

Werk

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PREFATORY NOTICE.

THE immense region west of the Rocky Mountains, extending to the Pacific Ocean, and bounded by the Russian frontier on the north, and California on the south, now attracts so much of popular regard, and is commingled with so many important national interests, that some authentic account of that territory cannot but be acceptable in Great Britain, as well as to American citizens.

Several exploring tours of the western portion of the American continent, within the geographical boundaries of the wilds now commonly known by the title, OREGON, have taken place during the present century. President Jefferson, in 1804, directed the first scrutiny in that country under the superintendence of Messrs. Lewis and Clarke, who devoted the larger part of three years to the examination of those trackless forests, and who were the pioneers of the movements which are now extending the limits of civilization, where Indians, or deer, bears, or buffaloes, only roamed. The second expedition, by Major Pike, to survey the West, forty years ago, was restricted to the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains, and consequently communicated little direct intelligence concerning the lands, the possession of which is now the subject of controversy between the United States and Great Britain.

The other subsequent travellers in the western territory confined their researches within the country through which the Upper Mississippi and Missouri flow, and therefore imparted no information of any importance concerning the Oregon lands, rivers, and other topics of public interest.

During several years, however, from 1833 to 1838, Mr. Nicollet, a scientific tourist, explored a very extensive portion of the

western country beyond the northern branches of the Mississippi. At the close of his amateur travels, the government of the United States engaged him to repeat his journey in another region; and Captain Fremont was united with him to assist his efforts. After an absence of two seasons they returned, and exhibited the result of their discoveries and astronomical observations, and topographical admeasurements to the government at Washington.

It being desirable for the government of the United States to become fully acquainted with the state of the territory between the southern geographical boundary of the United States and the Rocky Mountains, around the head-waters of the Missouri, Captain Fremont was appointed to superintend that exploring tour. That enterprising and scientific traveller is now absent on his *third* expedition, to enlarge our acquaintance with the western uninhabited districts.

The ensuing Narratives include the REPORTS of the two tours which have already been made by Captain Fremont, as they were presented to the Congress of the United States, and originally published by their command; excluding only the portions which are altogether astronomical, scientific, and philosophical, and, therefore, not adapted for general utility. Captain Fremont states, that the whole of the delineations, both "in the narrative and in the maps," which constitute the official publication, are "the result of positive observation." From a survey of the researches thus presented, it appears that the entire map of Oregon has been amply drawn out, so far as at present is requisite for all the purposes of geographical inquiry and national arrangement. With these claims on public attention, and the deep interest which the subject itself now offers, this authentic edition of Captain Fremont's extensive and protracted researches in the western wilds of the American continent, is submitted to the British public.

London, Dec. 29th, 1845.

