far as we could see, the jagged rocks pointed out the course of the cañon, on a winding line of seven or eight miles. It was simply a narrow, dark chasm in the rock; and here the perpendicular faces were much higher than in the previous pass, being at this end two to three hundred, and farther down, as we afterward ascertained, five hundred feet in vertical height. Our previous success had made us bold, and we determined again to run the cañon. Everything was secured as firmly as possible; and, having divested ourselves of the greater part of our clothing, we pushed into the stream. To save our chronometer from accident, Preuss took it and attempted to proceed along the shore on the masses of rock, which in places were piled up on either side; but after he had walked about five minutes everything like shore disappeared, and the vertical wall came squarely down into the water. He therefore waited until we came up.

An ugly pass lay before us. We had made fast to the stern of the boat a strong rope about fifty feet long; and three of the men clambered along among the rocks, and with this rope let her down slowly through the pass. In several places high rocks lay scattered about in the channel; and in the narrows it required all our strength and skill to avoid staving the boat on the sharp points. In one of these the boat proved a little too broad, and stuck fast for an instant, while the water flew over us; fortunately it was but for an instant, as our united strength forced her immediately through. The water swept overboard only a sextant and a pair of saddle-bags. I caught the sextant as it passed by me; but the saddlebags became the prey of the whirlpools. We reached the place where Preuss was standing, took him on board, and, with the aid of the boat, put the men with the rope on the succeeding pile of rocks. We found the passage much worse than the previous one, and our position was rather a bad one. To go back was impossible; before us, the cataract was a sheet of foam; and, shut up in the chasm by the rocks, which in some places seemed almost to meet overhead, the roar of the water was deafening.

We pushed off again; but after making a little distance the force of the current became too great for the men on shore, and two of them let go the rope. Lajeunesse, the third man, hung on, and was jerked head-foremost into the river from a rock about twelve feet high; and down the boat shot like an arrow, Basil following us in the rapid current and exerting all his strength to keep in mid-channel—his head only seen occasionally like a black spot in the white foam. How far we went, I do not exactly know; but we succeeded in turning the boat into an eddy below. "*'Cré Dieu,*" said Basil Lajeunesse, as he arrived immediately after us, "*je crois bien que j'ai nagé un demi-mile.*" He had owed his life to his skill as a swimmer; and I determined to take him and the two others on board, and trust to skill and fortune to reach the other end in safety.

We placed ourselves on our knees, with the short paddles in our hands, the most skilful boatman being at the bow; and again we commenced our rapid descent. We cleared rock after rock, and shot past fall after fall, our little boat seeming to play with the cataract. We became flushed with success and familiar with the danger; and, yielding to the excitement of the occasion, broke forth together into a Canadian boat-song. Singing, or rather shouting, we dashed along; and were, I believe, in the midst of the chorus, when the boat struck a concealed rock immediately at the foot of a fall, which whirled her over in an instant. Three of my men could not swim, and my first feeling was to assist them and save some of our effects; but a sharp concussion or two convinced me that I had not yet saved myself. A few strokes brought me into an eddy, and I landed on a pile of rocks on the left side. Looking around, I saw that Preuss had gained the shore on the same side, about twenty yards below; and a little climbing and swimming soon brought him to my side. On the opposite side, against the wall, lay the boat, bottom up; and Lambert was in the act of saving Descoteaux, whom he had grasped by the hair, and who could not swim; "*Lâche pas,*" said he, as I afterward learned, "*lâche pas, cher frère.*" "*Crains pas,*" was the reply, "*je m'en vais mourir avant de te lâcher.*" Such was the reply of courage and generosity in this danger.

For a hundred yards below, the current was covered with floating books and boxes, bales of blankets, and scattered articles of clothing; and so strong and boiling was the stream that even our heavy instruments, which were all in cases, kept on the surface, and the sextant, circle, and the long black box of the telescope were in view at once. For a moment, I felt somewhat disheartened. All our books—almost every record of the journey—our journals and registers of astronomical and barometrical observations—had been lost in a moment. But it was no time to indulge in regrets; and I immediately set about endeavoring to save something from the wreck. Making ourselves understood as well as possible by signs (for nothing could be heard in the roar of waters), we commenced our operations. Of everything on board, the only article that had been saved was my double-barrelled gun, which Descoteaux had caught and clung to with drowning tenacity. The men continued down the river on the left bank. Preuss and myself descended on the side we were on; and Lajeunesse, with a paddle in his hand, jumped on the boat alone, and continued down the cañon. She was now light, and cleared every bad place with much less difficulty. In a short time he was joined by Lambert; and the search was continued for about a mile and a half, which was as far as the boat could proceed in the pass.

Here the walls were about five hundred feet high, and the fragments of rocks from above had choked the river into a hollow pass, but one or two

feet above the surface. Through this and the interstices of the rock, the water found its way. Favored beyond our expectations, all of our registers had been recovered, with the exception of one of my journals, which contained the notes and incidents of travel, and topographical descriptions, a number of scattered astronomical observations, principally meridian altitudes of the sun, and our barometrical register west of Laramie. Fortunately, our other journals contained duplicates of the most important barometrical observations which had been taken in the mountains. These, with a few scattered notes, were all that had been preserved of our meteorological observations. In addition to these, we saved the circle; and these, with a few blankets, constituted everything that had been rescued from the waters.

The day was running rapidly away, and it was necessary to reach Goat Island, whither the party had preceded us, before night. In this uncertain country, the traveller is so much in the power of chance, that we became somewhat uneasy in regard to them. Should anything have occurred, in the brief interval of our separation, to prevent our rejoining them, our situation would be rather a desperate one. We had not a morsel of provisions—our arms and ammunition were gone—and we were entirely at the mercy of any straggling party of savages, and not a little in danger of starvation. We therefore set out at once in two parties; Mr. Preuss and myself on the left, and the men on the opposite side of the river. Climbing out of the cañon, we found ourselves in a very broken country, where we were not yet able to recognize any locality. In the course of our descent through the cañon, the rock, which at the upper end was of the decomposing granite, changed into a varied sandstone formation. The hills and points of the ridges were covered with fragments of a yellow sandstone, of which the strata were sometimes displayed in the broken ravines which interrupted our course, and made our walk extremely fatiguing.

At one point of the cañon the red argillaceous sandstone rose in a wall of five hundred feet, surmounted by a stratum of white sandstone; and in an opposite ravine a column of red sandstone rose, in form like a steeple, about one hundred and fifty feet high. The scenery was extremely picturesque, and, notwithstanding our forlorn condition, we were frequently obliged to stop and admire it. Our progress was not very rapid. We had emerged from the water half naked, and, on arriving at the top of the precipice, I found myself with only one moccasin. The fragments of rock made walking painful, and I was frequently obliged to stop and pull out the thorns of the *cactus*, here the prevailing plant, and with which a few minutes' walk covered the bottom of my feet. From this ridge the river emerged into a smiling prairie, and, descending to the bank for water, we were joined by Benoist. The rest of the party were out of sight, having

taken a more inland route. We crossed the river repeatedly—sometimes able to ford it, and sometimes swimming—climbed over the ridges of two more cañons, and toward evening reached the cut, which we here named the Hot Spring gate.

On our previous visit in July, we had not entered this pass, reserving it for our descent in the boat; and when we entered it this evening Mr. Preuss was a few hundred feet in advance. Heated with the long march, he came suddenly upon a fine bold spring gushing from the rock, about ten feet above the river. Eager to enjoy the crystal water, he threw himself down for a hasty draught, and took a mouthful of water almost boiling hot. He said nothing to Benoist, who laid himself down to drink; but the steam from the hot water arrested his eagerness, and he escaped the hot draught. We had no thermometer to ascertain the temperature, but I could hold my hand in the water just long enough to count two seconds. There are eight or ten of these springs, discharging themselves by streams large enough to be called runs. A loud hollow noise was heard from the rock, which I supposed to be produced by the fall of the water. The strata immediately where they issue is a fine white and calcareous sandstone, covered with an incrustation of common salt.

Leaving this Thermopylæ of the West, in a short walk we reached the red ridge which has been described as lying just above Goat Island. Ascending this, we found some fresh tracks and a button, which showed that the other men had already arrived. A shout from the man who first reached the top of the ridge, responded to from below, informed us that our friends were all on the island; and we were soon among them. We found some pieces of buffalo standing around the fire for us, and managed to get some dry clothes among the people. A sudden storm of rain drove us into the best shelter we could find, where we slept soundly, after one of the most fatiguing days I have ever experienced.

August 25th.—Early this morning Lajeunesse was sent to the wreck for the articles which had been saved, and about noon we left the island. The mare which he had left here in July had much improved in condition, and she served us well again for some time, but was finally abandoned at a subsequent part of the journey. At ten in the morning of the 26th we reached Cache camp, where we found everything undisturbed. We disinterred our deposit, arranged our carts which had been left here on the way out, and, travelling a few miles in the afternoon, encamped for the night at the ford of the Platte.

August 27th.—At midday we halted at the place where we had taken dinner on July 27th. The country which, when we passed up, looked as if the hard winter frosts had passed over it, had now assumed a new face, so much of vernal freshness had been given to it by the late rains. The

Platte was exceedingly low—a mere line of water among the sandbars. We reached Fort Laramie on the last day of August, after an absence of forty-two days, and had the pleasure to find our friends all well. The fortieth day had been fixed for our return; and the quick eyes of the Indians, who were on the lookout for us, discovered our flag as we wound among the hills. The fort saluted us with repeated discharges of its single piece, which we returned with scattered volleys of our small arms, and felt the joy of a home-reception in getting back to this remote station, which seemed so far off as we went out.

On the morning of September 3d we bade adieu to our kind friends at the fort, and continued our homeward journey down the Platte, which was glorious with the autumnal splendor of innumerable flowers in full and brilliant bloom. On the warm sands, among the *helianthi*, one of the characteristic plants, we saw great numbers of rattlesnakes, of which five or six were killed in the morning's ride. We occupied ourselves in improving our previous survey of the river; and, as the weather was fine, astronomical observations were generally made at night and at noon.

We halted for a short time on the afternoon of the 5th with a village of Sioux Indians, some of whose chiefs we had met at Laramie. The water in the Platte was extremely low; in many places, the large expanse of sands, with some occasional stunted trees on the banks, gave it the air of the sea-coast; the bed of the river being merely a succession of sandbars, among which the channel was divided into rivulets a few inches deep. We crossed and recrossed with our carts repeatedly and at our pleasure; and, whenever an obstruction barred our way, in the shape of precipitous bluffs that came down upon the river, we turned directly into it, and made our way along the sandy bed, with no other inconvenience than the frequent quicksands, which greatly fatigued our animals. Disinterring on the way the *cache* which had been made by our party when they ascended the river, we reached without accident, on the evening of September 12th, our old encampment of July 2d at the junction of the forks. Our *cache* of the barrel of pork was found undisturbed, and proved a seasonable addition to our stock of provisions. At this place I had determined to make another attempt to descend the Platte by water, and accordingly spent two days in the construction of a bull-boat. Men were sent out on the evening of our arrival, the necessary number of bulls killed, and their skins brought to the camp. Four of the best of them were strongly sewed together with buffalo sinew, and stretched over a basket-frame of willow. The seams were then covered with ashes and tallow, and the boat left exposed to the sun for the greater part of one day, which was sufficient to dry and contract the skin, and make the whole work solid and strong. It had a rounded bow, was eight feet long and five broad, and drew with four men about four inches of

water. On the morning of the 15th we embarked in our hide-boat, Mr. Preuss and myself, with two men. We dragged her over the sands for three or four miles, and then left her on a bar, and abandoned entirely all further attempts to navigate this river. The names given by the Indians are always remarkably appropriate; and certainly none was ever more so than that which they have given to this stream—"the Nebraska, or Shallow River." Walking steadily the remainder of the day, a little before dark we overtook our people at their evening camp, about twenty-one miles below the junction. The next morning we crossed the Platte, and continued our way down the river bottom on the left bank, where we found an excellent, plainly beaten road.

On the 18th we reached Grand Island, which is fifty-two miles long, with an average breadth of one mile and three-quarters. It has on it some small eminences, and is sufficiently elevated to be secure from the annual floods of the river. As has been already remarked, it is well timbered, with an excellent soil, and recommends itself to notice as the best point for a military position on the Lower Platte.

On the 22d we arrived at the village of the Grand Pawnees, on the right bank of the river, about thirty miles above the mouth of the Loup Fork. They were gathering in their corn, and we obtained from them a very welcome supply of vegetables.

The morning of the 24th we reached the Loup Fork of the Platte. At the place where we forded it, this stream was four hundred and thirty yards broad, with a swift current of *clear* water; in this respect, differing from the Platte, which has a yellow, muddy color, derived from the limestone and marl formation, of which we have previously spoken. The ford was difficult, as the water was so deep that it came into the body of the carts, and we reached the opposite bank after repeated attempts, ascending and descending the bed of the river in order to avail ourselves of the bars. We encamped on the left bank of the fork, in the point of land at its junction with the Platte. During the two days that we remained here for astronomical observations, the bad weather permitted us to obtain but one good observation for the latitude—a meridian altitude of the sun, which gave for the latitude of the mouth of the Loup Fork, 41° 22′ 11″.

Five or six days previously, I had sent forward Lambert, with two men, to Bellevue, with directions to ask from Mr. Pierre Sarpy, the gentleman in charge of the American Company's establishment at that place, the aid of his carpenters in constructing a boat, in which I proposed to descend the Missouri. On the afternoon of the 27th we met one of the men, who had been despatched by Mr. Sarpy with a welcome supply of provisions and a very kind note, which gave us the very gratifying intelligence that our boat was in rapid progress. On the evening of the 30th we encamped

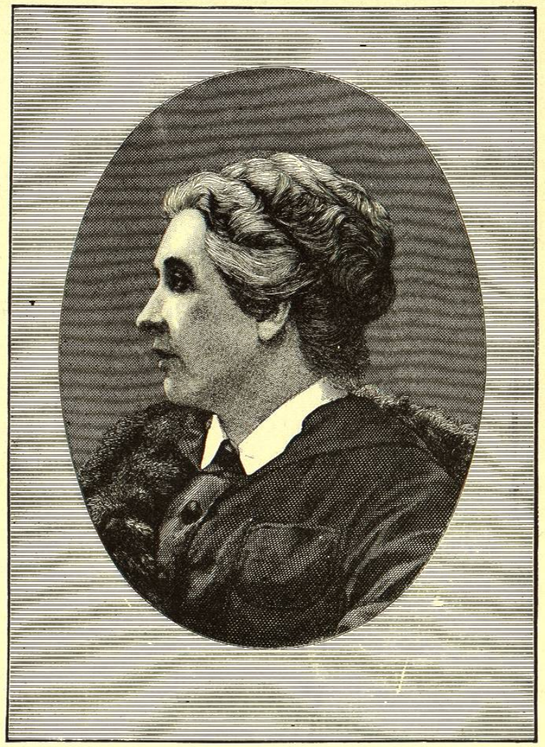
in an almost impenetrable undergrowth on the left bank of the Platte, in the point of land at its confluence with the Missouri—three hundred and fifteen miles, according to our reckoning, from the junction of the forks, and five hundred and twenty from Fort Laramie.

From the junction we had found the bed of the Platte occupied with numerous islands, many of them very large, and all well timbered; possessing, as well as the bottom lands of the river, a very excellent soil. With the exception of some scattered groves on the banks, the bottoms are generally without timber. A portion of these consist of low grounds, covered with a profusion of fine grasses, and are probably inundated in the spring; the remaining part is high prairie, entirely beyond the influence of the floods. The breadth of the river is usually three quarters of a mile, except where it is enlarged by islands. That portion of its course which is occupied by Grand Island, has an average breadth, from shore to shore, of two and a half miles. The breadth of the valley, with the various accidents of ground—springs, timber, and whatever I have thought interesting to travellers and settlers—I indicated on one of the maps which accompanied the report I made of this journey.

October 1st.—I rose this morning long before daylight, and heard, with a feeling of pleasure, the tinkling of cow-bells at the settlements on the opposite side of the Missouri. Early in the day we reached Mr. Sarpy's residence; and, in the security and comfort of his hospitable mansion, felt the pleasure of being again within the pale of civilization. We found our boat on the stocks; a few days sufficed to complete her; and in the afternoon of the 4th we embarked on the Missouri. All our equipage—horses, carts, and the *matériel* of the camp—had been sold at public auction at Bellevue. The strength of my party enabled me to man the boat with ten oars, relieved every hour; and we descended rapidly. Early on the morning of the 10th, we halted to make some astronomical observations at the mouth of the Kansas, exactly four months since we had left the trading-post of Mr. Cyprian Chouteau, on the same river, ten miles above. On our descent to this place, we had employed ourselves in surveying and sketching the Missouri, making astronomical observations regularly at night and at midday, whenever the weather permitted. These operations on the river were continued until our arrival at the city of St. Louis, Missouri, on the 17th. At St. Louis the sale of our remaining effects was made; and, leaving that city by steamboat on the 18th, I reached the city of Washington on October 29th.

I found the family well.

The winter was busily occupied in preparing my report of the expedition. To Mr. Preuss was assigned the labor of the maps. In addition to the general map of the country explored, a series of maps representing,



JESSIE BENTON FRÉMONT.

each a day's journey, a guide-book in atlas form, was prepared for the use of the emigration. This was the suggestion of Mr. Benton. Upon each of the maps the places were indicated for camps where grass and water and wood would be found.

The distinguished botanist, Professor Torrey, kindly undertook the description of the plants collected during the journey. To me fell the labor of the various computations and the writing of the report.

The third life alluded to in the "scope" of this narrative came now in for its portion of work.

I write more easily by dictation. Writing myself I have too much time to think and dwell upon words as well as ideas. In dictation there is not time for this and then, too, I see the face of my second mind, and get there at times the slight dissent confirming my own doubt, or the pleased expression which represents the popular impression of a mind new to the subject. This invites discussion: a form of discussion impossible except with a mind and purpose in harmony with one's own and on the same level; therefore the labor of amanuensis, commencing at this early time, has remained with Mrs. Frémont.

The report was called for by the Senate, and on the motion of Mr. Linn it was printed for the use of the Senate, and a number of extra copies ordered.

In support of his motion, Mr. Linn said:

"The object of the expedition was to examine and report upon the rivers and country between the frontiers of Missouri and the base of the Rocky Mountains: and especially to examine the character, and ascertain the latitude and longitude of the South Pass, the great crossing-place in those mountains on the way to the Oregon. All the objects of the expedition have been accomplished, and in a way to be beneficial to science and instructive to the general reader as well as useful to the Government. Supplied with the best astronomical and barometrical instruments, well qualified to use them, and accompanied by twenty-five voyageurs enlisted for the purpose at St. Louis, and trained to all the hardships and dangers of the prairies and the mountains, Mr. Frémont left the mouth of the Kansas, on the frontiers of Missouri, on June 10th, and in the incredibly short space of four months returned to the same point without an accident to a man, and with a vast mass of useful observations and many hundred specimens in botany and geology.

"In executing his instructions, Mr. Frémont proceeded up the Kansas River far enough to ascertain its character, and then crossed over to the Great Platte and pursued that river to its source in the mountains, where the Sweet Water (a head-branch of the Platte) issues from the neighborhood of the South Pass. He reached the pass on August 8th, and de-