

*Frémont, the West's Greatest Adventurer.* By ALLAN NEVINS.  
(New York: Harper & Brothers, 1928. Two volumes. Pp. 738. \$10.00.)

The author, Allan Nevins, after work as an educator and editor, is now of the *New York World's* editorial staff. Another work by him, *The Emergence of Modern America, 1865-1878*, was reviewed in the last issue of this *Quarterly*. The preface of this new work, dated at New York City, July 30, 1927, says: "This is an attempt at an honest and impartial biography of a man who has been the subject of excessive laudation and excessive detraction." The same thing was successfully attempted in 1913 by Frederick S. Dellenbaugh in his *Frémont and '49*. But Mr. Nevins mentions Mr. Dellenbaugh with twenty-three others, saying: "Without their aid the book would have been impossible."

At this time and with such acknowledge assistance this pair of books on Frémont should prove to be definitive. An adequate biography of the "Pathfinder" is a large and difficult task. It is believed that Mr. Nevins has performed that task well. Western readers will love again to travel with Frémont on his five expeditions across the continent, but all readers, east and west, will turn the pages quickly to test the promised remedy of "excessive detraction." Such quest leads to Chapters XXXIII and XXXIV, entitled "Out of Favor with Lincoln" and "The Defeat of the Blairs."

Although these chapters are convincing there are two hurdles across the path of their logic—the wavering of Lincoln and the sturdiness of Frémont during the campaign of 1864. Little doubt remains as to the baleful influence of the Blairs in that crisis.

Other chapters, beside those two, fully justify the statement in the publishers' blurb: "An unusual feature of the biography is the picture it gives of Jessie Benton Frémont, whose romance with the dashing young lieutenant survived over half a century, and whose charm, wit, loyalty, and intelligence played no small rôle in her husband's distinguished career."

The familiar record of Frémont in Oregon is given in Chapter XI. One distinctly new note is the revival of interest in Theodore Talbot, a member of the expedition. Hubert Howe Bancroft in his *History of Nevada, Colorado and Wyoming*, page 62, mentions Lieutenant Talbot as leader of one branch of the party on its division before crossing the Sierras into California. Mr. Bancroft quoted from a manuscript record by Thomas S.

Martin. Mr. Nevins now quotes from a manuscript referred to as "a fresh and naive little record," written by Talbot, himself, and found in the Library of Congress.

One of the most convincing portions of this new biography is the chapter devoted to bibliography. The author discusses understandingly the abundant primary and secondary sources used by him. He closes this chapter by reference to a mass of manuscript materials "generously supplied the author by members of the Frémont family." These papers were carefully and gratefully used but the author takes opportunity to say that his main conclusions were reached independently of them, adding: "They did not, in fact, come into his possession until this biography was largely written." It is evident that the author does not wish the reader to feel that he has yielded to the natural partiality of family papers, but he is thoroughly convinced of the historical value of those papers. He says they contain "untouched materials of great historical interest." Everyone will find delight in his concluding sentence about those papers: "He is pleased to think that his efforts contributed in some degree to induce the family, with great generosity, to deposit them in the Bancroft Library in Berkeley, California."

EDMOND S. MEANY.

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*A Bibliography of Alaskan Literature, 1724-1924.* By JAMES WICKERSHAM. (Cordova, Alaska: Cordova Daily Times Print, 1928. Pp. 27+635.)

The publication of Judge James Wickersham's *Bibliography of Alaskan Literature* may well be considered a notable event. This book brings together in available and convenient form more than ten thousand references to histories, travels, voyages, newspapers, periodicals and public documents relating to Russian America or Alaska from 1724 to and including 1924. It wholly supercedes the pioneer bibliographies of Dall and Baker (1879 and 1884) and the more recent list of A. H. Brooks (1906). Few if any of the commonwealths of the United States can claim an equally adequate and satisfactory survey of their bibliographical resources.

The preparation of this monumental work began in 1908 when the compiler was sent to Congress as the Territorial Delegate from Alaska. Nearly twenty years of successful and persistent work has been devoted to collecting material and about