scribed it as a wide and low depression of the mountains, where the ascent is as easy as that of the hill on which this Capitol stands, and where a plainly beaten wagon-road leads to the Oregon through the valley of Lewis River, a fork of the Columbia.

"He went through the pass and saw the head-waters of the Colorado of the Gulf of California; and, leaving the valleys, to indulge a laudable curiosity and to make some useful observations, and attended by four of his men, he climbed the loftiest peak of the Rocky Mountains, until then untrodden by any known human being; and on August 15th looked down upon ice and snow some thousand feet below, and traced in the distance the valleys of the rivers which, taking their rise in the same elevated ridge, flow in opposite directions to the Pacific Ocean and to the Mississippi. From that ultimate point he returned by the valley of the Great Platte, following the stream in its whole course, and solving all questions in relation to its navigability and the character of the country through which it flows.

"The results of all these observations Mr. Frémont has condensed into a brief report—enough to make a document of ninety or one hundred pages; and believing that this document would be of general interest to the whole country, and beneficial to science as well as useful to the Government, I move the printing of the extra number which has been named.

"This report proves conclusively that the country for several hundred miles from the frontier of Missouri is exceedingly beautiful and fertile; alternate woodland and prairie, and certain portions well supplied with water. It also proves that the valley of the River Platte has a very rich soil, affording great facilities for emigrants to the west of the Rocky Mountains."

This was the first act done with the, apparent, support of the Government in aid to the Oregon emigration.

Upon this subject Mr. Benton says:

"Connected with this emigration, and auxiliary to it, was the first expedition of Lieutenant Frémont to the Rocky Mountains, and undertaken and completed in the summer of 1842—upon its outside view the conception of the Government, but in fact conceived without its knowledge, and executed upon solicited orders, of which the design was unknown."

In the meantime the second expedition had been planned.

Pending the discussion at Washington of the Ashburton Treaty some propositions concerning Oregon which had been suggested between the negotiators were submitted to the Senators from Missouri, and by them promptly rejected. These suggestions of "a conventional divisional line" forewarned them of a basis of settlement that admitted doubt upon the clear title of the United States to the Valley of the Columbia, which they

had resolved to maintain against the field. The divisional line meant the north bank of the Columbia for the boundary, with equal rights of navigation in the river and to the harbor at its mouth.

The proposition to surrender simply inspired promptness in the measures projected to commit the Government to their views and render any compromise impossible; and the plans for extending the exploration into Oregon were hurried forward.

A policy of delay suggested in the President's message required that before any title to lands be given to emigrants in Oregon Territory, "the respective claims of the two Governments should be settled."

The answer to this open proposition for delay, in deference to the claims of England, was made by Senator Linn, of Missouri, who introduced a bill to encourage and protect emigration by stockading the line of travel and providing for grants of land.

This bill gave the key-note to the emigration; though the bill passed the Senate it was not acted on in the House, but the emigrants assumed it to mean government protection.

It was fair to set out distinctly the distorted and absurdly erroneous views entertained concerning the country we had to examine, as a reason for the explorations that brought to common knowledge the inexhaustible riches of the vast region which, through years of obstacle, its friends had struggled to reclaim from the possession of a foreign power. The necessity must be looked at from conditions existing at the time, not by the light thrown back upon them by the conditions of to-day.

The following extract from the *Athenæum*, London, reviewing, in March, 1844, the first report, shows the undetermined conditions which also existed on the other side of the water at the time. It concludes: "It is said that Lieutenant Frémont has been appointed to the survey of the Oregon Territory. We are heartily glad of it. He will be sure to do his work well, and if our topographical engineers labor in the same style and spirit, we may reckon on obtaining, through their joint efforts, an accurate knowledge of that country, so that we may be able to calculate, on safe grounds, the exact amount of blood and treasure which may be prudently expended in the conquest of it."

The second expedition was to connect with the first expedition at the South Pass, but to approach the mountains on a different line. It was intended to examine the broad region south of the Columbia River, lying between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. In this way the two expeditions would give a connected survey of the interior and western half of the continent.

Early in the spring of 1843, I left Washington with the whole family, Mr. Benton having preceded us to Missouri. Mr. Preuss and Jacob Dod-

son were with us. Jacob was only eighteen, but strong and active, and nearly six feet in height. He was of the good colored people of the district, born free, but with the feeling of belonging with a family and giving to it unchanging service. Others of his people held life-time service in the family of Mr. Benton, and it was the ambition of this boy to go with me. About noon the stage-coach was climbing up one of the Pennsylvania mountains—when reaching the summit it capsized. The driver, too confident of his skill, and disregarding the shouts of the wagoner, attempted to pass one of those huge wagons with its string of horses, with the result of overturning us into a gully, the coach lighting on its roof. Jacob, who was on the box, was at the horses' heads before the coach reached the gully, and the wagoner's men prevented further harm from frightened animals.

Inside the coach all was so silent that the first thought was that all had been hurt, but as they were drawn out one by one, Mrs. Benton was found to be the only one injured. She had received a hurt on the head which stunned her, and made rest necessary, so that we remained over until next day.

Preuss, who had gotten out to enjoy a walk up the mountain in the company of his pipe, was not to be consoled because he had not been part of the disaster; it was necessary to remind him that his being away had saved the precious barometer, which he never left out of his care.

Chance had given us a good place for the overset. The "wagon-stand" near by stood on the stony, bleak mountain-side; it was one of the by-gone, old-fashioned, Pennsylvania taverns, and the abundant game hanging about gave it now the appearance of a rough hunting-lodge. The landlady, who had seen the coach go over, tried to comfort us by loading her table with every good thing she had, or her housewifely skill could prepare. The buckwheat cakes were half an inch thick and porous like a sponge, capable of absorbing enough of the good mountain butter to support a man for a day; with honey from the buckwheat fields, and maple-syrup from the forest. The venison steaks were excellent, broiled over wood-coals. It was the native abundance of that day.

One may forget many things but it would not be easy to efface from a traveller's memory this contrast to many an after time; before a year had passed Preuss and I had recalled the stone house in the mountains with its big fires and lavish abundance of good food.

Mrs. Frémont was to remain in St. Louis during my absence, which was not to be for more than about eight months.

Experience enabled me to make my preparations quickly. Among the men engaged at St. Louis for this journey were six who had been with me in the first: Alexis Ayot, François Badeau, Baptiste Bernier, Basil Lajeunesse, Louis Ménard and Raphael Proue; all good men; together

with Louis Zindel, Prussian artillerist, who was one of the party under Mr. Nicollet in his second expedition.

As I expected to be much among Indians who had for many years a known character for audacious bravery and treachery, I applied to Colonel S. W. Kearny, commanding Third Military Division, for a howitzer, which he furnished me from the arsenal at St. Louis.

I had obtained for guide Mr. Thomas Fitzpatrick, well known in the mountains. He was known to be a brave man and had lived through rough experiences in the Indian country. On one occasion, surrounded by Blackfeet in the Wind River Mountains, all his party had been killed except himself, but the peril and excitement of the three days among the rocks while the Indians were searching for him had turned his thick hair entirely white. He was still young, and it made a contrast to the healthy ruddy color of his face.

On May 17th I arrived at the little town of Kansas, near the junction of the Kansas River with the Missouri. Maxwell, who will be remembered as having accompanied me in 1842, joined the camp here to accompany me as far as the upper Arkansas. Carson joined me as we reached the mountains at a little Mexican pueblo on the Arkansas River.

In setting out on this journey I made the acquaintance of Major Cummins, who had long been Indian Agent among the Delawares and other Indians, and a friend of long-standing to Senator Benton and valued by him. He was a large, fine-looking man, advanced now in years, but staunch in person as in character. His house was always open to me with a frontier welcome, which means much; and the introduction he gave me to the Shawnee and Delaware Indians gained me their confidence and proved most valuable to me for years afterward.

While engaged in completing my outfit I received from Mrs. Frémont a letter which urged me to set out upon the journey forthwith and make at Bents' Fort the waiting for the grass to get its full strength.

Satisfied that there was reason for such urgency I started on the morning of the 29th, twelve days only after reaching Kansas, and made my first encampment on the verge of the great prairies four miles beyond the frontier.

It was not until my return that I learned the reason why this sudden move was required of me.

I had requested Mrs. Frémont to open all my letters, using her discretion in regard to forwarding any of them while I remained on the frontier. But there came an official order from the head of my corps, Colonel Abert, directing me to return to Washington in order to explain why, in addition to ordinary arms, I had taken a howitzer with me: that it was a scientific expedition—not military—and not to be armed as such.

The flimsiness of this excuse for breaking up the expedition after it had been planned and ordered and in movement, was so apparent to Mrs. Frémont, as also was the true reason for it, that she did not hesitate to suppress the order, and write me the letter which caused me to make an immediate start. She did not communicate this proceeding to Colonel Abert until I was far beyond the reach of recall. Mr. Benton was not in St. Louis, and she took council with no one. She acted entirely on her own knowledge, which was full, concerning the expedition, and existing reasons for opposing it.

I never knew where the order originated. It came through Colonel Abert. He was a quiet man, not likely to disturb an expedition gotten up, apparently, under his own direction and, so far as he knew, originating with himself. It was not probable that I would have been recalled from the Missouri frontier to Washington, fifteen hundred miles of water and stage-coach travelling, to explain why I had taken an arm that simply served to increase the means of defence for a small party very certain to encounter Indian hostility, and which involved very trifling expense.

On his return to St. Louis Mr. Benton approved Mrs. Frémont's action, and so wrote to Washington, at the same time asking an explanation, but there the subject rested.

I mention it here to show the compliance of the administration with the English situation in Oregon.

CHAPTER VI.

My Second Expedition—Personnel of Party—Osages make a Charge—Ceremonious Arapahoes—Prairie-dog Village—Kit joins us again—Godey Engaged—Yampah River—An Attack by Arapahoes—Preuss objects to Kooyah—Our Rubber Boat.

My party consisted principally of Creole and Canadian French, and Americans, amounting in all to thirty-nine men; among whom will be recognized several of those who were with me in my first expedition, and who have been favorably brought to notice. Mr. Thomas Fitzpatrick, whom many years of hardship and exposure in the Western territories had rendered familiar with a portion of the country it was designed to explore, had been selected as our guide; and Mr. Charles Preuss, who had been my assistant in the previous journey, was again associated with me in the same capacity on the present expedition. Mr. Theodore Talbot, of Washington City, had been attached to the party, with a view to advancement in his profession; and at St. Louis I had been joined by Mr. Frederick Dwight, a gentleman of Springfield, Mass., who availed himself of our overland journey to visit the Sandwich Islands and China, by way of Fort Vancouver.

The men engaged for the service were: Alexis Ayot, François Badeau, Oliver Beaulieu, Baptiste Bernier, John A. Campbell, John G. Campbell, Manuel Chapman, Ransom Clark, Philibert Courteau, Michel Crélis, William Creuss, Clinton Deforest, Baptiste Derosier, Basil Lajeunesse, François Lajeunesse, Henry Lee, Louis Ménard, Louis Montreuil, Samuel Neil, Alexis Pera, François Pera, James Power, Raphael Proue, Oscar Sarpy, Baptiste Tabeau, Charles Taplin, Baptiste Tesson, Auguste Vasquez, Joseph Verrot, Patrick White, Tiery Wright, and Louis Zindel. Two Delaware Indians—a fine-looking old man and his son—were engaged to accompany the expedition as hunters, through the kindness of Major Cummins, the excellent Indian Agent.

The party was armed generally with Hall's carbines, which, with a brass twelve-pound howitzer, had been furnished to me by Colonel Kearny. Three men were specially detailed for the management of this piece, under