

### CAPTAIN FREMONT'S REPORT.

We have here a document of more than six hundred pages, containing the "Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the year 1842, and to Oregon and North California in the years 1843-44, by Brevet Captain J. C. FREMONT, of the Topographical Engineers," printed by order of the Senate of the United States.

"If 'know thyself' be regarded as a good maxim in moral and intellectual philosophy, then, by a parity of reason, 'know thy country,' is an equally good one in a geographical sense. In this point of view we regard the report of Captain FREMONT'S Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon, and to North California, as of much more value to us American citizens than the more bulky and costly narratives of exploring expeditions even to the 'ends of the earth.' We wish to deprecate the latter. As citizens of the world, and rejoicing in the spread of information and the increase of knowledge, we hail the hardy son of toil and travel, and the adventurous navigator of the pathless deep, as benefactors of their species, let them bring us information from whatever shore, or concerning whatever branch of the wide-spread human family they may. But, in the circle of social affections and interests, our own country has higher claims upon us than any other; and it is therefore that we feel, we have stated, a deeper interest in a publication before us.

Captain FREMONT has already made two expeditions to the western portion of our continent. "The first terminated at the Rocky Mountains, and at the two points of greatest interest in that range, namely, the South Pass and Fremont's Peak; the river being the lowest depression of the mountains, through which the road to Oregon now passes; and the latter the highest elevation, from the base of which four great rivers take their rise and flow in opposite directions towards the rising and setting sun." The second expedition, after approaching the mountains by a different route, connects with the first expedition at the South Pass, and thence finds the great theatre of its labors west of the Rocky Mountains and between the Oregon river and North California. The third expedition, now commencing, will be directed to that section of the Rocky Mountains which gives rise to the Arkansas, the Rio Grande del Norte, and the Rio Colorado of California, and will extend westward and southwest of that section, so as to examine the country towards the Pacific ocean, ascertain the lines of communication between the mountains and the ocean in that latitude, and complete the examination of the Great Salt Lake and of the interesting region which embosoms

"Respecting the large and valuable map which accompanies this report, Captain FREMONT says: 'This map may have a meager and skeleton appearance to the general eye, but is expected to be more valuable to science on that account, being wholly founded upon positive data and actual observations in the field. About ten thousand miles of actual travelling and traversing in the wilderness which lies between the frontiers of Missouri and the shores of the Pacific, almost every camping station being the scene of astronomical or barometrical observations, furnish the materials out of which this map has been constructed. Nothing supposititious has been admitted upon it.' The profile maps 'showing the elevations, or the rise and fall of the country from the Missouri to the Pacific, are perhaps the most extended work of the kind ever constructed,' exhibiting in all about four thousand miles of profile mapping, found upon four hundred barometrical positions, with views sketched and facts noted in the field."

Captain FREMONT, in the following extract from the preface to his report, speaks with much modesty of his contributions to geological and botanical science; but we have reason to believe that not only these, but also the astronomical observations, and the sketches of the topographical features of the country, and the barometrical and meteorological observations, are regarded as very valuable by men well versed in the respective sciences, and most competent to judge:

"In the departments of geological and botanical and science, I have not ventured to advance any opinions on my own imperfect knowledge of those branches, but have submitted all my specimens to the enlightened judgment of Dr. Torrey, of New Jersey, and Dr. Hall, of N. York, who have kindly classified and arranged all that I was able to submit to them.—The botanical observations of Dr. Torrey will be furnished in full hereafter, not being time to complete them now.—The remarks of Dr. Hall, on the geological specimens furnished to him, will be found in an appendix to the report; and to his paleontological skill I am indebted for the discovery of an oolitic formation in the region west of the Rocky Mountains, which further examination may prove to assimilate the geology of the new to that of the old world in a rare particular, which had not before been discovered in either of the two Americas. Unhappily, much of what we had collected was lost by accidents of serious import to ourselves, as well as to our animals and collections.—In the gorges and ridges of the Sierra Nevada, of the Alta California, we lost fourteen horses and mules, falling from rocks or precipices into chasms or rivers, bottomless to us and to them, and one of them loaded with bales of plants collected on a line of two thousand miles of travel; and when almost home, our camp on the banks of the Kansas was deluged by the great flood which, lower down, spread

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terror and desolation on the borders of the Missouri and Mississippi, and by which great damage was done to our remaining perishable specimens, all wet and saturated with water, and which we had no time to dry. Still, what is saved will be some respectable contribution to botanical science, thanks to the skill and care of Dr. Torrey; and both in geology and botany the maps will be of great value, the profile view showing the elevations at which the specimens were found, and the geographical map showing the localities from which they come.

"The astronomical observations, taken with good instruments, have been tested, where they were most important, by three-fold computation; one by Professor Walker, of Philadelphia, whose astronomical reputation is so great; another by Mr. Joseph C. Hubbard, a promising young mathematician from Connecticut; the third by myself; so that the correctness of the longitudes and latitudes may well be relied upon.

"In sketching the topographical features of the country, a branch of science in which he had been professionally educated, Mr. Charles Preuss had been my assistant in both expeditions; and to his extraordinary skill, supported by the pleasure he felt in the execution of his duties, I am indebted for the continuous topographical sketches of the regions through which we passed, and which were never interrupted by any extremity of fatigue or privation.

"The barometrical and meteorological observations were carefully made with good instruments, and admit of no material error beyond the minute deviations inseparable from such operations.

"The third expedition, now commencing, is undertaken with more ample means than the two former; and, being directed to a region so interesting in itself, and so new to science, can hardly fail to require the enterprise which explores it.

"The report, or narrative, of this extended expedition, like the maps which illustrate it, will be strictly confined to what was seen, and to what is necessary to show the face and character of the country, and to add something to science while fulfilling the instructions of the Government, which chiefly contemplated a military topographical survey. A greater degree of popular interest might have been imparted to it by admitting a greater latitude of detail, but it was deemed best to adhere to the rigorous character of a report, and to present nothing, either in the narrative or in the maps, which was not the result of positive observation."

This last paragraph gives a peculiar interest to Captain FREMONT'S narrative, and we wish that our modern book-makers would, one and all, prescribe to themselves and be governed by so just and conscientious a course of proceeding.

Capt. FREMONT departed from the trading-house of Mr. CYRIL CHOUTEAU, which is situated near the mouth of the Kansas river, and about four hundred miles above St. Louis, on the 10th of June, 1842. His company consisted of Mr. Charles Preuss, a native of Germany, as his assistant in the topographical part of the survey; J. Maxwell, of Kaskaskia, engaged as hunter; Christopher Carson, the guide; and twenty-one men, principally Creole and Canadian voyageurs, who had become familiar with prairie life in the service of the fur companies in the Indian country. In addition to these, he was accompanied "by Henry Brant, son of Col. J. B. Brant, of St. Louis, a young man of nineteen years of age; and Randolph, a lively boy of twelve, son of the Hon. Thomas H. Benton, for the development of mind and body which such an expedition would give."

On the 18th July, "while halting for dinner, after a march of about thirteen miles, on the banks of one of the many little tributaries to the Kansas, which look like trenches in the prairie, and are usually well timbered," Capt. FREMONT "rode off some miles to the left, attracted by the appearance of a cluster of huts near the mouth of the Vermilion. It was a large but deserted Kansas village, scattered in an open wood, along the margin of the stream, on a spot chosen with the customary Indian fondness for beauty of scenery." We make this short extract because we are glad to add the testimony of so good an authority as Capt. FREMONT in proof of this pleasing trait of the Indian character. This love of nature and of natural things appears to be a predominate feature of Capt. FREMONT'S character, and it fitted him in a peculiar manner for his enterprise. He had to traverse an immense country, where the foot of civilized man had as yet scarcely trod, and where the rich stores of Nature, in the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal world, presented much that had yet never been looked upon by the eye of science. How necessary was it, therefore, that he should possess not only the feeling and taste which prompted to continued observation of what was around him, but also the judgment which could estimate, and the science which could describe, the novelties which he met with. We think that he combined these requisites in a very rare degree. To these qualities he added a perseverance which no difficulties could weary, a courage which no danger could appal, and a hardness of frame which excess of

toil, deprivation of food and rest, and exposure of every kind, could not subdue.

On the 20th June he says:

"Along our route the *amorpha* has been in very abundant but variable bloom—in some places bending beneath the weight of purple clusters; in others without a flower. It seems to love best the sunny slopes, with a dark soil and southern exposure. Every where the rose is met with, and reminds us of cultivated gardens and civilization. It is scattered over the prairies in small bouquets, and, when glittering in the dews, and waving in the pleasant breeze of the early morning, is the most beautiful of the prairie flowers. The *atemisia*, absinthe, or prairie sage, as it is variously called, is increasing in size, and glitters like silver as the southern breeze turns up its leaves to the sun. All these plants have their insect inhabitants, variously colored; taking generally the hue of the flower on which they live. The *artemisia* has its small fly accompanying it through every change of elevation and latitude; and, wherever I have seen the *asclepias tuberosa*, I have always remarked, too, on the flower a large butterfly, so nearly resembling it in color as to be distinguishable at a little distance only by the motion of its wings."

On the 22d, when halting at Wyeth's Creek, he met with a very unexpected mark of civilization, in the appearance "of a pack of cards, lying loose on the grass, making an encampment of our Oregon emigrants."

The first meeting with Indians and with buffalo are noticed in the following very graphic paragraphs:

"At our evening camp, (June 23,) about sunset, three figures were discovered approaching, which our glasses made out to be Indians. They proved to be Cheyennes—two men, and a boy of thirteen.—About a month since, they had left their people on the south fork of the river, some three hundred miles to the westward, and a party of only four in number had been to the Pawnee villages on a horse stealing excursion, from which they were returning unsuccessful. They were miserably mounted on wild horses from the Arkansas plains, and had no other weapons than bows and long spears; and, had they been discovered by the Pawnees, could not, by any possibility, have escaped.—They were mortified by their ill success, and said the Pawnees were cowards, who shut up their horses in their lodges at night. I invited them to supper with me, and Randolph and the young Cheyenne, who had been eyeing each other suspiciously and curiously, soon became intimate friends. After supper, we sat down upon the grass, and I placed a sheet of paper between us, on which they traced rudely, but with a certain degree of relative truth, the water-courses of the country which lay between us and their villages, and of which I desired to have some information. Their companions, they told us, had taken a nearer route over the hills; but they had mounted one of the summits to spy out the country, whence they had caught a glimpse of our party, and, confident of good treatment at the hands of the whites, hastened to join company."

"The air was keen the next morning at sunrise, the thermometer standing at 44 degrees, and it was sufficiently cold to make overcoats very comfortable. A few miles brought us into the midst of the buffalo, swarming in immense numbers over the plains, where they had left scarcely a blade of grass standing. Mr. Preuss, who was sketching at a little distance in the rear, had at first noted them as large groves of timber. In the sight of such a mass of life, the traveller feels a strange emotion of grandeur. We had heard from a distance a dull and confused murmuring, and when we came in view of their dark masses, there was not one among us who did not feel his heart beat quicker. It was the early part of the day, when the herds are feeding, and every where they were in motion. Here and there a huge old bull was rolling in the grass, and clouds of dust rose in the air from various parts of the bands, each the scene of some obstinate fight. Indians and buffalo make the poetry and life of the prairie, and our camp was full of their exhilaration. In place of the quiet monotony of the march, relieved only by the cracking of the whip, and an 'avance done! enfant de garce!' shouts and songs resounded from every part of the line, and our evening camp was always the commencement of a feast, which terminated only with our departure on the following morning. At any time of the night might be seen pieces of the most delicate and choicest meat roasting *en appolas* on sticks around the fire, and the guard were never without company. With pleasant weather and no enemy to fear, an abundance of the most excellent meat, and no scarcity of bread or tobacco, they were enjoying the oasis of a voyageur's life."

"As we were riding slowly along this afternoon, (July 4,) clouds of dust in the ravines, among the hills to the right, suddenly attracted our attention, and in a few minutes column after column of buffalo came galloping down, making directly to the river. By the time the leading herds had reached the water the prairie was darkened with the dense masses.—Immediately before us, when the bands first came down into the valley, stretched

an unbroken line, the head of which was lost among the river hills on the opposite side; and still they poured down from the ridge on our right. From hill to hill, the prairie bottom was certainly not less than two miles wide; and, allowing the animals to be ten feet apart and only ten in a line, there were already eleven thousand in view. Some idea may thus be formed of their number when they had occupied the whole plain. In a short time they surrounded us on every side, extending for several miles in the rear, and forward as far as the eye could reach; leaving around us, as we advanced, an open space of only two or three hundred yards. This movement of the buffalo indicated to us the presence of Indians on the North fork."

"I halted earlier than usual about forty miles from the junction, and all hands were soon busily engaged in preparing a feast to celebrate the day. The kindness of our friends at St. Louis had provided us with a large supply of excellent preserves and rich fruit cake; and when these were added to a macaroni soup and variously prepared dishes of the choicest buffalo meat, crowned with a cup of coffee, and enjoyed with prairie appetite, we felt, as we sat in barbaric luxury around our smoking supper on the grass, a greater sensation of enjoyment than the Roman epicure at his perfumed feast. But, most of all, it seemed to please our Indian friends, who, in the unrestrained enjoyment of the moment, demanded to know if our 'medicine days came often. No restraint was exercised at the hospitable board, and, to the great delight of its elders, our young Indian had made himself extremely drunk."

"On the 6th we crossed the bed of a considerable stream, now entirely dry—a bed of sand. In a grove of willows, near the mouth, were the remains of a considerable fort, constructed of trunks of large trees. It was apparently very old, and had probably been the scene of some hostile encounter among the roving tribes.—Its solitude formed an impressive contrast to the picture which our imaginations involuntarily drew of the busy scene which had been enacted here. The timber appeared to have been much more extensive formerly than now. There were but few trees, a kind of long-leaved willow, standing; and numerous trunks of large trees were scattered about on the ground. In many similar places I had occasion to remark an apparent progressive decay in the timber."

It is an important inquiry to what this decay of timber is owing, and whether it exists generally in this region? Too many accurate observations cannot be made, or too many facts recorded, as to its extent and the accompanying circumstances.

On the 7th July, we find the following anecdote curiously illustrative of the history and habits of the buffalo:

"In the course of the afternoon, dust rising among the hills at a particular place attracted our attention; and, riding up, we found a band of eighteen or twenty buffalo bulls engaged in a desperate fight. Though butting and goring were bestowed liberally and without distinction, yet their efforts were evidently directed against one—a huge old bull, very lean, while his adversaries were all fat and in good order. He appeared very weak, and had already received some wounds, and while we were looking on, was several times knocked down and badly hurt, and a very few minutes would have put an end to him. Of course we took the side of the weaker party, and attacked the herd; but they were so blind with rage that they fought on, utterly regardless of our presence, although on foot and on horseback we were firing in open view within twenty yards of them. But this did not last long. In a very few seconds we created a commotion among them.—One or two which were knocked over by the balls jumped up and ran off into the hills; and they began to retreat slowly along a broad ravine to the river, fighting furiously as they went. By the time they had reached the bottom we had pretty well dispersed them, and the old bull hobbled off to lie down somewhere."

The great beauty, profusion, and variety of the flowers in the wilderness is often noted. On the 12th July "our road lay down the valley of the Platte, which resembled a garden in the splendor of fields of varied flowers, which filled the air with fragrance. The only timber I noticed consisted of poplar, birch, cottonwood, and willow."

On the 13th, when in longitude 104 degrees 39 min. 37 sec. and latitude 41 deg. 8 min. 31 sec., and at an elevation of 5,440 feet above the sea, Captain Fremont says:

"It will be seen, by occasional remarks on the geographical formation, that the constituents of the soil in these regions are good, and every day served to strengthen the impression in my mind, confirmed by subsequent observation, that the barren appearance of the country is due almost entirely to the extreme dryness of the climate."

On the 14th, the following curious geological scene is noticed:

"The winds and rains work this formation into a variety of singular forms. The pass into Goshen's hole is about two miles wide, and the hill on the western side im-

tates, in an extraordinary manner, a massive fortified place, with a remarkable fullness of detail. The rock is marl and earthy limestone, white, without the least appearance of vegetation, and much resembles masonry at a little distance; and here it sweeps around a level area two or three hundred yards in diameter, and in the form of a half moon, terminating on either extremity in enormous bastions.—Along the whole line of the parapets appear domes and slender minarets, forty or fifty feet high, giving it every appearance of an old fortified town. On the waters of White river, where this formation exists in great extent, it presents appearances which excite the admiration of the solitary voyager, and form a frequent theme of their conversation when speaking of the wonders of the country. Sometimes it offers the perfectly illusive appearance of a large city, with numerous streets and magnificent buildings, among which the Canadians never fail to see their *cabaret*; and sometimes it takes the form of a solitary house, with many large chambers, into which they drive their horses at night, and sleep in these natural defences perfectly secure from any attack of prowling savages. Before reaching our camp at Goshen's hole, in crossing the immense detritus at the foot of the Castle rock, we were involved amidst winding passages cut by the waters of the hill; and where, with a breadth scarcely large enough for the passage of a horse, the walls rise thirty and forty feet perpendicularly. This formation supplies the discoloration of the Platte."

On the 15th of July, the party reached Fort John, or Laramie, a post of the American Fur Company, situated near the junction of the Laramie with the Platte. Respecting this post Capt. F. says:

"It is hardly necessary to say that the object of the establishment is to trade with the neighboring tribes, who, in the course of the year, generally make two or three visits to the fort. In addition to this, traders, with a small outfit, are constantly kept amongst them. The articles of trade consist, on the one side, almost entirely of buffalo robes; and, on the other, of blankets, calicoes, guns, powder, and lead, with such cheap ornaments as glass-beads, looking-glasses, rings, vermilion for painting, tobacco, and principally, and in spite of the prohibition, of spirits, brought into the country in the form of alcohol, and diluted with water before sold. While mentioning this fact, it is but justice to the American Fur Company to state, that, throughout the country, I have always found them strenuously opposed to the introduction of spirituous liquors.—But, in the present state of things, when the country is supplied with alcohol, when a keg of it will purchase from an Indian every thing he possesses—his furs, his lodge, his horses, and even his wife and children—and when any vagabond who has money enough to purchase a mule can go into a village and trade against them successfully, without withdrawing entirely from the trade, it is impossible for them to discontinue its use. In their opposition to this practice, the company is sustained, not only by their obligation to the laws of the country and the welfare of the Indians, but clearly, also, on grounds of policy; for, with heavy and expensive outfits, they contend at manifestly great disadvantage against the numerous independent and unlicensed traders, who enter the country from various avenues, from the United States and from Mexico, having no other stock in trade than some kegs of liquor, which they sell at the modest price of thirty-six dollars per gallon. The difference between the regular trader and the *coureur des bois*, (as the French call the itinerant or peddling traders) with respect to the sale of spirits, is here, as it always has been, fixed and permanent, and growing out of the nature of their trade. The regular trader looks ahead, and has an interest in the preservation of the Indians, and in the regular pursuit of their business, and the preservation of their arms, horses, and every thing necessary to their future and permanent success in hunting; the *coureur des bois*, has no permanent interest, and gets what he can, and for what he can, from every Indian he meets, even at the risk of disabling him from doing any thing more at hunting."

"The fort had a very cool and clean appearance. The great entrance, in which I found the gentlemen assembled, and which was floored, and about fifteen feet long, made a pleasant, shaded seat, through which the breeze swept constantly; for this country is famous for high winds."

The unfavorable information received from the gentlemen of the fort, respecting the temper and position of the Indians, led to much consultation and deliberation:

"It appeared that the country was swarming with scattered war parties; and when I heard, during the day, the various contradictory and exaggerated rumors which were incessantly repeated to them, I was not surprised that so much alarm prevailed among my men. Carson, one of the best and most experienced mountaineers, fully supported the opinion given by Bridger of the dangerous state of the country, and openly expressed his conviction that we could not escape without some sharp encounters with the Indians. In addition to this, he made his will; and among the circumstances which were constantly occurring to increase their alarm, this was the most unfortunate; and I found that a

number of my party had become so much intimidated that they had requested to be discharged at this place."

All things, however, being prepared for continuing the route, on the evening of the 10th, Capt. F. says—

"I gathered my men around me, and told them that 'I had determined to proceed the next day. They were all well armed. I had engaged the services of Mr. Bissonette as interpreter, and had taken, in the circumstances, every possible means to ensure our safety. In the rumors we had heard, I believed there was much exaggeration, and then they were men accustomed to this kind of life and to the country; and that these were the dangers of every day occurrence, and to be expected in the ordinary course of their service. They had heard of the unsettled condition of the country before leaving St. Louis, and therefore could not make it a reason for breaking their engagements.—Still, I was unwilling to take with me, on a service of some certain danger, men on whom I could not rely; and as I had understood that there were among them some who were disposed to cowardice, and anxious to return, they had but to come forward at once, and state their desire, and they would be discharged with the amount due to them for the time they had served.' To their honor be it said, there was but one among them who had the face to come forward and avail himself of the permission. I asked him some few questions, in order to expose him to the ridicule of the men, and let him go.—The day after our departure, he engaged himself to one of the forts, and set off with a party for the Upper Missouri. I did not think that the situation of the country justified me in taking our young companions, Messrs. Brant and Benton, along with us. In case of misfortune, it would have been thought, at the least, an act of great imprudence; and, therefore, though reluctantly, I determined to leave them. Randolph had been the life of the camp, and the 'petit garcon' was much regretted by the men, to whom his buoyant spirits had afforded great amusement. They all, however, agreed in the propriety of leaving him at the fort, because, as they said, he might cost the lives of some of the men in a fight with the Indians."

On the 22d July, the party had a "fine view of the gorge where the Platte issues from the Black-hills, changing its character abruptly from a mountain stream into a river of the plains." Captain F. thus describes this locality:

"In the morning, while breakfast was being prepared, I visited this place with my favorite man, Basil Lajeunesse. Entering so far as there was footing for the mules, we dismounted, and, tying our animals, continued our way on foot. Like the whole country, the scenery of the river had undergone an entire change, and was in this place the most beautiful I have ever seen. The breadth of the stream, generally near that of its valley, was from two to three hundred feet, with a swift current, occasionally broken by rapids, and the water perfectly clear. On either side, rose the red precipices, vertical, and sometimes overhanging, two and four hundred feet in height, crowned with green summits, on which were scattered a few pines. At the foot of the rocks was the usual detritus, formed of masses fallen from above. Among the pines that grew here, and on the occasional banks, were the cherry, (*cerasus virginiana*), currants, and grains de boué, (*shepherdia argentæa*). Viewed in the sunshine of a pleasant morning, the scenery was of a most striking and romantic beauty, which arose from the picturesque disposition of the objects, and the vivid contrast of colors. I thought with much pleasure of our approaching descent in the canoe through such interesting places; and, in the expectation of being able at that time to give to them a full examination, did not now dwell so much as might have been desirable upon the geological formations along the line of the river, where they are developed with great clearness. The upper portion of the red strata consists of very compact clay, in which are occasionally seen imbedded large pebbles. Below was a stratum of compact red sandstone, changing a little above the river into a hard siliceous limestone. There is a small but handsome open prairie immediately below this place, on the left bank of the river, which would be a good locality for a military post. There are some open groves of cotton-wood on the Platte. The small stream which comes in at this place is well timbered with pine, and good building rock is abundant."

"If it is in contemplation to keep open the communications with Oregon territory, a show of military force in this country is absolutely necessary; and a combination of advantages renders the neighborhood of Fort Laramie the most suitable place, on the line of the Platte, for the establishment of a military post. It is connected with the mouth of the Platte and the Upper Missouri by excellent roads, which are in frequent use, and would not in any way interfere with the range of the buffalo, on which the neighboring Indians mainly depend for support. It would render any post on the Lower Platte unnecessary; the ordinary communication between it and the Missouri being sufficient to control the intermediate Indians. It would operate effectually to prevent any such combinations as are now formed among the Gros Ventres, Sioux, Cheyennes, and other Indians, and would keep the Oregon road through the valley of the Sweet Water and the South Pass of the mountains constantly open. A glance at the map which accompanies this report will show that it lies at the foot of a broken and mountainous region, along which, by the establishment of small posts in the neighborhood of St. Vrain's fort, on the south fork of the Platte, and Bent's fort, on the Arkansas, a line of communication would be formed, by good wagon roads, with our Southern military posts, which would entirely command the mountain passes, hold some of the most troublesome tribes in check, and protect and facilitate our intercourse with the neighboring Spanish settlements. The valleys of the rivers on which they would be situated are fertile; the country, which supports immense herds of buffalo, is admirably adapted to grazing; and herds of cattle might be maintained by the posts, or obtained from the Spanish country, which already supplies a portion of their provisions to the trading posts mentioned above."

"With the change in the geological formation on leaving Fort Laramie, the whole face of the country has entirely altered its appearance. Eastward of that meridian the principal objects which strike the eye of a traveller are the absence of timber, and the immense expanse of prairie, covered with the verdure of rich grasses, and highly adapted for pasture. Wherever they are not disturbed by the vicinity of man, large herds of buffalo give animation to this country. Westward of Laramie river the region is sandy, and apparently sterile; and the place of the grass is usurped by the