it. But it took some nerve to drive up in the ark among the holiday crowd, who were familiar enough with its Noah, but looked and smiled on the young lady in full dress and officer in uniform. Mrs. Frémont disembarked at her father's to assist in the reception there, and that evening in the intimacy of after-dinner talk there came to me the probability of my being the head of the proposed expedition.

Mr. Nicollet's health did not improve; but was steadily failing. My mind was unwilling to see this. But the larger experience of Mr. Benton made him sure Mr. Nicollet could not again take charge of an expedition.

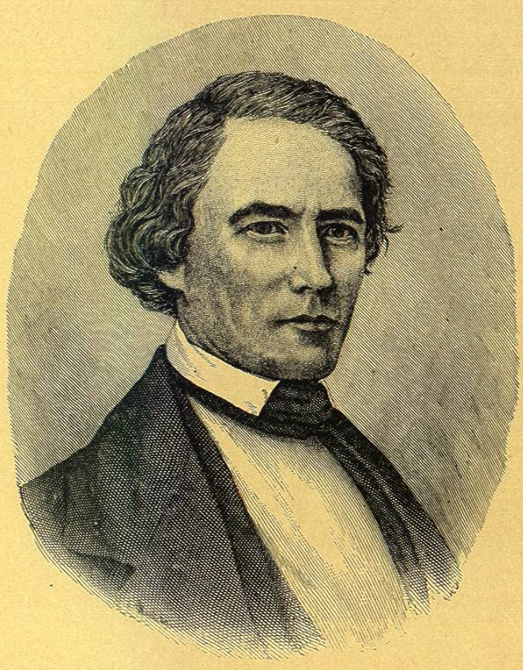
The evening was passed in considering this contingency, and with the New Year began my joint work with Mr. Benton in behalf of our western territories.

The months immediately following were occupied in preparation. The object of the expedition, as "ordered by the Topographical Bureau with the sanction of the Secretary of War," was simply to explore the country between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains; but its real purpose, the objects which were had in view in designing it, were known only to the circle of its friends. It was not until long after that it was avowed to be "in aid of and auxiliary to the Oregon emigration."

General Harrison, as a western and military man, would most probably have entered heartily into the ultimate motive of the expedition. With him Mr. Benton was on friendly terms. President Harrison's Secretary of War, John Bell, of Tennessee, was also a western man. But the death of the President made different conditions. Mr. Tyler threw the weight of his administration against any measure to encourage and aid the emigration to Oregon. His Secretary of War, Mr. Spencer, was from the east, and a lawyer. These were the altered circumstances which required prudence and reserve in avoiding any check to the projected movement to settle the Oregon question by emigration. The amount appropriated was small. In obtaining this it was necessary to use caution, in order to avoid the opposition which for various reasons might be expected. This Mr. Benton's parliamentary experience enabled him to do successfully. But the limited means exacted a close economy in the outfit. With the plan fully settled I went in March to New York to obtain necessary instruments and other essentials. Among these I had made an india-rubber boat, with air-tight compartments, to be used in crossing or examining water-courses. So far as I know, this was the first boat of the kind made or used in such work. When finished it was brought to Washington by Mr. Horace Day, who took much pride in it. It was the early day of india-

rubber, when its preparations were not "odorless." Mr. Day himself unpacked it at the house, on a broad gallery opening from the dining-room, saying that there "might be some odor from the chemicals." There was; to such a degree that it was promptly transferred to the stable, but not in time to avoid a long-contested battle between his "chemicals" and the obligatory disinfectants. Notwithstanding, it proved of valuable service, until finally it came to a violent end in the line of its duty.

The unreserve of daily intercourse under his own roof had given me a familiar knowledge of Mr. Benton's plans. Recognizing fully his forceful energy, and the certainty of success this carried with it, I gave henceforward to him and the work confided to me unstinted devotion.



KIT CARSON.