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JOHN McLOUGHLIN.

THE STORY OF OREGON.

A History

With Portraits and Biographies

BY

JULIAN HAWTHORNE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

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PREFACE.

A NETWORK of human traditions, interests, and sympathies overspreads this planet as nerves interweave and radiate over the body of the human being ; so that no region is so remote but that its organic relation with all other regions may be recognized and traced. Emerson, the American poet whose spiritual vision is purest and best sustained, says :

“ There is no sequestered grot,
Lone mountain tarn, or isle forgot,
But Justice, journeying in the sphere,
Daily stoops to harbor there.”

What is true of the moral principle is true also of the principle of human solidarity. The humblest plebeian, not less than the most fastidious patrician, may trace his genealogy back to Adam ; and every country inhabited by man, following the trail of its origin into “ the dark backward and abysm of time,” will be led through successive historic eras until it is landed at length in the mystic Oriental cradle of the race.

This truth is conspicuously and picturesquely exemplified by the new State of Oregon, with the leading features of whose discovery and development the ensuing pages are concerned. It is not too much to say that the westward movement which ended on the banks of the Columbia and Willamette began on the banks of the Euphrates. It was a world movement, and a full history of its various contributing causes and incidental episodes would constitute a history of the world. After the ad-

vance-guard of the great emigration had reached the British Isles, and had paused there for a thousand years or more, a Genoese sailor braved the problematical horizons of the Atlantic, and, by chance, led the way to that point of the Western Continent across which is the shortest and most direct transit to the Pacific. The fact that this discovery was made under the auspices of a certain powerful and warlike European nation, which thereby became, according to unwritten law, the owner of the pass, led the other nations of Europe to seek for a similar pass far to the north. The theory upon which they acted was proved, after the lapse of some centuries, to be baseless; but the mistake, like many other human errors, resulted in a great good. Had Spain not aroused the rivalry of the rest of Europe by laying her hand on the Isthmus and Mexico, no effort would have been made to find a northwest passage; and the discovery of Oregon would have been indefinitely belated.

When Charles II. granted a charter to the Hudson's Bay Company, his object was to establish a permanent exploring station in the immediate vicinity of the supposed passage; the agents of the company were to push their investigations systematically year after year, until the northwest outlet was found, and were to support themselves meanwhile upon whatever products the country afforded. The company were not long in recognizing the fact that prosperity, for them, lay not in opening a way to the Pacific, but in concealing it, if it existed, and developing the immense wealth to be derived from the sale of furs. This policy, manifestly hostile to the interests of civilization, was successfully pursued until the issue of our Revolutionary War left the citizens of the United States at leisure to look into the true nature and value of the northwest territory. From that date civilization, as represented by ourselves, was engaged in a struggle with barbarism, personified by Great Britain. The conflict, of course, represented no essential difference in the standards of morality and degrees of enlighten-

ment of the two peoples ; but it so happened that the interests of the United States were, in this instance, identified with the irresistible tide of human progress ; and the power of England, mighty as it was, must needs give way before it. Oregon was the field of battle, owing to its geographical position ; but neither party to the struggle had any conception of its incalculable value as a source of natural wealth and a home for happy and prosperous men and women. It is only of recent years, in short, that Oregon has ceased to be an object of desire merely as a means to something else, and has become recognized and prized for its intrinsic worth and beauty.

The difficulties and obstacles which attended our efforts to possess and occupy Oregon are typical of those which render arduous the attainment of anything vitally worth having. The Happy Valley was withheld from us not only by man, in the persons of savage aborigines and the agents of the company, but was girdled about by nature herself with barriers that seemed all but impassable. Fifteen thousand miles of pathless ocean separated New York from Astoria by one route ; by the other, the pioneer must cross deserts yet more perilous than the sea, and scale mountains whose awful heights were terrifying even to contemplate. The fairy tales of old, of bowers of delight guarded by dreadful enchantments, but faintly symbolize the realities of peril and effort which were confronted and overcome by the Oregon pioneers ; and as the fairy prince who finally reached the shrine was supposed to personify the highest mortal attribute, so the bulk of the men and women who finally fought their way into the Willamette Valley and built their log-cabins there, represented inevitably the very best bone and blood and character that the Western Continent had produced ; and they were therefore worthy to become the progenitors of a people destined to the enjoyment of so magnificent a habitation. Had Oregon been easily accessible, the character of its early occupants would naturally have fallen to a much lower level of

manhood and womanhood ; but the pioneers of the Willamette were made of true metal, tested and tempered by a sevenfold heated furnace, and their descendants may be trusted to do them honor. The law of the survival of the fittest has seldom been better illustrated than in the settlement of Oregon. Even California has not so pure a record to show, because, in her case, the passion for sudden wealth was the predominating goad that drove the early emigrants thither. They went not to found homes, but to find nuggets ; and, legitimate though the object was, it nevertheless attracted many of the baser sort, who would otherwise (as the annals of Oregon show) never have been at the pains to cross the Rocky Mountains.

The story of Oregon is stirring and romantic ; it is also, and pre-eminently, the story of the triumph of the American idea. The strong and fine qualities which are at the base of the American character were forced into activity by the circumstances attending the settlement of this corner of our continent. Here the nation may be said to culminate ; the goal of the long pilgrimage round the earth is also the spot where the spirit of the principles imported by the Puritans in 1624 finds its fullest incarnation. The successful establishment of the Provincial Government in the teeth of hostility at home, as well as abroad, proves the sturdy fealty to law and order of men immured in the wilderness, and separated by thousands of miles and months of time from the nearest civilized outposts. They vindicated their right to the support of our Government long before it was conceded to them ; they helped themselves so promptly and ably that the formal act of official recognition was not consummated until after the crisis of affairs was safely passed.

A candid record of these events can never be out of place, though doubtless the time has not yet arrived to write a final history of Oregon. As a social and political creation, its date is still too recent to admit of a broadly philosophical treatment. Statistics are, indeed, not wanting ; but something remains to be done in the way

of grouping them and giving them symmetrical proportion. What is termed historical perspective is difficult to attain in writing of a country whose birth men yet living have seen. History is to-day at least as much a fine art as is the writing of imaginative fiction ; it is no less rich in the interest arising from the manifestations of human nature ; and it is fertile in the problems of social and political science. Little has been or can be done now to forestall the analysis and the verdict of a wiser and more enlightened posterity. Moreover, any contemporary effort in this direction must be subject to a peculiarly embarrassing form of criticism. The critics in this case are persons who have themselves witnessed some part of the events that are described. They are prone to attach disproportionate weight to matters in which they were, in one way or another, directly concerned ; and they will not readily surrender their own prepossessions for the interpretations of strangers. Again, there is a natural disposition, now that the conflicts of the past are over, to extend over both parties to it a common mantle of charity and reconciliation ; and the historian who attempts to attach blame where it seems to him to belong is subjected to the charge of wantonly opening old wounds and reviving memories of acrimonies which were better left to oblivion.

But history and oblivion are irreconcilably antagonistic to each other ; and the writer who tries to form and to express an accurate and conscientious judgment on the subjects that come before him must be prepared for a lack of contemporary sympathy in some quarters, and must appeal to the future for impartial recognition of his own attempts at impartiality. He may fall into errors—he cannot expect to avoid doing so ; but if his intention has been candid and his examination of the materials at his command conscientious, he may accept whatever verdict is passed upon him with equanimity.

The slender volumes which are here submitted to the public make no pretence of competing with the monumental

work of Mr. Hubert Howe Bancroft, which must remain a permanent storehouse of information on the subject in hand. Nor can they take the place of the excellent and spirited digest published a few years ago by Mr. H. L. Wells, under the title "A Popular History of Oregon." The aim of the writer has been to tell his story rapidly and succinctly, omitting nothing essential in the way of events or of human character, but eschewing anything approaching exhaustive statistical data. An effort has been made to maintain a due proportion between the component parts of the chronicle, and to deduce from many sources a residuum of continuous and organic historical truth which shall enable the mind of the reader easily to grasp the narrative as a whole. In addition to valuable aid from the sources above mentioned, the writer is indebted to the annual publications of the Oregon Pioneer Association, and to numberless fugitive articles in newspapers and reviews; also to much interesting autobiographical memoranda, published and unpublished; and, finally, to not a few books published during the early decades of this century.

It is believed that no essential element in the story has been left untouched in the present composition. On the other hand, much may be wanting to the proper explanation or to a revelation of the hidden causes of events. Such deficiencies can be made good only by time; for it is the paradox of history that (within certain large limits) the more remote the occurrences of which it treats, the more full and accurate are the data on which its judgments are based.

Perhaps the most valuable feature of these volumes is the autobiographical portion, kindly contributed by a number of representative living Oregonians. Here will be found information at first hand not otherwise or elsewhere obtainable. For these personal sketches, and for all other helps and courtesies, the writer begs to tender his sincere acknowledgments.

JULIAN HAWTHORNE.

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A HISTORY.

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PART I.

THE ERA OF DISCOVERY.

CHAPTER I.

THE PHANTOM STRAITS.

IF, in this last decade of the nineteenth century, news were to reach us that a route had been established between this earth and the planet Mars, and that precious stones and precious metals had been found there in limitless profusion, we might comprehend the sensations of civilized Europe when, in 1493, it learned that Christopher Columbus had crossed the unknown ocean and discovered a strange land of golden promise on the other side of it.

The mental attitude of the inhabitants of the Old World four centuries ago bears a certain likeness to that of ourselves to-day. They had arrived at the end of a stage in their development. Literature, science, and art had run their course and come to a standstill. Shake-

speare, Descartes, Bacon, Rafael, were still remote and unsuspected in the womb of time. No fresh social, religious, or political gospel had been preached for a thousand years. Geographers had mapped out the earth by such light as they had, and had generally come to the conclusion that it was a diversified plain of limited extent surrounded by boundless and inhospitable seas. The possibilities of existence seemed exhausted, and yet human energy was as restless and unsatisfied as ever. For many generations history had been but a record of wars, waged now for conquest, now for religion, according to the whim of the contending monarchs, as if mankind, finding no other outlet for the instinctive craving for change and action, had been constrained to fly at one another's throats. The Moorish invasions and the Turkish conquests were godsend to the people of Europe, in providing them with something to do and to discuss. The age of chivalric romance had deserved gratitude for its effort to impart sentiment and fancy into the sordid level of life, but its enthusiasm was already beginning to weaken a trifle, as if it had caught a distant echo of Cervantes' laugh a century in the future. Cynics and pessimists were declaring then, as they are declaring now, and have always declared, that the world had seen its best days, and that nothing new or good was to be expected. But the men of deeper and stronger mind, who, then as now, had faith in the boundlessness of human progress, were whispering to one another that the time was ripe for a great change, and they were looking this way and that for signs of its approach.

One man, at least, of these believers had the energy and courage to go forth to meet the change, or to make it, instead of waiting for it to come to him. Columbus was the pivot upon which the world turned in 1492. The world needs, and it will doubtless find, such another pivot now. Columbuses are rare, but they never fail to appear at the critical moment. And to-day, when re-

ligion seems rich in forms but poor in spirit ; when science is knocking at the door of the unseen, and can gain no admittance ; when literature refines upon itself and ceases to create ; when social life is as the glittering crust suspended over a dark abyss—at this hour mankind is conscious of an undefined unrest, a suspense, an anticipation of some new avatar waiting to be born. It may be that the hope is premature ; or it may be the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus's great discovery may introduce to us another Columbus destined to reveal to us regions of the intellect or of the spirit, answering, as soul to body, to the revelation of his predecessor.

Be that as it may, it is with the past and not with the future that we are now to deal. By dint of a steadfastness of faith and purpose that were all but superhuman, Columbus gained his goal, and on October 12th, 1492, he planted on the shores of the island named San Salvador the royal banner of Spain. Fourteen years afterward he died at Valladolid in poverty and neglect, and without even knowing the true magnitude of his own achievement. But he had unlocked the gates of the future ; and coming generations yielded him the honor that, during his lifetime, had been denied him. Balboa, Cortez, and Mendoza carried on the work that he had begun ; and, as the broad Pacific unrolled itself before their eyes, they realized with awe and triumph that this new world was not (as had at first been supposed) the eastern shores of the old, but a veritable unknown continent between two oceans.

It would be difficult to overestimate the excitement which this event aroused in Europe. The news seemed almost too great to be true. The pent-up imagination, the misdirected activity of a thousand years, burst forth in a great flame of purpose and accomplishment. Here was an untrodden stage on which to enact a fresh drama of existence. Here was wealth beyond computation, wonders outvying the inventions of poets, sources of

power unlimited and incalculable. The kings and peoples of weary and mephitic Europe lifted up their heads, snuffed up this strange, life-giving air from the West, and sprang to their feet recreated. From the dull inertia of scepticism they passed in an hour to the wildest extremes of credulity: they believed the impossible; their dazzled eyes heeded not the most naked inconsistencies and absurdities. Observing this, an army of impostors arose to profit by it. Stories of preposterous voyages and discoveries were circulated, and found everywhere eager and grave acceptance. Maps were made and remade; rivers, cities, treasures that had no existence, became household words. The northwest passage was found and lost again and again, each time in a different place. Latitudes were hopelessly confused; longitude was altogether ignored; an error of three thousand miles more or less was a trifle. For a hundred years and more the din of assertion, contradiction, question, and asseveration continued. At last, with the sheer exhaustion of inventiveness, a new scepticism set in, and the few facts that emerged from the chaos were looked at askance. The world had become surfeited with marvels, and could digest no more. Then began a more scientific and less sensational order of procedure, productive of solid and rational results. Meanwhile, the nations fell to wrangling over their spoils, and the golden glory in the western heavens grew dimmer, and its lower edges were tinged blood-red.

And yet the wildest and most baseless fancies of those early explorers and improvisators were errors in kind rather than in degree. The resources and the wealth of this continent are even greater than they had imagined, though they are not derived from gold and precious stones. The transformation which the discovery of America has wrought in the condition and destinies of the world is mightier and profounder than its discoverers had conceived. They believed not wisely, but not too

well. The ways of Providence are not laid out in accordance with human forecasts, yet they reach farther and higher than our anticipation. Mankind is never disappointed, though the fulfilment of its hopes arrives by unexpected channels. We have already passed beyond the limits of the glowing prophecies of the men of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and yet we are but at the outset of our career.

Under Charles V. and Philip II., Spain, in the first half of the sixteenth century, reached its zenith of power and renown. It was her flag that was first unfurled to the winds of the western world, and she arrogated to herself the ownership of the new territory. By the custom of nations, discovery involved possession; and the Spanish kings were not disposed to abate a tittle of their rights. They claimed nothing less than the whole continent, from the Arctic to the Antarctic, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. But it is one thing to claim; to hold is another.

Nevertheless, chance had led them to the point most convenient for the maintenance of their assumptions. They had first set foot upon, or near, the narrowest part of the continent. It was not until twenty-seven years later, in 1519, that Magellan found a passage through the straits that bear his name. The existence of Cape Horn and of the Antarctic Ocean was not then suspected; it was supposed that Terra del Fuego was the northern extremity of another continent. Thus, by fortifying the isthmus and the straits, Spain could control the entire Pacific coast of America and the trade with China and the Indies.

On the Atlantic, of course, her channels of communication were exposed to attack; but she possessed the most powerful navy of the world, and had little to fear even then. Such sources of revenue as were thus suddenly opened to her had never before been conceived of; and for years they supplied her treasury with

the means of fighting down all rivalry. But the very greatness of her prosperity became the measure of the enterprise and determination of her enemies ; and by slow but sure degrees the latter gained upon her. For full eighty years, however, she remained practically unmolested.

Her policy during this long period was vigorous and sagacious. Her kings encouraged private enterprise, hesitating not to grant possession of any given region to whomsoever should first gain access to it, together with all revenues thence accruing after the portion due the Crown had been paid. The Spaniards were persistent and successful colonists ; they lost no time in planting their roots in the soil, and so deeply that even now they flourish. What avarice neglected to grasp, was seized by religion ; the priesthood overspread the land ; the bells of the missions answered one another for a thousand miles along the coast, and the helpless heathen were converted wholesale. Indeed, it was to the cross and the confessional more than to the sword that Spain owed her ascendancy in the New World. Greed and the passion for adventure might tire or falter, but not so the zeal for the Catholic faith that unlocked heaven with St. Peter's keys.

It was not until 1577 that Spain received her first serious check. It came from her traditional enemy, England ; and its instrument was a Devonshire mariner, one Francis Drake. Drake nowadays would be called a pirate ; but in the age of Elizabeth he was but making war on his own account, with the unexpressed connivance of the British Crown. He had heard of the Straits of Magellan, and, in spite of the reputed terrors of the passage, he resolved to try his fortune by that route. He set sail, accordingly, with three vessels, one of which was wrecked, while another put back to England ; but the third, with Drake himself at the helm, entered the Pacific, and thenceforth he had the defenceless Spanish

ports and galleons at his mercy. He improved his opportunity to the utmost, and his plunder was limited only by the capacity of his vessel. With hatches bursting with treasure, he then steered northward along the coast; for he feared to fall in with the Spanish men-of-war should he return the way he came, and he hoped to get back to the Atlantic and to England by way of the Straits of Anian.

What were the Straits of Anian? That is a question which the principal nations of Europe tried to answer for more than two hundred and fifty years. And since their efforts in that direction had much to do with the discovery of Oregon, it is proper that we should devote a few minutes' attention to the matter.

It was in the last year of the fifteenth century that an adventurous Portuguese sailor, by the name of Cortereal, bethought himself that possibly there might be a way across or through the new continent at its northern end. It had been, by this time, generally conceded that the earth was a sphere: but what its circumference might be was still a matter of conjecture. Longitude, as we have already observed, was still imperfectly comprehended; mariners knew how to estimate their distance from the equator, but the problem of easting and westing was beyond them. Most of them underestimated the girth of the globe by from five to ten thousand miles. Cortereal was aware of the existence of the Indian Ocean; but Balboa had not yet discovered the Pacific, and Cortereal imagined that either America was India, or else that it was a comparatively narrow strip of land running north and south, separated from India by a long, river-like sea of moderate breadth.

Northward he steered accordingly, and coasting along Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, rounded Cape Race, and sailed up the northeast coast of Labrador. Passing between Cape Chidley and Cape Best, he entered Hudson's Straits, and so found his way into the mighty waters of

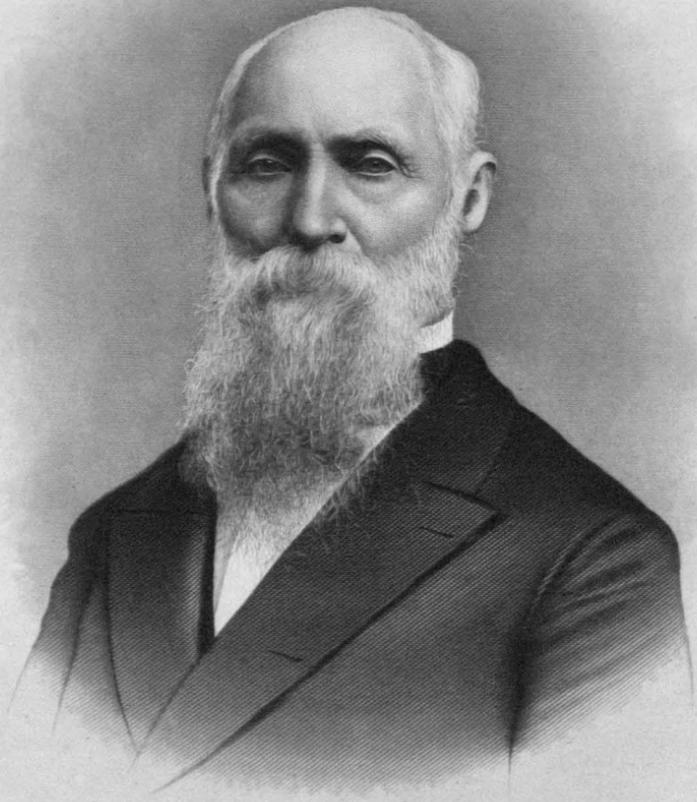
Hudson's Bay. Most of these names, of course, were bestowed long after Cortereal's time.

The navigator now took it for granted that he had proved his theory. He never doubted that he had made the northwest passage, and that Hudson's Bay communicated directly with the Indian Ocean. Since, however, India was not his present destination, he put his ship about, and returned to Portugal the way he had come. There he reported that there was an easy route round the northern end of the continent, and he christened it the Straits of Anian—a name which has given philologists food for no little futile speculation.

Here the matter was allowed to rest for twenty-one years. Then Magellan made his southern voyage into the Pacific, crossed it, doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and thus circumnavigated the globe. Europe began to learn by that voyage what a gigantic expanse of water the Pacific was, and, reverting to Cortereal's discovery, came to the conviction that it was into the Pacific and not into the Indian Ocean that his "Straits of Anian" led.

During the seventy-seven years that elapsed between Cortereal's voyage and Francis Drake's buccaneering expedition, many navigators, French, Dutch, and English, had tried to follow in Cortereal's wake; but none of them had been successful. Others, however, pretended to have made the passage; and probably no one actually disbelieved that such an avenue of transit existed. Indeed, few things in the history of geography are more remarkable than is the pertinacity with which this conviction was held. It is to be observed, moreover, that the conviction was justified by the fact; the northwest passage does exist, only, instead of water, there is everlasting ice. To Drake, at all events, the idea of such a passage was familiar, and he now designed to avail himself of it for his return trip.

The issues of this voyage were more important than



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W. W. Chapman

Drake imagined ; otherwise he would have taken pains to keep an accurate log-book. When, in 1846, the English and American Commission met to discuss the division of the Oregon country, the dispute turned in great measure upon the question, how far up the Oregon coast Drake had sailed his ship. If he had gone as far as latitude 48° , then England had a colorable claim to the coast as far down as the mouth of the Columbia River. If, on the other hand, he had stopped at latitude 43° , as the Americans contended, then we were entitled to draw our boundary as high as $54^{\circ} 40'$. The grounds of the dispute may be briefly stated as follows :

Drake was not the first explorer of Oregon ; but he was the first and last Englishman to sail along that coast until 1778, when Captain Cook investigated and mapped out the region. During this interval of two hundred years several Spanish expeditions had penetrated as far as Alaska—fully ten degrees beyond Drake's highest claim. More to the point, however, was the fact that some five-and-thirty years before Drake's time, Ferrelo, a Spanish captain, acting under instructions from the Spanish viceroy, De Mendoza, had effected a landing at about the forty-third parallel. If, therefore, the true limit of Drake's voyage was latitude 43° , he had been anticipated by Ferrelo, and England's plea fell to the ground. If, on the contrary, his limit was 48° , then he superseded Ferrelo, and anticipated the subsequent Spanish expeditions.

Obviously, then, the question turns upon whether 43° or 48° be the correct figure. Reasonable probability favors the former. Drake, not being a person of literary tastes, wrote no account of his adventures himself ; but an eminent geographer of the period, Richard Hakluyt, published an account of them, purporting to have emanated from one Francis Pretty, who was an officer in Drake's ship. This Francis Pretty is authority for the 43° version of the story. The claim for 48° , on the

other hand, is based upon nothing better than a narrative published by Drake's nephew, seventy years after the date of the voyage, and full of many gross misstatements. Now, assuming 43° to be correct, it follows that Spain's cession to this country, in 1819, of her possessions in the northwest, extending to $54^{\circ} 40'$, was valid. But if we accept 48° , then England's right to the coast-line as far down as the Columbia River may be allowed. As a matter of fact, the Commission compromised on the forty-ninth parallel, which is the present northern boundary of the United States as far east as the Lake of the Woods. We shall touch upon this discussion again in its proper chronological place. We now return to Drake.

Having convinced himself that the Straits of Anian, if they existed at all, were not worth the trouble it took to find them, the Englishman turned back, with the idea of getting home by the long route round the Cape of Good Hope. Adverse gales drove him back upon the Californian coast, in latitude 38° ; he anchored in what is now known as Drake's Bay, and remained there five weeks. San Pablo Bay is in the same latitude, on the eastern side of the promontory; and it has been believed that Drake passed through the Golden Gate, and was thus the discoverer of San Francisco harbor. But this hypothesis is untenable; for Drake, with the notion of the Straits of Anian in his head, would inevitably have imagined that this great inlet was the beginning of them, and would have sailed up either the Sacramento or the San Joaquin. It is sufficiently surprising that he did not stumble upon this inland sea, as it was; a tramp of ten or fifteen miles due eastward would have brought him to its shores. It is not known when the existence of San Francisco Bay was first made known; for though, in 1769, a Spanish expedition sailed into it and gave it its name, there is reason to believe that it was discovered many years before.

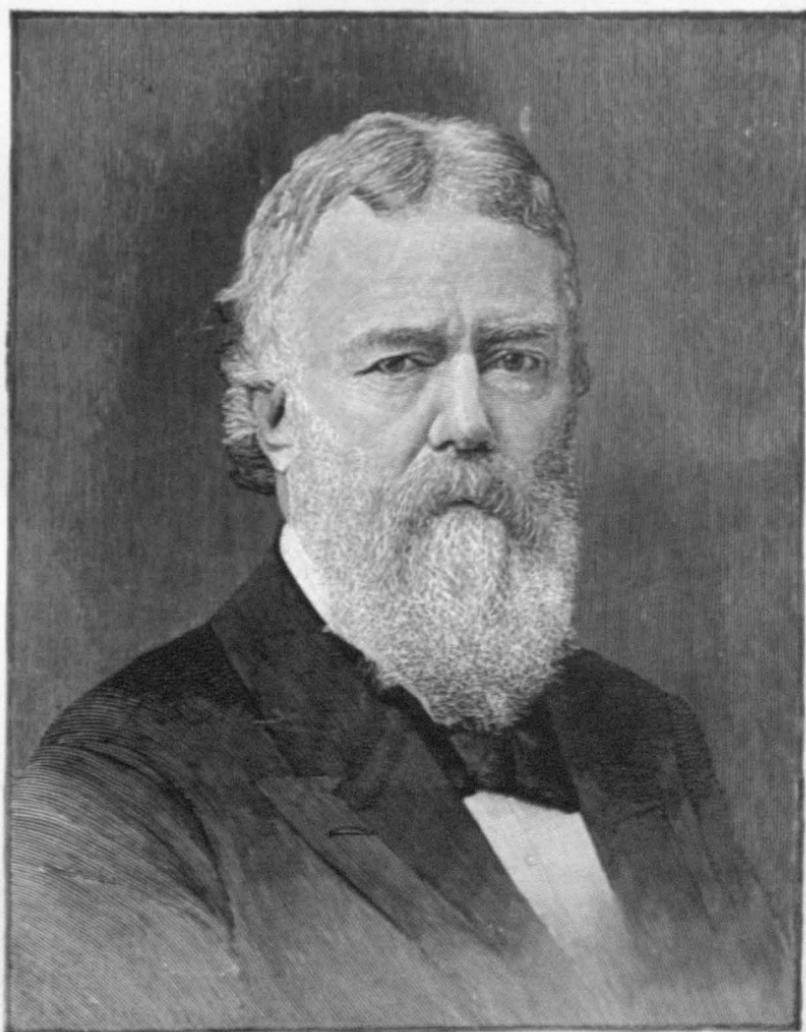
Leaving the coast, Drake steered southwest, and in due time arrived in England with his treasure. Queen Elizabeth knighted him; and other Englishmen, imitating his example, likewise entered the Pacific and made prizes of Spanish galleons. Spain's luck had turned; and when, in 1588, the Armada was destroyed by the combination of bad weather, bad seamanship, and the English fleet, her prestige declined.

The Straits of Anian continued to be the will-o'-the-wisp of navigation—those of England and Holland especially—for years afterward; but they eluded all pursuers. Two ingeniously constructed romances were, however, put forth in 1609 and in 1625, assuming to be descriptions of voyages in quest of the northwest passage. The former of these was the production of Captain Maldonado, who wrote that he had, in 1588, found Cortereal's straits in latitude 75° , followed them to the North Sea, and thence southward to the Pacific. This story was credited until more accurate geographical knowledge proved its impossibility—not to mention the fact that no records of such a voyage existed among the Spanish archives. The other invention was given to the world by Samuel Purchas, and detailed the adventures of a Greek sailor, Juan de Fuca, who was represented as having voyaged up the west coast to latitude 47° or 48° , when he entered a broad inlet, which he followed for twenty days, until he emerged in the North Sea. This tale is manifestly more plausible than the other, inasmuch as the southern extremity of Vancouver's Island lies in latitude $48\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$; and a man ignorant of geography, sailing between the island and the mainland, and coming out at last by way of Queen Charlotte's Sound, might conceivably imagine that he had passed across the northern limits of the continent. But the negative presumptions against the reality of the voyage are too strong to be argued away; and although the straits east of Vancouver's Island bear the name of Juan de Fuca, it is not

likely that any such person existed. Still another marvellous yarn, which need not detain us, was that of the voyage of Admiral de Fonté, of the Spanish marine. He, it was pretended, entered the mouth of a great river on the western coast in latitude 53° , and, following a chain of rivers and lakes, arrived at length at the Atlantic. The date assigned to this trip was 1640.

Meanwhile, between 1596 and 1603, efforts—though not very energetic ones—were made by Spain to survey the coast above Cape Mendocino. Philip II. had inherited from his father, Charles V., a recommendation to establish refitting stations at such points as were available north of that stormy cape; and orders were accordingly issued to the Mexican viceroy to discharge this duty. It was specified, however, that the expenses of the voyage were to be paid by the viceroy. The latter, having no stomach for such an outlay, evinced small alacrity to undertake the enterprise; but since it was necessary to do something, he at length put Sebastian Viscaïno in command of three ships, and sent him forth. Viscaïno made two futile attempts to colonize Lower California; but at the death of the king, in 1598, he was recalled, and the viceroy hoped he had heard the last of these costly undertakings. Philip III. destroyed these hopes by reaffirming his predecessor's mandate; and in 1602 Viscaïno sailed once more with two vessels and a *fragata*—a craft of smaller size, commanded by Martin de Aguilar.

By the time the fleet had reached Monterey Bay, just south of 37° , the scurvy had killed sixteen men. Spanish sailors seem to have been particularly subject to this disease; we hear much less of it among the English and Dutch. From Monterey one of the ships was sent back to Acapulco with the invalids, and arrived there with a handful of survivors, after a trip of unimaginable horrors. At the opening of the new year, 1603, Viscaïno and Aguilar proceeded northward. Not far from the



Matthew P. Leady

harbor of San Francisco they were overtaken by a storm ; the two ships were separated from each other and never again came together. Viscaino, when the storm abated, sailed slowly along the shore, searching for a galleon that had suffered shipwreck thereabouts in 1594. Possibly owing to fog, he failed to notice the entrance to the harbor, but put into Drake's Bay. The remains of the galleon were not found. Viscaino kept on for some two hundred and fifty miles farther, when opposing winds and the persistence of scurvy induced him to turn back. His voyage had accomplished nothing. The only places available as refitting stations that he had found were at San Diego and at Monterey. San Francisco had escaped him, and of the Rogue River, the Umpqua, and the Columbia, he of course knew nothing.

While the leader of the expedition was suffering these reverses, Aguilar, in the *fragata*, had made Cape Mendocino, where another storm compelled him to take refuge in a small inlet, probably Humboldt Bay. Continuing thence, they reached latitude 43°, near which they noticed the mouth of a large river, which, it seems likely, may have been the Umpqua. At this moment Viscaino was just setting forth from Drake's Bay. Aguilar now turned back, and the two vessels must have passed each other in the neighborhood of Cape Mendocino. Before the *fragata* sighted Acapulco, Aguilar and most of his crew had died of scurvy, and their bodies had been cast into the sea. For one hundred and fifty years after this disastrous expedition no Spanish ship was ever seen north of Cape Mendocino. Spain had matters nearer home to attend to, and the viceroys preferred putting their revenues in their pockets to squandering them in wild-goose chases after ambiguous ports of refuge and phantom straits.

But the phantom straits still continued to allure other navigators, who, however, conducted their researches on the Atlantic side. In 1588, the "Armada" year, Captain

John Davis, of England, tried to find the famous opening through which Cortereal had passed eighty-eight years before. He missed the comparatively narrow gateway to Hudson's Bay, but entered the great arm of the sea between Greenland and the undefined regions to the west, and sailed as far as latitude 75° . Henry Hudson, twenty years later, found and partly explored the bay which he named after himself; and Baffin's Bay was christened by William Baffin in 1616. In the same year Van Schonten and Lemaire, from the Netherlands, had the honor of doubling Cape Horn, and thereby relieving the Straits of Magellan from any further tactical importance. This great discovery had the effect of filling the South Sea with privateers, whose object was to plunder Spanish shipping. In vain did Spain struggle against this fierce swarm of foes. Europe was leagued against her; the source of her revenue was cut off, and the expatriation, in 1621, of a million of her industrious Moorish citizens from Valencia, paralyzed her production of the merchandise which she had traded for Mexican gold.

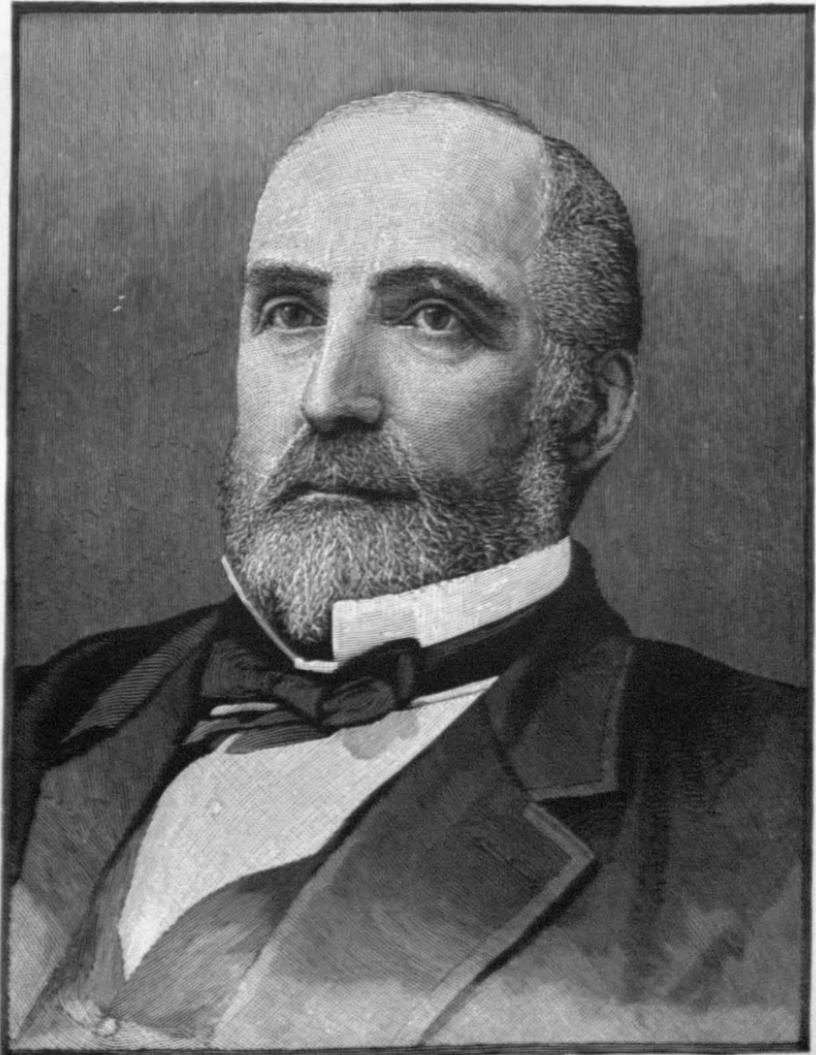
The civil war in England between Charles I. and his people abated the ardor of English explorers for many years; but after the Restoration, Charles II., in 1669, took a step which, though designed chiefly to settle the question of the northwest passage, turned out to have precisely the opposite effect. Acting upon the hypothesis that the Straits of Anian must open westward out of Hudson's Bay, Charles conceived the idea of establishing a sort of colony in that region, whose main object should be to find the straits, but which should, meanwhile, support itself by driving a trade in furs, minerals, and other local products. The charter given this colony or company was a comprehensive one, endowing its members with practically absolute control of a vast tract, the wealth whereof no one at that time suspected. When the truth as to this matter began to dawn upon the com-

pany, they came to the conclusion that their prosperity depended not upon discovering the straits, or in any manner encouraging travel across or emigration into their principality, but, on the contrary, in blocking all access to it by every device in their power. This policy, however selfish, was a natural one in the circumstances ; but it had the ulterior effect of keeping the English out of the Oregon country, and thus defeating England's chance of claiming it by the strong right of possession, in 1818 and 1826. And no one suffered by this exclusion so much as the Hudson's Bay Company itself.

Meanwhile, another element was added to the drawing together of nations at the northwest corner of the American continent. Toward the close of his reign, Peter the Great, of Russia, became acquainted with the potential value of the fur product in the northeastern extremity of his vast dominions. He cared nothing and probably knew nothing about the problem of the Straits of Anian ; but he knew that the Arctic Ocean bounded his coast on the north, and the Okhotsk Sea, communicating with the North Pacific, on the south ; but the peninsula between these waters had never been explored, and he determined to find out its character. His plan was to despatch vessels eastward along both the northern and the southern coasts, and thus trace out a northeast passage of his own into the Pacific. His death, in 1725, left the execution of the undertaking to the Empress Catherine, his widow, who, three years after her accession to supreme power, built a small fleet on the Kamtchatkan coast, and placed it under command of a Danish mariner, Behring. Behring rounded the East Cape without getting sight of Cape Prince of Wales, on the Alaskan coast ; and his attempt to reach it the year following was prevented by contrary winds, which finally drove him into the Okhotsk Sea. The propinquity of Eastern Siberia and Alaska was only made known in 1732.

Nine years later Behring sailed again, taking a south-

easterly course, and afterward a northeasterly one, until he made land on the sixtieth parallel, where the island of Nunivak lies some five-and-twenty miles from the mainland. On the return trip Behring went astray in the Aleutian Archipelago, and after staggering to and fro in unknown seas for many weeks, the crew eaten up with scurvy, he ran ashore on a small rocky island to spend the winter. Here the famous navigator died, with thirty of his followers. It was not until the ensuing summer that the survivors reached home, in a boat constructed out of the remnants of their original vessel. Calamitous though the voyage had been, it led to an immense trade; for the furs in which the forlorn sailors had clothed themselves were found to be of great value, and during the next twenty years the seal fishery was prosecuted with such vigor as the wretched boats obtainable admitted. It is a singular illustration of the geographical ignorance of those times that the skins thus collected were carried to China (the chief market for that commodity) overland instead of by sea. No one knew that there was an uninterrupted stretch of water between Kamtchatka and Canton. That useful piece of intelligence was accidentally communicated to the world by some fugitive Polish exiles, who, in 1771, succeeded in escaping from a Kamtchatkan port, and, with a small cargo of furs, finally fetched up—much to their own astonishment—in Hong Kong harbor. The impulse thus given to the fur trade was of course enormous, and stimulated further Russian explorations. But the Russians were not lucid geographers. Until the results of Cook's voyage, in 1778, were promulgated, they supposed Alaska to be a large island, and properly a part of Siberia. At all events, they appropriated it, and were preparing to annex whatsoever might adjoin it, when Spain received news of their encroachments, and sent post-haste an expedition to check them. Before the emissaries of these two powers had arranged for a conference, Captain



M. S. Ladd

Cook appeared on the scene in behalf of England—which events, with their sequel, will be treated more in detail in the next chapter.

It is worth remarking, at this juncture, that although Oregon had as yet not even been named, and though its interior was unexplored and utterly problematical, it was nevertheless the point at which the great nations of Europe were inevitably coming together. Some were drawn by one motive, some by another, but the result was in all cases the same. Destiny seemed to have decreed that, in one way or another, Oregon should become known. Remote though was its geographical position, it was in some respects the key of the continent; while, contrary to all probability, its climate was as mild as that of many regions ten degrees nearer the equator. Meantime, a nation that had not yet been fully born, though it was struggling to its birth, was ordained shortly to step in between the wrangling claimants and possess itself of the northern Eden for which they were contending. It is an absorbing history, whose every circumstance has a remarkable significance.

CHAPTER II.

BY SEA AND LAND.

FOR more than two hundred years the northwest promontory of our continent had been sought as a means of reaching places far distant from it; but now the world was beginning to look toward it on its own account. The epoch of settlement and cultivation was, indeed, still remote; but it was realized that the coasts and archipelagos and the adjacent seas afforded materials for a remunerative industry, and that attraction was, for the nonce, sufficient.

Spain's object in arrogating ownership of these regions had been on the principle that the more of the earth's surface belonged to her the better. She had not expected any particular pecuniary advantage from such hyperborean possessions. But when it began to be rumored that Russia was working her way downward from the extreme north, and was incidentally deriving a substantial profit from the barter of furs, the hidalgos thought it high time to bestir themselves—especially since their Mexican and Indian trade had suffered such diminution.

The immediate result of Spain's renewed activity was the accomplishment of three voyages up the western coast, which, though they yielded no practical benefit, and added next to nothing to the sum of geographical knowledge, nevertheless entitled Spain to declare that priority of right was hers as far as latitude 56°.

The first of these expeditions sailed from the port of San Blas, just below latitude 22°, in January, 1774. It consisted of but one vessel, the *Santiago*, commanded by Juan Perez, with Martinez as pilot. The *Santiago* arrived off Queen Charlotte's Islands about the middle of June, ten degrees farther north than any Spaniard had been till then; but no landing was effected, and the ship was headed for the south. Keeping Vancouver's Island close in-board, and proceeding leisurely, a good cargo of furs was obtained, till a storm put an end to their industry by driving the *Santiago* out to sea. Returning, Perez anchored a few days in Nootka Sound, off the coast of Vancouver's Island, and then made sail for Mexico. For all useful results that he obtained, he might as well never have left port.

Two vessels, the *Santiago* and the *Sonora*, were sent out in March, 1775. The former was commanded by Heceta, with Perez as pilot; the other by Lieutenant Bodega. On reaching a point between 48° and 49° Heceta made the breaking out of the scurvy on board his ship a pretext for returning. On his way back he

blundered upon an important discovery—that of the mouth of the Columbia River. He mistook it, however, for an inlet, and failed entirely to explore it.

Lieutenant Bodega was a shade more energetic and conscientious. After losing some of his crew at the hands of the Indians on Destruction Island, he proceeded as far as latitude 56° , where he sighted Mount Edgecumbe, and attempted, unsuccessfully, to erect a memorial of his visit there. He pushed on to latitude 58° , and then put about for home. He looked in vain for traces of Fonte's fabled river, and finally, in October, dropped his anchor in the harbor of San Blas. A more dismal spectacle of incompetence and timidity than is exhibited in these three voyages the annals of navigation do not afford.

Dismal though it was, it served to stimulate England's rivalry : she had claimed a lien upon the coast ever since Drake's voyage, two hundred years before. The fact that war was just breaking out between herself and her colonies on the Atlantic coast did not avail to deter her from this enterprise. After offering—with no result, thanks to the secret opposition of the Hudson's Bay Company—a reward of \$100,000 for the discovery of a northwest passage, Captain Cook was ordered by the British Government to determine, once and for all, whether any waterway between the North Atlantic and the North Pacific existed. Incidentally, but with all due diplomatic precautions, he was to find out just what Russia and Spain were doing north of latitude 45° , and whether it were worth England's while to take an active and decisive hand in the proceedings.

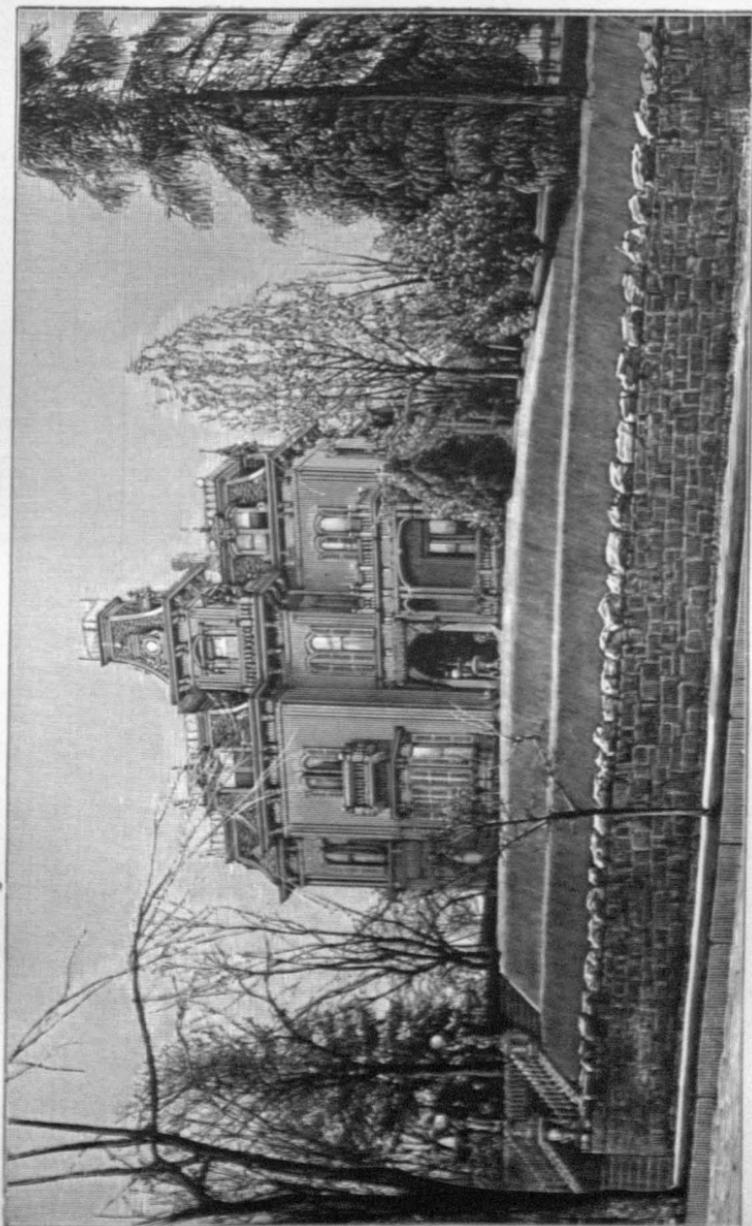
No better man than Cook could have been selected for this mission. He was the greatest mariner of his age, of wide experience, courageous, and of skilful address, even-tempered, resolute, and intelligent. His character had the thoroughness that is indispensable to success in exploration, and a confidence and buoyancy that yielded

to no disappointment. He was familiar with the science of navigation in all its branches, was a competent writer and draughtsman, and, withal, a man of sterling honor and veracity.

Cook was in command of two ships; the *Resolution* he navigated himself, Charles Clerke was entrusted with the *Discovery*. They sailed from Plymouth, Devonshire, on July 12th, 1776, and taking the eastern route round the Cape of Good Hope, and stopping here and there upon the way, arrived off the coast of Oregon on March 7th, 1778. A storm obliged him to bear out to sea for a few days, and the next land sighted was Cape Flattery, on the southern side of the Straits of Juan de Fuca. It was in Cook's book of instructions to find these very straits; but inasmuch as their location on the map was fifty or sixty miles to the southward, he turned and prosecuted his search in that direction; nor did he ever discover his mistake. He convinced himself, however, that the Straits of Fuca were not in the place designated on the chart; and with this negative satisfaction, he addressed himself to the northern voyage.

The reports of the Russians had made it seem probable that the North American coast took a decided slant toward the northeast, or east, at about latitude 60° . Had they been correct in their supposition that Alaska was an island, such a slant would doubtless have existed, and would have led Cook directly to the Arctic Ocean. In hopes of such an opening he kept close in-shore, though not quite close enough to perceive that the mainland was fringed with islands, with narrow straits intervening. Save for this detail, his survey was very accurate; and when, at the latitude of Mount Edgecumb, he found the coast trending west instead of east, he began to realize that the Russians had fallen into an important error.

Nevertheless he did not relax his careful observation, and two deep inlets were accurately explored, on the



RESIDENCE OF W. S. LADD, PORTLAND, ORE.

chance of their proving to be entrances to the famous straits; these were Prince William's Sound and Cook's Inlet, on the sixtieth parallel. Beyond these the land gradually curved southwestward; he circumnavigated the long extent of the Aleutian Archipelago, and coming up on their northern side, traversed Bristol Bay, passed Nunivak Island on the right and St. Lawrence on the left, and so reached Cape Prince of Wales, the westernmost extremity of the continent.

Here he left the American coast for the time being, and crossing Behring Straits, followed the northern shore of Siberia for about five hundred miles. At Cape North he turned back, and recrossed the straits, intending to follow the northern shore of Alaska to its end. At a point a little above 70° he was stopped by ice, and, the summer being then over, he sailed for the Sandwich Islands (which he had discovered on the trip out), where he spent the winter, with the intention of returning to resume his exploration in the spring. As all the world knows, he was slain on the beach at Hawaii, in February, 1779. Captain Clerke, after an unsuccessful attempt to carry out the designs of the dead navigator, himself died at Petropaulovski, on the Kamtchatkan coast, and John Gore, the next in command, sailed for England, arriving there in the autumn of 1780.

This voyage of Cook's, by authoritatively outlining a hitherto ambiguous portion of the map of North America, practically put an end to the question of the northwest passage; for although it was recognized that a sea might exist on the north of the continent, it could evidently never be available for navigation. This was the negative result of the expedition. On the other hand, he had shown the area of habitable land to be much greater than had been imagined, and had confirmed the value of the fur industry. This last fact produced immediate consequences.

The first of them was the organization by Russia of the

Russian-American Trading Company, to prosecute business in a sustained and methodical manner. They established posts on the Alaskan coast, and on several of the islands in Behring Sea, over which they assumed almost proprietary rights. This was in 1781. Four years later the French sent La Perouse to see whether there was nothing for King Louis to be got out of the great grab-bag ; but he, after noting the island fringe which Cook had overlooked, was wrecked in the New Hebrides. Meanwhile, several English adventurers had taken cargoes of furs to Canton and sold them at a large profit ; and now England chartered the South Sea Company, with privilege to monopolize the trade, so far as England was concerned. Here upon another great monopoly, the East India Company, which had also been looking toward Behring Sea, and which controlled dealings with Chinese ports, adopted a hostile attitude toward the South Sea Company, and refused to allow them to dispose of their cargoes on those coasts. The South Sea Company retaliated by denying the East India Company access to Behring Sea. The difficulty was finally adjusted by the creation of the King George's Sound Company, as a sort of medium between the other two. But it was now discovered that the Chinese market was overstocked ; and the upshot was the bursting of the South Sea Bubble, and the withdrawal of the East India Company to its own proper domains. Monopoly had cut its own throat. This was in 1787. Russia remained quietly in possession, guarding for us our future inheritance.

The voyages of Meares and of Barclay modified the situation in no important manner, though the latter finally identified the Straits of Fuca. But in 1788 two ships belonging to the new republic of the United States of America entered Nootka Sound. One was the *Lady Washington*, commanded by Captain Robert Gray ; the other, the *Columbia Rediviva*, Captain John Kendrick. Americans were not subject to the restrictions of British

monopolies, and they were losing no time in taking advantage of the fact. Spain, however, had now become thoroughly alarmed at the aspect of affairs, and she sent two vessels, the *Princesa* and the *San Carlos*, commanded by Martinez and by Haro respectively, to call a halt.

The Spanish emissaries seem to have taken a pacific view of their instructions ; they met some Russian officers at Oonalaska, courtesies were exchanged, and some information as to the extent and character of the Russian posts obtained. With this, Martinez and Haro returned to San Blas, and their report was sent to Madrid. Communications ensued between Madrid and St. Petersburg ; but since neither party could define or justify the extent of its own claims, no understanding was reached. Accordingly, in 1789, Martinez and Haro were sent north again. They landed on an island in Nootka Sound, and put up some fortifications, informing some English sailors who happened to be there that they were taking possession of the region in the name of Spain. Martinez's next step was to put the sailors under arrest, on account of their unauthorized presence in a Spanish port ; but after a few days their liberty was restored to them. During the next spring and summer, however, other vessels came into port, and various complications ensued, issuing in the lodgment of a complaint against Martinez, on the part of the English sailors, to the commandant of the port of San Blas. The latter decided that Martinez had exceeded his instructions, and compensation was accorded to the English. Meanwhile, the captains and crews of certain American vessels which had been present during these transactions were treated with distinguished consideration.

When the story was told at Madrid, the Spanish Government put on its haughtiest air, and sent a message to King George, warning him out of the Pacific. King George replied in the same tone ; but war was averted by diplomatic *pour parlers*, and finally, in October, 1790, a

treaty was entered into which, while subjecting England to certain nominal restrictions, really overthrew Spain's power in the Pacific. Captain Vancouver on the part of England, and Bodega on the part of Spain, were ordered to Nootka to put the treaty into execution. But it was not until 1792 that the plenipotentiaries met.

During this interval a great deal of exploring was done between the forty-eighth and the sixtieth parallels. The coast of northwest America is as intricate as that of Norway, and affords almost inexhaustible opportunities to the makers of maps. The explorations were carried on by Spanish, English, and American vessels, and were comparatively scientific and exhaustive. The Viceroy of Mexico was responsible for the Spanish researches, Captain Vancouver for most of the English ones, and Captain Gray, of the *Columbia*, and others, for the American. The mysteries of the Straits of Fuca were thoroughly ventilated, the existence of Puget Sound and of the Gulf of Georgia was revealed, the ins and outs of the innumerable islands along the coast were unravelled, and different names were given to everything by the representatives of all of the three nations, in accordance with immemorial custom. But the event of most import to our present purpose was the entrance of Captain Gray, the American, into the great river which he christened the *Columbia*, in honor of his vessel. He was the first white man to sail upon its waters, and he penetrated inland a distance of five-and-twenty miles. This was in May, 1792. In October of the same year, Vancouver, with Gray's report of his discovery in his pocket, also entered the river, and explored it for upward of one hundred miles. He afterward reconciled it with his conscience to assert that he was the first to invade these waters; and England quoted his assumption in the long subsequent diplomatic negotiations with this country.

It was the month previous to this that Vancouver and Bodega met at Nootka. Bodega had by that time col-



Eng. by E. C. Williams & Bro. NY

Geo. H. Williams

lected evidence to prove that the English charges against Spain were unfounded, and that there was no compensation to be made further than had been accorded at the time. But Vancouver had his full share of domineering British stubbornness, and since he had made up his mind beforehand that Nootka was to be surrendered to the English, and that an indemnity of more than half a million dollars was to be paid, he treated Bodega's evidence as if it had no existence. Bodega offered to give up Nootka, if England would recognize the right of Spain to all the coast south of $48^{\circ} 30'$; but Vancouver was immovable; and finally negotiations were suspended, and the facts were laid before the English and Spanish governments. Ultimately an indemnity of \$210,000 was accepted by England, and Nootka was made free to the vessels of both nations, neither of whom, however, was to make any "permanent establishment" in the port. This arrangement was not reached until 1795, by which time both Bodega and Vancouver were dead. Nootka remains uninhabited to this day. The truth is, no one really cared to occupy the post, for, the Straits of Anian being proved a myth, it was too far north to be conveniently guarded. The whole affair has its humorous side. An ounce of business co-operation is worth a ton of diplomatic etiquette.

Hitherto we have confined ourselves to the record of maritime activities, and have not yet fairly set foot on dry land. But the explorers themselves were amphibious, and from an early period had pushed forward investigations on foot, which may conveniently be summarized in this place. As far back as 1540, Antonio de Meudoza, Viceroy of Mexico, had sent two land expeditions in quest of a fabled city called Quivira, reported to contain unimaginable riches, and of another of similar character known as Cibola—both located vaguely somewhere to the north. What was the basis of these fables—if any basis there were—has never been determined;

but one Fernando de Alarcon ascended the Colorado River for three hundred miles without finding anything save an untrodden wilderness ; and Francisco de Coronado actually spent two years on a journey which took him as high as latitude 40° , with similar results. Two hundred miles farther would have entitled him to be called the discoverer of Oregon.

It was nearly a hundred and fifty years before any other attempt to push northward was made ; and then the motive of the pioneers was not gold, but the spread of religion. The Society of Jesus, the most powerful and energetic organization within the boundaries of the Catholic Church, and the most persistent and successful of missionaries, obtained permission from the Spanish Crown to establish missions in Mexico. This order—to compare great things with small—may be likened to the “ Salvation Army ” of our own times : they observed a species of military discipline, and hesitated at no means to obtain converts. The great body of orthodox Catholics were not too favorably disposed toward them ; and seventy years after permission had been granted them to proselytize the American heathen, the Spanish monarch dispossessed them of their missions, and handed over the latter to the keeping of the monastic orders of the Dominicans and Franciscans. At this time sixteen flourishing settlements were in existence.

From 1769 to 1824 the missions prospered and extended under monkish rule, dotting the coast of California as high up as San Francisco, which was occupied in 1776. At length the sacerdotal influence over the population became so pronounced that the Mexican Government was alarmed ; and they were finally secularized in 1845. In 1846 occurred the Mexican War, and California came into our possession.

By the Treaty of Ryswick, in 1697, the continent of North America was divided between Spain, France, and England. Inasmuch as none of these three nations knew

anything about the shape or size of the country, it is difficult to define the precise boundaries of their holdings. In a general way it may be said that France claimed a wedge-shaped section, extending from the mouth of the Mississippi northeastward and northwestward as far as about latitude 55° . Spain had Florida on the east and, west of the Mississippi, a region bounded by and inclusive of Texas, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana; and on the west by the Pacific. England had the strip of territory on the Atlantic coast that is bounded on the west by the Alleghanies. There remained a rectangular block of land at the northwest, north of 42° and west of the Rocky Mountains, that belonged to nobody in particular, perhaps because nobody then knew of its existence. This rectangle is now the site of the States of Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. As for the Hudson's Bay region, it was claimed both by France and England; but England had possession of it, and France never attempted to eject her.

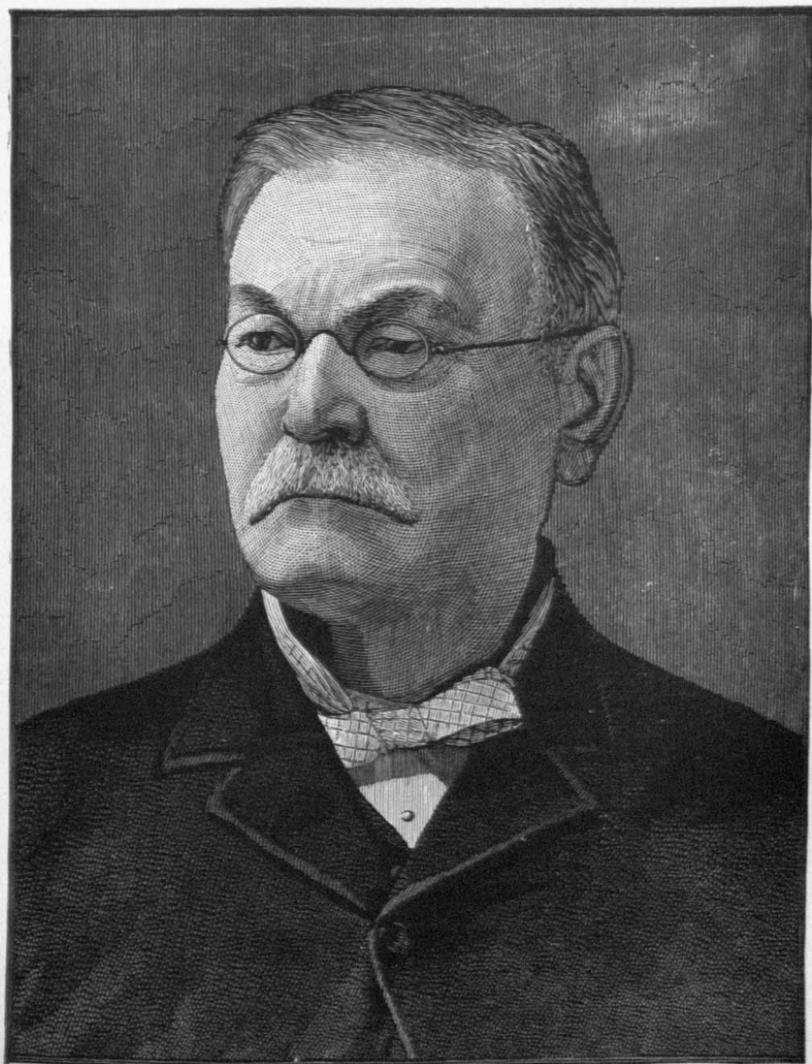
The Mississippi River invited explorers into the interior, and formed the basis for the excursions east and west. The Jesuits formed a chain of stations from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada; French pioneers traversed the great valley in all directions, stopping only at the barrier of the Rocky Mountains. Some of them wandered to the head-waters of the Mississippi, and listened to tales told them by the Indians of a great river in that latitude, but beyond the mountains, flowing westward to the sea. None of them ever saw this mighty stream; but there is no doubt that it was of the Columbia that the Indians spoke. It was reserved for two native-born citizens of the American republic to approach the Columbia from the interior, as Captain Gray had already done from the sea.

In 1742, however, two young Canadians by the name of Verendrye set out to explore the Rocky Mountains north of California. They ascended the range at a point

not far from Helena, in the present State of Wyoming. Here they conversed with a band of Flathead Indians, who described to them the river farther to the west. Ten years later Fort Jonquierre was established in the mountains. Soon after the war with England put a stop to further French exploration, and the French possessions (to prevent their falling into the hands of the English) were ceded to Spain. Forty-five years elapsed before this vast tract of country, which had, in the mean time, reverted to France, was by Napoleon Bonaparte sold to the United States for \$15,000,000. During these forty-five years it was all but unvisited, save by one explorer—Captain Jonathan Carver, of Connecticut.

This down-East Yankee had already, before emerging into the light of history, achieved a respectable reputation in the French war, when he served on behalf of the English, with the rank of Captain. Upon peace being declared, in 1763, he had the prophetic genius to believe that it would be expedient to personally investigate the country west of the Mississippi. Nothing was known of its quality and resources, and there was a reasonable probability that some of it might turn out to be available for agricultural purposes. Perhaps, had Captain Carver appreciated the magnitude of the enterprise he was undertaking, he might have hesitated; but it was not until long after his day that any accurate conception of the immense distance between the North Atlantic and the North Pacific was obtained. From Boston to the mouth of the Columbia was nearly twenty-eight hundred miles as the crow flies; and the captain could not hope to rival the economy of that proverbially forthright traveller. There were no roads, no railways, and no coaches; the only thing to be done was to bestride one's horse and keep him moving toward the setting sun by such routes as Providence might provide. The captain, accordingly, climbed into his saddle and set forth.

He had not embarked upon his journey with undue



James R. Kelly

precipitation ; nearly three years elapsed between the signing of the treaty of Paris and the captain's departure from Boston, in 1766. We may suppose him to have employed this interval in picking up and piecing together whatever information was accessible concerning the regions he was to visit. Indeed, there is some reason to believe that he was only too diligent in these preliminary researches, inasmuch as some of the more stirring and adventurous of his exploits, when perused in the cold light of a later age, have a singular resemblance to passages in previously published French records of exploration. But if the captain was imaginative, that is no more than every good traveller should be ; and since his book was not written until many years after the experiences which it purports to describe, a little breadth of statement may easily be condoned. Doubtless he had by that time told his tale so often by word of mouth, and, in the glow of narration, had embellished it with so many details that might have happened, whether they did or not, that when it came to setting the narrative down with pen and ink, he not only was unable to draw the line between imagination and hearsay and fact, but he would in any case not have had the heart to defraud his former listeners of any part of the good things to which they had lent such attentive ear.

Be that as it may, the captain rode gallantly along, and in due time turned up at the junction of lakes Huron and Erie, where the city of Detroit now stands. Pressing onward by devious paths, by field and forest, he reached the banks of the Mississippi, and followed the stream northward toward its source. Thus far we may trace him ; but it is not easy to decide precisely what he did next. According to his own account, he spent some five months in further westward travel, apparently with the notion of running across the Straits of Anian and becoming the founder of an English settlement there. Owing to causes which he could not con-

trol, he was unsuccessful in this praiseworthy effort; and there is reason to think that the information he vouchsafes concerning the tribes and the topography "back of the Mississippi" was due less to his genius as a pioneer than to his ability as a translator of French books.

Nevertheless, the captain has one title to fame of which nothing can deprive him, and which is likely to keep him in men's memories during indefinite ages to come. It was he who invented, or at all events first uttered, the name "Oregon." Speaking of what is now known as Northern Minnesota, he remarks that the sources of four great rivers are to be found in that neighborhood, namely, the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, the Red River of the North, and the "Oregon," or River of the West. This "Oregon" can be nothing else than the Columbia; and although Captain Gray's nomenclature has been retained for the river, Captain Carver's title has been applied to the region which the river drains.

What "Oregon" means, or how—otherwise than through the captain's imagination—the word came into existence, are questions that have never been satisfactorily answered. Spanish it cannot be, for no Spaniard had ever set foot in the country, nor was there a Spanish settlement within a thousand miles of it. Neither is it an Indian name, as the futile efforts to trace it among the local tribes abundantly prove. It certainly is not French, and still less is it English. But, after all objections have been made, there stands the word, with Captain Carver behind it; and no one can deny that, intrinsically, it is a word of unexceptionable character, and none the worse for being the outcome of a sort of miraculous conception. One regrets to add that its worthy progenitor died in London in 1780, in circumstances far from affluent.

The impenetrable veil of secrecy which the Hudson's Bay Company drew around its principality was not, as we have seen, disturbed by the English Government's

offer of \$100,000 for the discovery of the Straits of Anian. As soon as a country begins to be settled, fur-bearing animals take their departure; and since it was from these animals that the company derived their revenues, they were naturally anxious not to have them disturbed. Having satisfied themselves, however, that the straits would never be found, because there were none, they sent forth one Samuel Hearne, with a great flourish of trumpets, to find them. Incidentally Hearne was to maintain a lookout for a rich copper mine, whereof intelligence had been brought by the Indians; in reality, of course, this was the sole object of his journey. But, as it turned out, Hearne failed to discover the copper mine, and actually did discover the northwest passage. That is to say, he followed a certain river, which he named the Coppermine, to its exit into the Arctic Ocean, between the sixty-fifth and the seventieth parallels. He, to be sure, reported it as an inland sea, and was careful to say that it had no communication with Hudson's Bay; nevertheless, if any one is to be credited with having first seen the Straits of Anian, Hearne is that man. Some years later, in 1789, Mackenzie, an agent of the Northwest Company, traced the river called by his name to its mouth, four or five hundred miles west of the Coppermine. Thus he came within four hundred miles of that "icy cape" which was the eastern limit of Captain Cook's researches eleven years earlier. The coast-line of the Western Continent had been all but explored.

This Northwest Company was a rival of the Hudson's Bay Company, and had been organized by a number of fur-traders from Montreal. Three years after Mackenzie had added the Mackenzie River to geography, he followed the course of Peace River, which empties into Athabasca Lake, to its source in the Rocky Mountains, just above latitude 55°. Thence he turned southward, and after traversing Fraser River for some distance, struck across the mountains to the westward, and reached

the Pacific coast near Vancouver's Island. In 1811 Fraser River was explored to its mouth in the Gulf of Georgia by another agent of the Northwest Company, Simon Fraser. But before this Lewis and Clarke had made their great journey to the Columbia, and the chief features of the country west of the Rocky Mountains had been disclosed.

The indeterminate extent of the province known as Louisiana, held alternately by the French and the Spanish until its final sale to the United States, was the source of much perplexity to the various claimants of western American territory. Russia, indeed, had a firm hold on Alaska; it seemed to belong to her by right of situation, as well as otherwise. The province of Columbia, next below Alaska, was held jointly by England and Spain, though, by the terms of their compact, neither of them could really occupy it. The United States had a strong lien on the Oregon country, in virtue of Gray's discovery of the river that drained it; and California was in the hands of Spain. But now arose the Louisiana question. If, as was asserted, it covered the "whole region west of the Mississippi," it must include California and Oregon, and perhaps Columbia as well. While Spain held it, she would simply be confirmed in her tenure of California and strengthened in whatever pretensions she might have to Oregon and Columbia. But while it was in French hands—as happened again in 1800—confusion was at its height. No one knew what he owned, nor how nor when his pretensions might be attacked. Nothing is more curious than the spectacle of this gigantic tract of country, nearly as large as the whole of Europe, being juggled from hand to hand as a juggler shuffles a card. Only less remarkable is the price finally paid for it by Jefferson, on behalf of the United States. Such a sum would not to-day purchase a single street in one of our third-rate towns. And yet that transaction took place only eighty-nine years ago.



John Minto

The bargain having been made, an entirely new complexion was put upon the face of affairs. The United States was now in the position of a shareholder in a stock company who holds two thirds of the stock. The other holders regard him with merited apprehension, for he is liable to "vote them out" at any moment. With a territory already extending from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains, and with thousands of resolute and hardy men and women willing and anxious to act as pioneer settlers, our "manifest destiny" began to be apparent even to the least enlightened eyes. Our chance of getting Oregon was at least as good as any one's; and the collapse of Spain during the last few years had been so rapid that she could no longer be regarded as a permanent rival. There were already those who foresaw that Texas would follow Louisiana, and California, Texas. As for Florida, its day of annexation was but sixteen years distant.

In the mean time Jefferson, who was one of the greatest statesmen who ever lived in the White House, made an urgent recommendation to Congress to send an expedition to examine and report upon the northwest country. He saw the importance of losing no time if we wished to make good our hold upon that domain. As far back as 1792 he had influenced the American Philosophical Society to raise a subscription for such a purpose, and a young Virginian, Lieutenant Meriwether Lewis, had been selected to lead it, with a French botanist, Michaux, as his companion. But before they had got well under way his government had recalled Michaux, and Lewis also had turned back. This same Lewis was now the President's private secretary, and his request to be sent on the new expedition was readily granted. His instructions directed him to make a thorough examination of the territory, ethnologically, topographically, geologically, climatically, and with regard to its commercial and agricultural possibilities. The friendly attitude of France and England was assured; and Lewis, in com-

pauy with Captain William Clarke, nine young Kentuckians, and a small force of soldiers and Canadian *voyageurs*, set out from Louisville on the fourteenth day of May, 1804. What success they met with will be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

ASTORIA.

THE adventurers, with their followers and assistants, made a fair appearance as they passed out of Louisville and took the trail toward the northwest. They were to journey through barren lands, ascend wild mountains, traverse unknown rivers, and treat with savage tribes; and none could foretell what might be their fate. No white man had ever preceded them, save here and there a lonely trapper, almost as untamed as the Indians themselves; and the most important part of their route lay through regions entirely virgin to members of their race. It was an enterprise that needed for its accomplishment stout hearts and sturdy frames, as well as steady tempers and cool judgment. All the men were young; but they were inspired by the same resolute and independent spirit that had already thrown off British oppression; and they were sobered by the knowledge that on the success of their efforts depended in no small degree the future welfare and glory of their country.

For many days and miles they followed the path marked out for them by the broad current of the Missouri. The vast prairies which extend unbroken from horizon to horizon in this region are now crossed and recrossed by a network of railways; villages and populous towns dot them everywhere, and fields of grain wave and whiten in solid miles. But eighty-five years ago the only roads were the almost invisible trails of trapper and

Indian ; the most familiar inhabitants were the coyote and the buffalo ; there was no crop except the wild flowers and grass of the prairie. As the little caravan pressed on, through spring and summer, the rising sun cast their shadows before them, or threw them behind as it preceded them to the west. The monotony of the journey was wearisome. The prospect never seemed to change ; the yellow waters of the river, swirling between its banks, brought no message to them on its current. There was nothing to arouse speculation or stimulate talk. For hours at a stretch they rode in silence, varied only by the faint creaking of the saddles and the tramp of hoofs upon the grass.

Toward autumn they reached the first halting place of their journey, on the upper waters of the Missouri, among the Mandan tribe of Indians. Here they were to pass the winter, for the mountains were impassable in the season of snow ; and here a part of their escort was sent back, and carried to Washington the last news that was received of them for more than two years. There was no telegraph in those days, and men who plunged into the wilderness disappeared as completely as if they had left the planet.

The winter with the Mandans was rendered interesting by a war between that tribe and the neighboring Rickarees. The scanty means of subsistence in that neighborhood and the absence of natural boundaries, not to speak of the desire for some sort of excitement, natural to the Indian as well as to the white, had kept these two peoples in a state of chronic hostility. Lewis and Clarke, however, recognizing the fact that to espouse the cause of either would involve antagonizing the other, turned the flank of the dilemma by effecting a treaty of peace between the two. In these diplomatic achievements, and in getting together whatever information was to be had regarding the rather intricate route they were to follow in the spring, the months of winter passed away.

About a year from the date of their departure from Louisville, they bade their Mandan hosts farewell, and headed toward the mountains. The journey was no longer a monotonous one, either in scenery or incident; but it was abundant in hardships and privations. Still keeping to the Missouri as their guide, and leaving on their left the Yellowstone, flowing from the southwest, they at length arrived at the picturesque region now known as Lewis and Clarke County, in Montana. For a long distance they had gradually been ascending from the river level, until, near the base of the mountains, they were already at a height above the sea of four thousand feet. Before them, and on either hand, rose peaks of an altitude of from six to twelve thousand feet, their highest summits still white with snow, while at their bases was a primeval growth of pine and cedar, fir and hemlock. The air was dry and thin, rendering exertion arduous, and sharpening appetites that there was little game to appease. They crossed the Divide of the Rocky Mountains, where the Verendryes had preceded them sixty-two years before, and descending into the valley on the western side, reached the bank of Clarke's Fork, one of the chief affluents of the Columbia. Crossing this, they arrived at the foot of that northern continuation of the Rocky Mountains known as the Bitter Root Range.

September had now arrived, and the atmosphere was not only rarified, but painfully cold. Food grew scarcer and scarcer, and the sufferings of the party became acute. It was indispensable to cross the range without delay, or they would be imprisoned in the valley for the winter. Taking the Lolo Trail, afterward made famous by the retreat of Howard before Chief Joseph, of the Nez Perces, they struggled onward amid appalling hardships. It was not until September 20th that they emerged from the icy defiles of the tall mountains, and beheld the welcome spectacle of the rugged valley of the Clearwater, and the river itself flowing swiftly toward the west to



Eng^d by F. G. Kernan, N.Y.

J. Mease

join the Columbia. The elevation above the sea was still several thousand feet, and in the intervals of the forest only the sage-brush and the buffalo-grass grew ; but any change was grateful after that awful struggle through the pass.

The Nez Perces, who inhabited the banks of the Clearwater, received the travellers with much friendliness, and spread such a feast before the famished guests as well-nigh cost them their lives. For, falling-to, without due regard to the laws and limitations of the human digestion, and intent only upon satisfying at last that intolerable craving that had beset their vitals for many days, they incontinently overate themselves, and now rolled in torments of a new description. Even the gallant Clarke was among the unwary ones, and neither the next day nor the next day after that was he able to contemplate with equanimity the remounting of his mustang.

Digestion having at length been restored, down the banks of the Clearwater they proceeded. But their plight was still unenviable. A parching heat had taken the place of cold, and the combined ill effects of their late exposure and exertion, and of their later banquet, still hung upon them. Lewis was ill, and could barely keep the saddle ; others, feebler yet, were forced to dismount and stretch themselves beside the trail. The way was rough and strength was precious ; there was nothing for it, at last, but to leave their horses to such guardianship as the amicable Nez Perces might afford them, and to make the rest of their journey in canoes. But canoes were not to be hired, like wherries on the Thames or the Harlem ; they must be built then and there out of such materials as the forest yielded. Accordingly, Captain Clarke, piloted by a Nez Perces chief, Twisted Hair by name, sought out and cut the requisite timber, and it was conveyed to a convenient spot on the river margin. Here the fleet was built, and, embarking, they sped downward on the unweariable current.

The bill of fare in Idaho at that epoch had neither variety nor especial succulence. A few species of edible roots, horse-beef, wolf, crow, with now and then a deer or a salmon, comprised the list of dishes. But now, since their horses had been abandoned, they were fain to supply their place with the sinewy flesh of the half wild dogs sold them by the Indians on the banks. Meanwhile, onward they paddled or drifted, with nothing visible but the sky, the forest, and the stream, until one day they swept round a bend to the northward, and bidding farewell to the Clearwater, entered the greater stream of Snake River, and were in the southeastern corner of what is now Washington State. From there a journey of little more than a hundred miles brought them to the broad tide of the Columbia, and there, from the southern shore, lay outstretched illimitably the savage and mountainous expanse of Oregon, the Promised Land.

Blue and silver between its wooded banks flowed the majestic stream, with still a third of its journey of twelve hundred miles before it. Sometimes the course lay through plains of sage-brush, sometimes through grassy regions; or, again, a dark growth of timber clustered to the margin. Sometimes the river slid smoothly and silently over its bed; then it broke into hurrying rapids that carried them down headlong, hardly steered aright by the struggling paddle over the stern. Now a black bear thrust his head and shoulders through the bushes to gaze at them; now an Indian, with a feather in his black hair and a bow in his hand, stared after them from his coign of vantage. As the sun set they sought the shore, lit their camp-fire, cooked their provisions, and slept. At daylight they were once more astir and careering westward.

The first showers of the rainy season had begun when they passed the Dalles and came to the Cascades. It was October 21st. Here the rapids were too swift to allow of

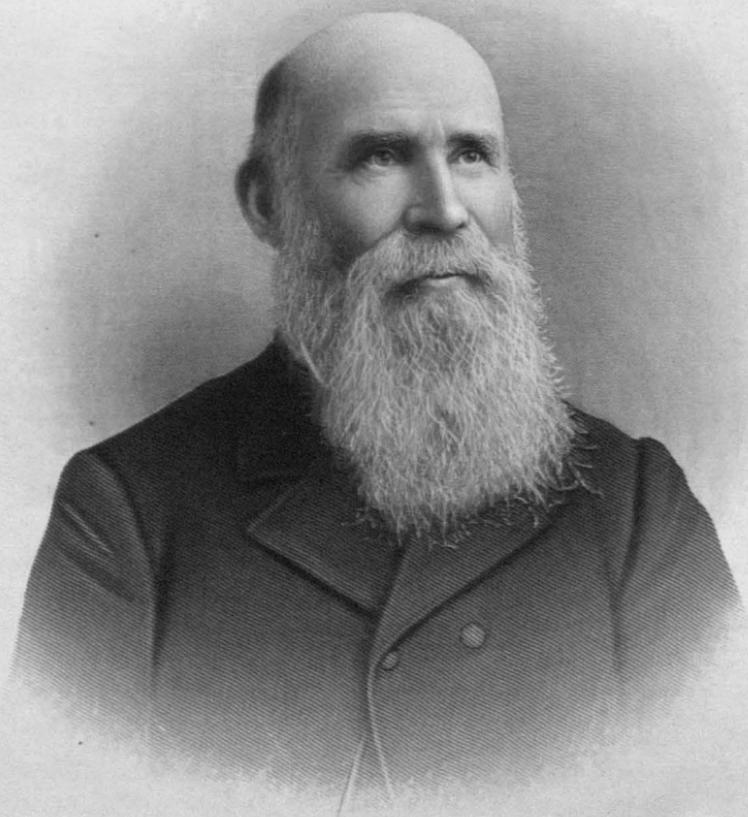
risking their baggage ; it was taken ashore and carried round to the foot of the falls, together with some of the canoes ; but several of the party preferred the chance of a wetting and the excitement of the descent to the certain fatigues of a portage ; and they were whirled through the leaping waves in safety. The perils of the outward journey were now over, and the goal was not far distant. A day later they turned sharply to the north, and the Willamette, joining the Columbia at so acute an angle, was not recognized as a separate stream. The river grew broader ; islands appeared in the channel ; the banks receded more and more ; at last the headland of Cape Disappointment rose into view, and the voyagers from the distant Atlantic, gazing westward, saw the white breakers of the Pacific that foam forever on the outer bar.

The rains soon raised the waters of the Columbia to such a height that they were compelled to abandon the north bank of the river, where they had first made their camp, and migrate to the southern shore, inhabited by the Clatsop Indians, after whom their new post was named. Here they spent the winter. The land in their vicinity was thickly grown with Oregon pine ; and bear, elk, deer, and water fowl were abundant. Some fifteen miles to the southward rose a high mountain, with a peak at either end, giving it the appearance of a Mexican saddle. From this flowed northward and westward small streams, in which trout were to be caught ; while the Columbia provided salmon, and cod and flat-fish were beyond the bar. Thus the party was in no danger of starving ; but they needed for their home trip provisions that could be preserved ; and they postponed the start for a time in the hopes of the arrival of some vessel that could furnish them with supplies. But in those days vessels were rare visitors ; and at length they were fain to set out with an empty larder and with very few commodities to use in the way of barter.

Proceeding along the south bank of the river, they did

not fail to notice the influx of the Willamette, and plotted it on their chart. Their first commercial transaction was with the Indians on Sauvie's Island, about sixty miles up the stream, when, by the exhibition of a handful of burning sulphur matches, they awed the simple but selfish Red Man into replenishing their stock of food. At the John Day's River they bought some mustangs from a local tribe, and, leaving their canoes, continued the ascent on foot, reaching Walla Walla on April 27th, a little more than a month from the date of leaving Fort Clatsop. Here they were hospitably entreated by the great chief Yellept, who, with his five sons, became, years afterward, victims of a tragic fate. Meanwhile, two days were passed in feasting and dancing, and in the exchange of gifts, Yellept presenting Captain Clarke with a handsome white stallion, receiving in return the captain's sword. A good horse was worth all the swords in America at that time and place; but the worthy Yellept expressed himself "perfectly satisfied." On April 29th the whites moved on, leaving the kindly savages to gossip and speculate over their strange appearance and problematic purposes, and to decorate themselves with the useless trinkets that had been given to them.

Their next halt was in the valley below the Bitter Root Mountains, where the sturdy and handsome Nez Perces came forth to meet them, jingling with frippery of beads and shells, shaggy with buffalo robes, fluttering with feathers, and prismatic with paint—blue, green, and white. They reported that the Lolo Pass was still blocked with snow; and until June 30th the explorers were forced to linger among the wigwams by the Clearwater, while the Indians diligently pursued their avocation of fishing and root-collecting. These barren plains are now prodigal of the finest Idaho wheat. Lewis and Clarke, notwithstanding their courage, their persistence, and their conscientiousness, cannot be said to have erred on the side of optimism in their report upon the superb



Eng. by F. G. Kernan, N.Y.

P. McGowan

regions which they had traversed. They saw a wild, rough country, rich in timber, rugged with mountains, watered by deep and rapid rivers, and populous with game; and they perceived that it might become of value to civilization. But they suspected nothing of the treasures of iron and minerals under the soil, or of the marvellous productiveness of the soil itself, or of the profits of the cattle-raising industry. Indeed, these things are still but in the infancy of their development, nor can any adequate forecast of the future yet be made.

After crossing the Bitter Root, Lewis sought the headwaters of the Missouri by a somewhat devious route, gaining some knowledge of the geography of Montana. Clarke, with the moiety of the party, headed for the Yellowstone, and followed it to its junction with the Missouri, where the expedition was again united. On September 25th, 1806, six months after leaving Fort Clatsop, they rode into St. Louis, and the good news of their successful enterprise and safe return became known throughout the Eastern States. The first decisive step toward the annexation of the northwestern country had been taken by Americans; and the eyes of all daring and able persons throughout the Union began to turn hopefully in that direction. The way was long and difficult; but it was of the essence of the spirit of the nation to confront and conquer obstacles. Even during the absence of Lewis and Clarke, Lieutenant Pike had visited the sources of the Arkansas and Red rivers, and of the Rio Bravo del Norte; and others had been active in the same neighborhoods. It was small wonder that England became uneasy, and feared lest this great inheritance should slip from her grasp.

It was at this period that the two great Canadian corporations—the Hudson's Bay and the Northwest Company—appeared upon the stage as the most dangerous and energetic antagonists of this country. It was their aim and policy to keep the northwest in its original un-

tamed state ; they were fighting against progress and civilization. Possession was, in this case, nine points of the law ; and though the British made the most of the exploits of Drake, Cook, and Vancouver, as against the Americans Gray, Lewis, and Clarke, they were well aware that the establishment of a few permanent posts would be worth all the "prior-discovery" rights in the world. The duel which now ensued was the most stubbornly fought and the most momentous in the annals of pioneering.

England's first blow fell a little wide of its mark. The Northwest Company had a French-Canadian agent by the name of Laroque, to whom they entrusted the mission of founding a series of trading-posts on the Columbia. Laroque penetrated as far as the Mandan country ; but further than that he could not go ; and he might as well have stayed at home. Hereupon, Simon Fraser shouldered the British banner, and proceeded to make the capital mistake of confounding the Fraser River with the Columbia, and, with great complacency, planted a post upon the former. So might a warrior congratulate himself upon cleaving his enemy's head when, in fact, he had but cut down an adjacent mullein stalk.

It was now the Americans' turn to lead, and they did so in every sense of the word. In 1808 was created the Missouri Fur Company, with headquarters on the tributaries of that river and of the Mississippi ; and having thus secured their footing, they threw forward an agent of theirs, named Henry, who crossed the Rockies on the southern boundary of Montana, and built Fort Henry on the headwaters of Snake River. Inasmuch as Snake River is the chief affluent of the Columbia, to Henry belongs the credit of drawing first blood in the conflict. Before the other party could put in a counter to this attack, it was followed up by a manœuvre which, for a time, seemed likely to put an end to the battle before it had well begun.

In 1784 a young German merchant, since known all over the world as John Jacob Astor, landed in the harbor of New York. Had all our emigrants since his time resembled him, we should not now be enforcing laws to keep undesirable persons away from Castle Garden, and the criminal population of Europe would be far more numerous than it is. Astor was not less a man of destiny than was Napoleon Bonaparte; but, unlike Bonaparte's, his destiny was a beneficent one, and his posterity has enlarged his renown. Astor, from the first, identified himself with the fur trade, and in 1810 he was already the wealthiest citizen of the United States.

Cognizant of the efforts making by our Government to establish a regular basis of trade and settlement on the western coast, Astor offered to take the matter in charge, and to turn the whole of the trade into American channels, himself bearing the expense, and stipulating only for official Government support. The New York Legislature gave him a charter, and he incorporated the American Fur Company, with a capital of \$1,000,000; half of the stock he himself took up, reserving the rest for such partners as he should afterward invite to join him.

His plan was to place a line of trading posts along the Missouri and Columbia rivers, with a chief mart and station at the mouth of the latter. Subordinate posts were to be established on the affluents along this route, which were to treat directly with the Indians for peltries, sending their acquisitions to the Columbia station, and drawing thence whatever they needed in the shape of supplies and articles of barter. At this station, also, vessels were to be built for trading on the coasts of Western Canada and of Alaska. Thus the whole trade in furs of the Oregon country and adjacent seas would converge at the mouth of the Columbia; and the fruits thereof would be transported to the Chinese coast, at which the monopoly of the East India Company prevented the

Northwest Company from dealing. The good-will of the Russians was to be secured by substituting a regular system of supplies for their establishments on Behring Sea, in place of the occasional succor furnished by private American ships; while a hand of conciliation was outstretched to the Northwest Company by the offer of a one-third share in the profits of the business. This proposition was declined, the Northwest Company hoping to anticipate Astor in his designs.

In selecting coadjutors in his scheme, Astor fell into his only serious error, and it was probably forced upon him by the nature of the situation. His chief partners, with one eminent exception, were Scotchmen who had already been in the service of the Northwest Company. Against the recommendation of their knowledge of the business and their partial acquaintance with the regions in which it was to be carried on was to be set the fact of their nationality, which rendered them undeserving of any position of trust in an organization that was in rivalry with their own countrymen. This was the principal source of weakness in Astor's plan; another was in his acceptance of Lieutenant Thorn to command the *Tonquin*, the ship which carried out several of the Scotch partners and all the materials to be used in founding the station. Lieutenant Thorn was a loyal American and a man of courage and ability in his profession, but he was as self-willed and arbitrary as only a naval martinet can be; and this temper of his had its share in the disaster that was to occur. For the present, however, the stars in their courses favored the Americans.

The *Tonquin* sailed, doubled Cape Horn, and arrived safely off Columbia River, carrying, among others, McDougal, the chief partner and proxy of Astor, McKay, his associate, the two Stuarts, and Mr. Lewis, fated to become tragically famous. There had been bickerings during the voyage between Thorn and the Scotchmen; and the former, in attempting to find the passage



Eng^d by F. S. Kern & NY

J. H. D. Gray

across the bar, lost two boats, with their crews. About April 1st, 1811, the ship dropped her anchor in Baker's Bay; but, after some dispute, the post was erected on the south side of the river, and was christened Astoria, in honor of the man whose money and public spirit had caused its existence. The Tonquin, meanwhile, recrossed the bar and sailed up the coast for furs. There were twenty-three men on board, including Thorn, McKay, and Lewis. The ship anchored off Vancouver's Island.

Owing to an injudicious outbreak of temper on the part of Thorn, and an insult he put upon the chief of a band of Indians who came aboard for traffic, the latter plotted retaliation. Thorn had been cautioned by Astor not to admit too many Indians on the vessel at any one time. He disregarded the warning, and when, the next day, the savages appeared in their canoes, and without arms, to continue the traffic, he suffered them to come on board freely. They bartered skins for knives; but those who had made their bargains did not leave the ship. Finally, the deck being thronged, and others coming up, Thorn gave the order to clear the ship. It was the signal for massacre. The Indians sprang upon the handful of men and plied their knives. Lewis, stabbed in the back, fell down the companion-way. Thorn, armed only with a clasp-knife, fought desperately, and killed many, but was at last hacked to pieces. McKay was stabbed and thrown overboard, where he was tortured to death by the squaws. Four survivors of the crew had escaped into the cabin and obtained access to the arsenal, whence they opened fire, and presently drove the enemy to their canoes, which they also attacked with cannon. But their plot had been only too successful.

The fiercest part of the tragedy remains to be told. When the morning dawned there lay the Tonquin still at anchor, her sails flapping in the warm June breeze. She seemed deserted, and the Indians drew near in their canoes, eager to plunder her, but fearful of some mishap.

At length Lewis appeared on deck, and with friendly gestures invited them on board. In a few minutes they were swarming over the sides. Lewis had disappeared. The Indians continued to throng on board until the ship was packed to suffocation. Then was heard a deep and terrible roar. The decks parted, the stout timbers were riven apart, and a torrent and whirlwind of flame and smoke burst forth in all directions. The fragments of the ship hurtled aloft in the air in a volcano of fire. The bodies of the Indians, blown to atoms, charred and mangled, were vomited upward toward the blue sky, then dropped far and wide over the sea. Hundreds of canoes that were approaching, with their occupants, were also destroyed, and the transparent waters were covered, over a radius of a quarter of a mile, with dead and dying. When the thunder of the explosion ceased to echo along the coast the Tonquin had vanished, and the canopy of smoke that hung over the scene drifted slowly landward. Thus it was that Lewis, at the sacrifice of his own life, avenged the murder of his comrades. One would like to know more of this man—a strange, sad, desperate character, prophetic of evil, and foreboding his own death. The other four seamen, who had put off in an open boat the night previous, were driven ashore and tortured to death by the savages. The only man of the ship's company who escaped was the Indian interpreter.

While these things were enacting on the coast, Wilson Price Hunt, another of the partners, and an American, was on his way overland to the same point, with a company of upward of sixty followers. They progressed very slowly, and spent their first winter on the eastern side of the mountains. On resuming their journey, they were advised against following the trail of Lewis and Clarke, on account of the hostility of the Blackfeet Indians. They therefore took a more southerly course, and were presently lost in an inextricable maze of mountains, ravines, and rivers ; they were in peril from hostile

Indians, exposed to the attacks of grizzly bears, and to the treachery of their own guides and interpreters. Again and again they felt the pinch of famine; their horses failed, their canoes were wrecked in furious rapids; the Columbia seemed to fly before them as they advanced; not a few deserted; others, too feeble to travel, were abandoned where they fell. It was a terrific journey, crowded with moving incidents.

Among those left to die on the banks of the Snake River were Ramsay Crooks, another of the Scotch partners, and John Day, a noted Kentucky hunter. A band of Dalles Indians found them there, stripped them naked, and took their weapons. This was in the spring; they had spent the winter with the Walla Wallas. Their sufferings can never be told; it is scarcely conceivable that they survived. Day had been a giant in strength, with nerves of iron and a constitution hardened by a life of activity and exposure; but when he was found by one of the Stuarts, in April, he was shattered, body and mind; after being rescued, he attempted suicide, and finally died at Astoria. One of the tributaries of the Columbia perpetuates his name.

The disasters of this expedition form a significant contrast to the absence of mishaps that characterized that of Lewis and Clarke. It was doubtless easier to manage a small party like Lewis's than a mixed troop so numerous as Hunt's; and the latter was also hampered by fear of the Indians. Something, too, is to be allowed to mere luck. The fact remains that Hunt was constantly unfortunate, while Lewis was successful; and the difference is perhaps due to that indefinable quality that makes one man a good leader, while another, not less honest, energetic, and intelligent, blunders from start to finish.

Hunt's party finally reached Astoria in detachments during the first months of 1812. All this time Astor had received no news of the fate of the expedition, whether

by sea or land ; but, in accordance with his predetermined policy, he fitted out a large ship, the *Beaver*, of four hundred and ninety tons burden, and gave the command to Captain Sowle, a man who proved to be both cowardly and untrustworthy. The new settlers who sailed on her were all Americans, it being Astor's design to make the American element the predominant one at Astoria. But this purpose was acted upon too late. The *Beaver* arrived at the settlement two or three months after the last remnants of Hunt's party had been gathered in, and infused some animation into the concern ; interior trading posts were created, and good success in getting furs put a more hopeful complexion on the situation. News was despatched overland to Astor, and but for one accident, for which neither Astor nor the colony was to blame, Astoria might have entered on a career of prosperity commensurate with its founder's expectations.

This accident was the outbreak of the War of 1812 with England. Immediately, numerous difficulties beset Astor's path. Anticipating the blockade of the port of New York, he sent out in haste a fast-sailing ship, the *Lark*, fated to be wrecked before reaching her destination. He addressed a letter to Captain Sowle at Canton (where he was due to arrive with the first cargo of furs from Astoria), directing him to return to the Columbia and there await further orders. In March, 1813, he was informed that the Northwest Company had memorialized the British Government to crush the Astoria settlement, and that a British frigate had accordingly been ordered to the Pacific to carry out this operation, and to establish a new settlement under the English flag. At his suggestion, Congress detailed an American frigate to proceed to Astoria's defence ; but before she could sail a call came for re-enforcements on Lake Ontario, and the crew of the frigate was transferred thither. The *Beaver*, meanwhile, had, after prolonged negotiations and delays



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lasting three months, got her cargo of furs in Behring Sea ; but instead of returning to Astoria to collect the consignment awaiting her there, she proceeded direct to Canton, lest she should be too late for the market. Stopping at Hawaii, she left Mr. Hunt there, and proceeded to Canton, where Sowle found Astor's letter, which gave him his first intimation of the war. Sowle wrote, in reply to Astor, that he declined to venture back to Astoria under the circumstances, but would remain at Canton while the war lasted. Thus vanished the last chance of saving the valuable invoice of furs then collected.

Hunt, after waiting in vain at Hawaii for the arrival of the wrecked Lark, was apprised of the war by a ship, the Albatross, arriving from China. Realizing the desperate straits of Astoria, he chartered this ship to land him there, which was done. He found the Scotchmen on the point of abandoning the post ; the question was, what was to be done with the furs. The Albatross was not going to the Atlantic ; some other vessel must be procured. Hunt finally purchased at Hawaii, for \$10,000, a brig called the Pedlar ; but before he could get back in her to the Columbia the British frigate had arrived, and he had the pleasure of learning that McDougal, the treacherous Scotch partner, had sold \$100,000 worth of furs to an agent of the Northwest Company for a third of their value.

Thus perished Astoria, not to revive again for three-and-thirty years. For although, at the close of the war, in accordance with the principle of *status quo ante bellum*, the post reverted to the United States ; yet, on the plea that it had been disposed of to the Northwest Company by private sale, it was suffered to remain in the company's hands, and Astor's application for its restitution to him was denied. An absurd compromise was agreed upon, specifying that while Astoria should be nominally ceded to the United States, it should be actu-

ally held by the Canadian corporation. Commissioners were appointed by both nations, and the ceremony of hauling up and hauling down the British and American flags was duly performed. It was a repetition of the farce at Nootka, between Vancouver and Bodega.

Astoria was rechristened Fort George, and was carefully fortified. In the long duel between Great Britain and John Jacob Astor, the latter—thanks to the failure of our Government to redeem its promise to support him—had been worsted. Astor was forced to give up his great project and to employ his capital in other directions. But, as we shall presently see, the conflict as between the two nations was not yet over; nor was the final victory to be decided by the supineness of this or that particular administration.

PART II.

THE ERA OF DISPUTE.

CHAPTER IV.

FIGHTS AND FORTUNES OF THE FUR COMPANIES.

It is always interesting to watch the growth of a great idea—its early and seemingly fortuitous beginnings, its vicissitudes, its conflicts, its increasing power, and its final triumph. Like an inestimable jewel, it passes from hand to hand ; from his who first caught its sparkle in the clay at his feet, and who, perhaps, knew not its sovereign value, to his who recognized its significance, but could not win the recognition of others ; who passed it on to a third who attempted to apply it to his own selfish interests, and so forfeited it ; and then another, with more zeal than judgment, extolled it prematurely, and was robbed of it ; and still another, endowed with strength and wisdom, marshalled an army in its cause, and set it in its appointed place, a possession and a glory forever. Such an idea, precious and sovereign, was the conviction that the Great Northwest belonged, by destiny and the right of eminent domain, to the United States, and must by her be occupied, administered, and held.

It was to the mind of Thomas Jefferson that the idea seems first to have been clearly revealed. When, in 1790, he was in Paris as our diplomatic representative, he met there a young Englishman named Ledyard. Led-

yard was full of the enthusiasm of travel and exploration, and he was on his way to Egypt, to search for the sources of the Nile. But in conversation with Jefferson, the topic of the Oregon country came up, and the American statesman pointed out that there was a virgin territory, as yet untrodden by the foot of a white man, but which might fairly be assumed to be the abiding place of vast potential wealth. And he spoke of the mighty mountain chains that guarded and traversed it, and argued that, in the valleys that lay between them, some great river must flow to the Pacific, fit to be the peer of the giant stream that divided the continent from the Lakes to the Gulf. Uncertain rumors of the existence of such a river had already been disseminated by coast-wise mariners; but up to that date no ship had floated on its waters, and no eye had seen its majestic reaches. And would it not—Jefferson suggested—be a worthier and more useful enterprise to search for this noble channel of future commerce and communication than to spend doubtful years in quest of the solution of a mere geographical enigma, which, even if solved, would benefit no important human interest? Ledyard listened, believed, and kindled. When the conference was over, he had given up his projected journey to Africa, and had entered with his whole heart into Jefferson's scheme. Between them they elaborated the plan of action. Ledyard was to cross Russia, and penetrate Siberia to the coasts of Behring Sea. There he was to cross the straits, and pass down the Alaskan and adjoining shores until the mouth of the unknown river was reached. Up that river to its sources among the remote passes of the mountains he was then to force his way; and having crossed the range, was to emerge on the high table-lands whence the Missouri begins its southeastward journey, whose broad current would bear him back to civilization.

The Empress Catherine of Russia was applied to for permission to cross her domains, and informed of the



Samuel Jones

object of the journey. She gave her cordial assent and approval, and Ledyard set out. But, thanks to some hostile influence, the source of which has never been certainly detected, the Russian Government was induced to withdraw its permission, and Ledyard was overtaken by an imperial messenger when almost within sight of Behring Straits, and forced to give up his enterprise and return. It was a heavy disappointment to Jefferson; but his purpose stayed with him, and he bided his time.

We have seen how, in 1792, Gray verified the existence of the Columbia; how, in 1802, Jefferson bought Louisiana, carrying a colorable claim to Oregon, from Napoleon; and how, three years later, he despatched Lewis and Clarke to survey the country. We have seen how Astor founded and lost Astoria, when a hand less strong than Jefferson's was at the helm of State; and how the pusillanimous treaty of Joint Occupation of 1818 practically threw the country into British hands. But though Jefferson was in retirement, and unable himself to publicly urge his views, he had found a young and resolute ally in the person of Thomas Benton, an officer of the War of 1812, and a man of eminent ability and lofty character. For a quarter of a century Benton supported the cause of Oregon in Congress, unflinchingly opposing the cowardly policy of the majority of his colleagues, and the active and dangerous aggressions of the British Government. With him was associated John C. Frémont, an army officer and engineer, and an enthusiastic explorer, whose expeditions into the western region, and accurate maps and reports, had a powerful effect in attracting public attention to California and Oregon, and furnishing trustworthy data whereby to estimate their value.

But we must turn for a while to the consideration of British aggression. This was carried on through the medium of the two great fur companies who possessed the entire northern portion of the American Continent—

a territory actually greater in area than the whole of the present United States. The Northwest Fur Company was, as we have seen, an intruder upon the domains—or a part of them—claimed by the Hudson's Bay. The latter had at first despised its rival too much to adopt energetic measures against it; and when it awoke to its danger, it was too late; the Northwest Company could no longer be crushed. It was not hampered by the rigid traditions and red-tape policy of the other company, and instead of waiting with solemn dignity for trade to come to it, it went out to solicit trade, and obtained it from under the Hudson's Bay Company's nose. It had its headquarters in Canada, and there was in it a spirit of vivacity and jollity to which the dismal offices of the Hudson's Bay Company, in Fenchurch Street, London, were strangers. The partners were like great feudal chiefs; the Company controlled thousands of agents and vassals; it held splendid meetings in its parliamentary halls, with wassail and banquet, gigantic picnics by forest and river, royal hunting expeditions, and all manner of magnificent revelry. Its members were part Scotch and part French-Canadians; they had the shrewdness and persistency of the one race and the enterprise and light-heartedness of the other. The Canadian *voyageurs* were a unique class of men, of dauntless courage and inexhaustible endurance, ready at an hour's notice to start on lonely journeys through pathless wildernesses extending thousands of miles; and not less ready, when occasion served, for a dance, a song, and a frolic; withal, strictly subservient to discipline, with a respect for the laws of the company that was hereditary from father to son. Their condition and character are much the same to-day that they were a hundred years ago; and they still wear the picturesque capote, the loose shirt, the fringed leggings, and the belt, which form a costume half-way between the savage and the white.

The Northwest Company, by its shrewd and energetic

tactics, gradually won over the Indians to its side, and away from its rival ; and it now began to take measures to exclude the latter from the beaver country, one of its most valuable sources of revenue. Were it successful in this, the Hudson's Bay Company might ultimately be forced to forfeit its charter and retire from business. The fat pocket-books of the English stockholders took the alarm, and were fain to practise the unwelcome novelty of giving out instead of only taking in, as had been their custom during the previous century. Money must be spent, or those beloved dividends, already dwindling, would wholly disappear. War was being waged upon them by the Company of the Northwest, and verily they must either fight or perish.

It is at junctures like this that the Republican form of government appears at a disadvantage. The antagonism of the two British companies was, for us, the best possible thing that could happen ; and our proper policy in the circumstances was to afford them every encouragement to cut each other's throats. Nor would this have been in any respect a reprehensible action on our part ; for both these overgrown monopolies were enemies of the human race, and have done more to retard civilization and prolong human misery, for the ends of their own private luxury and self-indulgence, than has any other influence known to recent history. For had the lands which they control been open since the beginning of the eighteenth century to free settlement and colonization, they would have served as an outlet and resource for all the poor of crowded England, who now live in squalor and wretchedness, and die of disease and starvation, and crowd the barbarous prisons which Parliament maintains for their benefit. These lost myriads of men and women might have become a thriving, prosperous, and happy community, a source of wealth to the world and of power to their mother country. But the companies, by every device of dishonesty

and measure of arbitrary violence, have kept the great wilderness a wilderness still ; the axe is not heard throughout the countless miles of their forests, and agriculture and industries are unknown. The guilt of thousands of criminals is written against the names of these prosperous gentlemen, and the ruin of innumerable lives is at their doors. Yet no law can reach them ; no stigma will ever be attached to them ; they are born and die in uninterrupted wealth and idleness ; and with exquisite complacency they subscribe a guinea to a local charity, and denounce the inhumanity of the Czar in availing himself of criminal labor to develop his Siberian mines. Surely, to have helped to scotch such a dragon as this would have been no ill deed for the American Government to perform.

But partisan spirit was high in Congress at this time ; and short terms of power are unfavorable to achievements of deep and deliberate policy applied to unexpected occurrences. Neither Madison nor Monroe appreciated the opportunity, and the war between the rival factions of the enemy was suffered to proceed unnoticed. In 1815, and again in 1816, Fort Gibraltar, on the Red River of the North, built by Lord Selkirk in the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company, was besieged and captured by the men of the Northwest Company, Governor Semple and many of the garrison slaughtered, and the rest driven out of the country ; while the fort itself was destroyed. Bloody affrays and robberies took place during many years ; there was no law in the country and no justice. Both sides were fast consummating the wholesome work of mutual destruction, when, in 1821, the English Parliament intervened, and succeeded in consolidating the two companies into one, bearing the title of the elder. Of course, the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company became almost immediately more than twice as strong as either of its component parts had been, and the outlook for America was gloomy indeed.



Rodney Glisan, M.D.

It will be remembered that after the War of 1812 the possession of Astoria had been yielded to the Northwest Company, on the plea of private purchase, and its name changed to Fort George. The consolidated company continued in possession ; but in 1823 it was determined to abandon it for a more favorable position a few miles further up the stream. A site on the northern bank was selected, and named Fort Vancouver. It was on a bend of the river, immediately opposite the mouth of the Willamette. It was in all respects happily chosen. By way of Puget Sound it communicated with the northern coasts up to Alaska ; the Willamette brought it the produce of Oregon and California ; while the Columbia, with its affluents north and south, opened the way to all regions east. Meanwhile, the river was deep enough to admit of the largest ships discharging their cargoes and receiving them at the wharf of the fort. An adjoining tract of fertile land, three thousand acres in extent, was set apart for the raising of grain and vegetables for the sustenance of the occupants of the fort ; and the fort itself and the buildings were made as comfortable and secure as money and skilled workmen could render them. A man named McLoughlin was placed in charge of the station. His character has been sharply attacked and vehemently defended. He appears to have been, at all events, well fitted for his position. He was thoroughly devoted to the interests of the company, with marked administrative ability, suave, plausible, affable, subtle ; a genial manner concealing an unrelenting purpose, and withal an impetuous, autocratic temper, to which he sometimes gave the rein. He left a voluminous narrative of his rule at Fort Vancouver, in which he repels the many charges of cruelty and treachery that were brought against him. The natural resentment of those whom he had tried to subject to the control of the company, or to force out of the country, while professing for them friendly sentiments, may have occasionally provoked

them to throw too much color into their account of his doings ; but if he were really blameless, he was certainly often the victim of unfortunate appearances. We shall probably be safe in regarding him as a model representative of the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company. He thoroughly understood their policy, and carried it out to admiration.

The fort was an enclosed space some seven hundred yards in circuit, protected by a fence of stout logs driven into the ground close together, and having a height of twenty feet. At the corners were bastions, with a couple of cannon mounted in each ; and larger cannon were fixed inside the enclosure. The latter was divided into two courts surrounded by wooden buildings ; in the centre rose the house occupied by Mr. McLoughlin, and adjoining it were the dining-hall, and the public sitting-room, called " Bachelor's Hall." Among the other contents of the fort were a chapel, a school, and a powder-magazine.

Outside of the enclosure, at a distance of a little over a third of a mile, was the village inhabited by the servants and retainers of the fort, mostly Canadians and Scots, and a hospital for the sick and injured. Both these people and the officials in the Fort, finding that white women were not to be induced to venture out to so remote a settlement, and being unwilling to deny themselves the comforts and attentions of domesticity, took to themselves wives (for so they were called) from the surrounding Indian tribes. The greater part of these ladies were half-breeds ; they dressed in a picturesque combination of English and Indian fashions, and seem to have served their masters with great docility and faithfulness. A large progeny of half-breed children grew from these connections, and clambered about the fort, played on the river-banks, hunted small game in the forest, and sat on the benches of the school-house.

The regimen of life of the Governor and his staff ap-

pears not to have been unduly ascetic. Their daily banquet, we are told, was of the most substantial kind ; and their appreciation of it was evinced by their solemnly invoking a blessing ere sitting down to it. Course after course was discussed, garnished with the appropriate wines ; and when they had eaten and drunken, and were merry, they would throng joyously into Bachelor's Hall, to smoke and tell stories of adventure by flood and field. These daily jollifications were enlarged to a grand scale when, as happened several times each year, the traders came in from the outposts, or the officers of the company's ships arrived from the Indian Ocean or Behring Sea. Then sea yarns were exchanged for frontier anecdotes, and the eccentricities of Kamtchatkan fur hunters and Mongolian traders were matched against the last Indian legend or the best bear or fish story. But in all these revelries, says the discreet chronicler, the strictest propriety was observed ; Governor McLoughlin could not endure a loose word nor a rash gesture ; and although wine flowed freely, anything in the shape of spirituous liquors was strictly prohibited. In this the company's factotum displayed his long-headed sagacity ; for were he to permit liquor to his officers and servants, it would be sure to find its way to the Indians, who would thereby be rendered obstreperous and unruly, and their diligence in collecting furs be diminished. Sobriety was the best policy, and had the advantage of morality thrown in.

Idleness was never known in Fort Vancouver. Besides the regular work of collecting, assorting, and packing the furs, there was the garden to be kept up, and timber to be felled for shipment to the Sandwich Islands and elsewhere. There were grist mills and threshing mills, dairies and cattle yards to be looked after, and a brisk trade to be kept up with Russian stations and with ships putting into the port in all manner of manufactured English goods. The special terms given the company by the home market enabled them to undersell all com-

petition, while retaining a handsome profit ; and year by year the custom of the Pacific kept increasing at their doors. Their prosperity was enormous. They were enjoying the benefits of the scheme that Astor had devised, and were pursuing it with an ability, a steadiness, and a discipline characteristic of British administration everywhere. They had won their position by questionable measures, but they had the means of holding it against all comers, and, now as always, might was right with them.

The departures, as well as the arrivals of the various hunting and trapping expeditions, were scenes of bustle and vivacity. They consisted of fifty or sixty men each, and some weeks of preparation were needed for their complete equipment. The provision stores were opened, and portable foods made up into compact packages, for transportation, on mustang back or Indian back, or in the dug-out or the birch-bark canoe. Cases were made, filled with blankets, calicoes, and trinkets for the Indians, to be exchanged for their furs at a profit of a thousand per cent and upward. Meanwhile, the tailors and outfitters of the colony were busy in measuring the men for their hunting shirts and leggings, which the women decorated with fringes and embroidery in the Indian style. From the smithies came the noise of hammers and the glow of forges, as the blacksmiths put together the traps of steel which were to capture the beaver, the mink, and the fox. Pack-horses were selected from the company's stock yard ; and at length, when all was ready, an allowance of rum was dealt out to each man, to hearten him for his long and rough journey and his precarious abode in the wilderness. Some of these parties remained out all winter ; but, whether returning soon or late, they always brought with them, besides their furs, a mass of information about the topography of the country, the character and range of the various tribes, and similar details, which was carefully noted



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down by the secretaries of the post, to be used as occasion arose to acquire or confirm their grasp on the country and its denizens.

Such were the appearance and methods of the Oregon post of the Hudson's Bay Company. Year after year the power and the area of their operations augmented. The law passed by Congress in 1815, expelling them from the region between the upper branches of the Missouri and the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains, was not enforced by our Government, and was utterly disregarded by the company. Had it suited their convenience, they would doubtless, in defiance of the treaty, have made their way down the Mississippi to the Gulf. In 1828, acting on information obtained from the remnant of a party of American explorers, a party, led by Alexander McLeod, was sent down the Willamette Valley to the valley of the Sacramento, in Northern California. They were successful in getting furs, but were caught by the snow, lost their horses, and were obliged to *cache* their plunder near Mt. Shasta, and it was subsequently ruined by a flood. Another party, under Ogden, travelled by the Columbia and Snake rivers to the American rendezvous on Green River, and thence to the Humboldt (afterward named by Frémont). Ogden crossed the Sierra Nevada, and returned homeward up the Sacramento, with a valuable lot of furs. Thus the company had ranged as far south as latitude 39°.

Let us now inquire what the Americans had been doing. Their ancestors in the fur trade were the French settlers of Louisiana, who trapped and hunted in the Mississippi and Missouri valleys as far back as 1762. Later, the place of these pioneers was taken by the English—or, rather, the Scotch; and after the War of the Revolution, the Scotch were succeeded by the Americans, who conducted their operations from a base of supplies at Mackinaw. St. Louis, from the small village that it was in the early years of the century, inhabited chiefly by

French families, became the chief port on the borders of the great prairie sea that stretched westward for eight hundred miles, till it touched the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Hither, from all eastward points, congregated the army of adventurers to the West; here the caravans were fitted out, and at this point they began their journeys. It was a lively and bustling town, with a shifting population, the elements of which were by no means as choice as they were various. There were deserters from Atlantic ships, criminals fleeing from the hand of the law, veterans of the wars, boys who had run away from home to seek their fortunes, vagabonds who hailed from nowhere, and cared not whither fate might carry them, gentlemen, laborers, soldiers, farmers, American hunters, and French trappers from the Gulf States. The names of some of these men have been preserved by history; but the vast majority went out into that vague Western region, never again to be heard of or inquired after. Some were lost on the plains; some were slain by Indians; some were trampled by the buffalo or crushed by grizzly bears; some lived adventurous lives, hunting, fighting, and wandering; some found a home, and raised families, whose descendants live to-day. But from the Atlantic to the Pacific all lines of travel intersected at St. Louis.

After the collapse of Astoria, the American Fur Company confined its expeditions to points east of the Rocky Mountains. Astor gradually withdrew from the corporation, and his place was taken by the Scotchman, Ramsay Crooks. Their chief rival was the Missouri Fur Company, which, in 1808, had hunted beyond the Rockies. Expeditions were occasionally sent as far south as Santa Fé, in New Mexico. After the edict of 1815, the American Fur Company mustered the energy to despatch a party to the headwaters of the Missouri; but they found the British there in as great force as ever. In Oregon itself, the American competition was of the

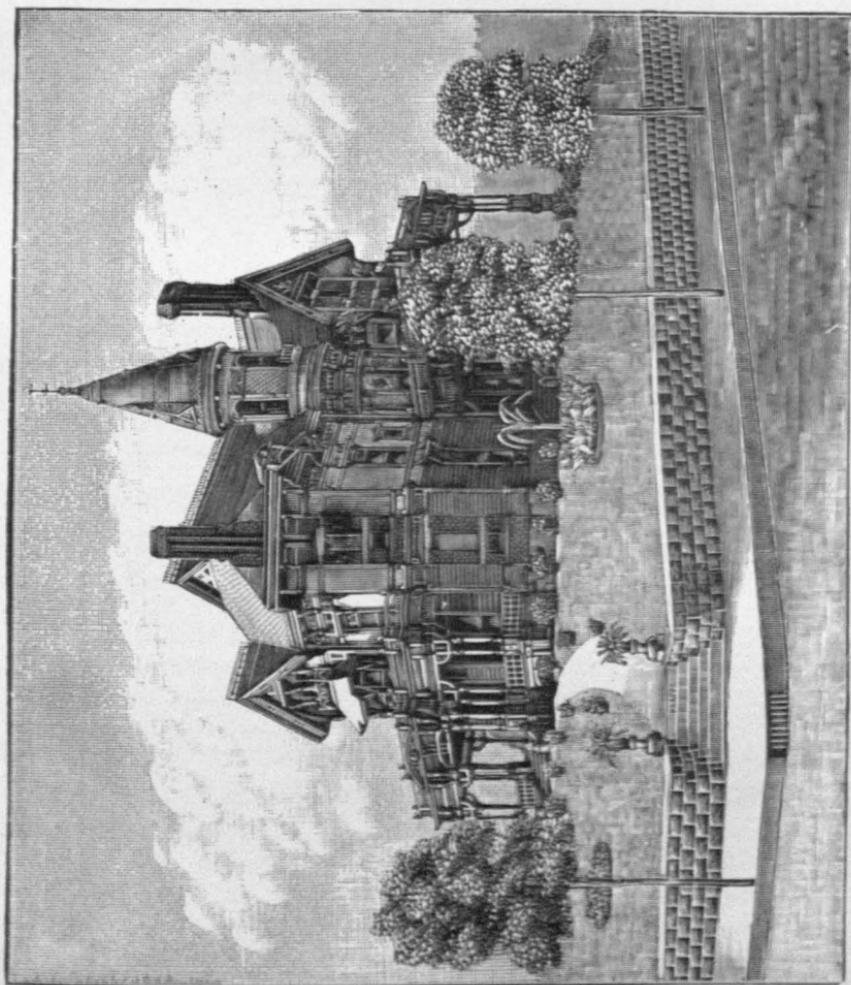
most feeble and ineffective kind. Such as it was, it was carried on either by private individuals or by companies so small as to be powerless to accomplish anything but their own ruin. They had no capital, they found the Indians hostile—thanks in part to their own injudicious conduct and in part to the secret incitement of the Hudson's Bay Company—and they were undersold on all sides by the latter, who could afford, if necessary, to give away their goods, rather than fail to force the Americans to the wall. These small traders also hastened one another's extinction by their petty rivalries; and if anything had been wanting to complete their discomfiture, it would have been afforded by the character of the men they were obliged to employ, who belonged to a low and brutal class of the population, reckless, dissolute, and vicious, and utterly unamenable to authority or discipline. Their jug of alcohol was as indispensable to them as their rifle, and they did quite as much execution with the one as with the other. Desperate courage was almost their sole virtue; and for the ends of the industry for which they were hired, they were not for a moment to be compared to the sober, orderly, and trained servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. To all practical intents and purposes, therefore, the British were undisturbed in their monopoly, and every year the hope of successful rivalry became less.

An explicit and vigorous policy on the part of our Government would have changed the situation at once. Many were the applications for aid made to Congress; many the speeches delivered in House and Senate in favor of action. But there was always a member from Missouri or a Senator from South Carolina or New Jersey ready with a plausible rejoinder, full of cleverness, ignorance, and timidity, declaring that the entire region west of the Mississippi was an uninhabitable wilderness, fit only for Indians and penal colonies, and that it was a noble act of self-abnegation on the part of England to

consent to support a station in it. Let us show our gratitude by at least forbearing to molest her! The truth is, that whatever may have been the case with the American people, the American Government was afraid of England at this epoch, and dared not provoke her. Had Congress been aware that England was playing a game of bluff, and would have thought more than twice or thrice before going to war about her Northwestern pretensions, more than a quarter of a century of valuable time would have been saved. But the reluctance at Washington to wound British sensibilities was extraordinary. It was considered the worst taste even to hint that we had any claim to our own. It was frowned down: "His majesty would feel offended."

The treaty of "Joint Occupation" was to continue till 1828. In 1823, General Ashley, senior partner of an association called the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, was enterprising enough to proceed, with a party of trappers, from St. Louis across Missouri to Nebraska, thence up the Platte River to Rattlesnake Mountains, and from there followed its branch, called the Sweetwater, to its source in the Wind River Mountains, in Wyoming. West of these mountains, and accessible by the South Pass (afterward named and mapped by Frémont), was the valley of the Green River, overlooked by Frémont's Peak. Here, a hundred miles south of the present Yellowstone National Park, Ashley made his camp; and this afterward became the headquarters of the American fur traders. The next year Ashley penetrated farther south, to Utah, where he found Great Salt Lake, and a smaller lake, on which he built a fort, giving his own name to both. During several years business was done in this region after a fashion more or less irregular; but it was profitable enough to enable General Ashley shortly to retire from the Rocky Mountain Fur Company with a fortune.

Meantime, a member of the company, Jedidiah S.



RESIDENCE OF R. B. KNAPP, PORTLAND, ORE.

Smith by name, had come into prominence by an expedition to Humboldt River, in Nevada, which he was the first to discover, and which led him toward the Sierra Nevada range. This he crossed below latitude 40° , and found himself in the valley of the Sacramento. Leaving most of his company there, to trap and hunt during the winter, he went back to Green River; when, owing to the retirement of Ashley, as aforesaid, Smith, Sublette, and Jackson became chiefs of the company. On his way back, in the spring of 1826, to rejoin his party in the Sacramento, he followed Green River down to its junction with the Colorado, and there he and his followers were attacked by Indians. Smith, with two companions, escaped southward, only to be captured and imprisoned for several months by the Mexicans. On being released, he started north to rejoin his party of the year before, and found them on the American River. In June, 1827, they made their way to the coast, and proceeded northward to the Umpqua, in crossing which they were attacked by Indians under the control of Governor McLoughlin of Fort Vancouver, though he was obviously not in any way privy to this massacre. Smith and one Daniel Prior escaped, and got to the fort in a deplorable condition, and with the loss of all their furs. McLoughlin received them hospitably, and promised to recover the furs and punish the Indians. The furs were recovered, and then appropriated by McLoughlin at a fraction of their value; but no punishment was inflicted on the Indians. The whole affair looks like a solemn farce from the company's point of view, though it was a sufficiently tragic drama to the unhappy Smith.

The following year another American party, under Major Pilcher, started from the base at Green River and ventured into Oregon, by way of Clarke's Fork and the Upper Columbia. This party also was cut to pieces by the Indians, and their furs were soon afterward delivered at Fort Vancouver. Major Pilcher escaped the toma-

hawk, but did not, like Smith, fly to Fort Vancouver for protection. He had no stomach for that sinister hospitality.

So far, the experiences of American traders in Oregon had not been encouraging. But in 1832, Ewing Young, an experienced trapper and frontiersman, and afterward one of the early and prominent settlers of Oregon, came up the Pacific coast from California as far as the Umpqua; at that point he turned eastward, and left the boundaries of the State by the southeast with a whole skin. In the Sacramento Valley, however, he encountered a body of the Hudson's Bay Company's trappers, who were on their way to establish a station at San Francisco, then known as Yerba Buena, which they retained until 1845. Captain B. L. E. Bonneville, in 1834, was less fortunate than Mr. Young, though he succeeded in procuring a "permit" from Congress to attempt the establishment of a fort on the Lower Columbia. He entered Oregon from the northeast, and for three weeks was lost among the Blue Mountains, near latitude 45°. It was winter, and he and his party narrowly escaped freezing and starvation. They were found and rescued by the Nez Perces, and brought to the Hudson's Bay Company's station at Walla Walla. The agent in charge there, Mr. Pambrun, refused to give the captain any assistance, feeling bound, as he expressed it, to "do nothing which should facilitate or encourage the visits of other traders among the Indians in that part of the country." Bonneville, guided by a Nez Perces chief, returned to his starting-point at Portneuf River. In July of the same year he set forth once more, with a large party and a supply of goods for Indian traffic. He followed the course of the Umatilla to its junction with the Columbia; but the Indians, intimidated by the Hudson's Bay Company, refused to have any transactions with them, or even to sell them food. Bonneville had the choice of either starving or retiring, and he chose the latter.

Nathaniel J. Wyeth, of Boston, was meanwhile making efforts quite as futile in another part of the country. With eleven men, he proceeded from the Humboldt to the Snake River, and thence down the Columbia to Fort Vancouver. McLoughlin received him with great cordiality, but sent him back the following spring a bankrupt. Wyeth still had some fight left in him, however, and returned in 1834, with the preposterous expectation of carrying out Astor's plans of twenty-three years before, with the addition of salmon-fishing. He built Fort Hall, near the sources of Snake River, garrisoned it, descended the Columbia to Sauvie's Island, just below Vancouver, and built another fort there. He had sent a ship, the *Mary Dacres*, round Cape Horn, which arrived with tools and supplies. In all this he was but playing into the hands of McLoughlin, who welcomed him with his accustomed heartiness, and proceeded to destroy him. He built Fort Boisé on Snake River, and drew the Indian trade away from Fort Hall; he forbade the Indians of the lower Columbia to have any dealings with the Americans; and having thus bound his rival hand and foot, he smilingly awaited the result. It came in two years. Wyeth abandoned all his possessions to the Hudson's Bay Company, including Fort Hall, and disappeared from Oregon and from history, having enriched his enemies to the extent of his own possessions, and rather more. This was in 1836. For more than five-and-twenty years the struggle between Americans and the Hudson's Bay Company had been going on, and the former had not only gained nothing, but had lost something of the little they originally had.

Before entering upon the next stage in the game, let us briefly review the negotiations between our Government and that of Great Britain as to the Oregon question.

The subject had been kept alive in Congress by the patriotic and far-sighted exertions of Rush, Gallatin, Benton, Linn, and a few others. Benton had devoted

his life to the task of securing to the United States the ports of San Francisco and of the Columbia, with an extension of our ownership to the 49th parallel. His famous saying, pointing across the Western plains toward the Pacific, "There lies the East—there is the road to India!" formulated his conception of the advantages of this occupancy. Commanding the coast, we could trade overland with Asia, and draw from it our share of the wealth now monopolized by England. It was this prospect especially which kindled his imagination. Of the intrinsic value of the Western country he could form only a conjecture, and, of course, an inadequate one. The gold discoveries were still far in the future, and the agricultural resources were but a possibility. But the rewards of the East Indian overland trade appeared to him immense and immediate; and herein he was at one with both Jefferson and General Clarke, the original explorer of 1805, who was still living in St. Louis, as commissioner for the Indian tribes of the Pacific coast.

In 1820, a proposition to construct a chain of forts overland, to protect and supply emigrants, and to station an adequate body of troops on the coast, was rejected by Congress, which expressed the opinion that before colonizing the transmontane region, it would be expedient to see the intervening territory thoroughly settled. In 1821, Russia, by asserting exclusive title to the coast as far south as 51°, and forbidding all foreign vessels to trade in Behring Sea, strengthened the position of those who advocated the abandonment of the struggle; but this effect was in some measure counteracted by the enunciation, in 1823, of Monroe's historic doctrine, that American continents were henceforth "not to be considered as subjects for colonization by any European power." During the next three years, English and American commissioners were appointed to decide what should be done when the ten-years' treaty of Joint Occupation should expire. Rush and Gallatin acted for us,



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and on grounds with which the reader is already familiar, together with the additional argument of the "contiguity" of the Mississippi and Missouri settlements, laid claim to the coast up to latitude 49°. But in arguments based upon grounds of prior discovery and treaties, the case put forward by the English commissioners was nearly as good as ours; both ours and theirs being, in truth, valueless and beside the mark. The only proper and dignified course for the United States to follow was to assert our ownership in the Western regions because they were a homogeneous part of the continent of which we were the actual and the chief inhabitants. On the same principle, Canada and Mexico belong to us whenever it shall suit our purposes to take possession of them. The claims of mere colonists of foreign nations are not worthy of serious consideration; they are sporadic and accidental, and exist only by our sufferance. As regards the present dispute over Behring Sea, if there be no precedent for the validity of the rights we bought from Russia, there is at any rate an excellent opportunity for such a precedent to be made. Behring Sea is already a *mare clausum* by virtue of its geographical position; no one can pretend that it is a thoroughfare. Its conditions are analogous to those of no other body of water on the surface of the globe; and until we maintain our exclusive right to it, there will be no assurance of peace.

The negotiations which were brought to a close in 1827 had no satisfactory result; the treaty of Joint Occupation was continued, with the tacit hope that some *deus ex machina* would ere long remove the question from the sphere of argument, and decide it by the incalculable logic of events. Chance was invoked to remedy the failure of diplomacy.

CHAPTER V.

THE MISSIONARIES.

THE incompetency of either private American traders or organizations of them to maintain any rivalry with the British company had now been abundantly demonstrated. The American Government had repeatedly and definitively refused to aid or countenance such efforts in any manner. On the other hand, the British Colonial Government gave its whole weight to the support of the Hudson's Bay Company's aggrandizements, for the excellent reason that the former and the latter were practically the same thing. The company owned the government, and constituted it. Such being the situation, it is obvious that the *deus ex machina* most likely to intervene, and the one looked for by the British, was nothing more nor less than the moral right conveyed by continuous and undisturbed possession and administration. When Americans found that they could not live in Oregon or California, they would cease attempting to do so; boundaries would be established accordingly, and all trouble, so far as England was concerned, would be at an end.

The uncertainty of events and the seemingly trivial causes on which the largest results depend have not often been more strikingly illustrated than at this juncture. Doubtless, all things at all times are controlled and moulded by Providence; but that guiding Hand is seldom so clearly manifested as at this moment, when the efforts of human self-interest—generally regarded as the most powerful of earthly influences—had utterly failed to bring that to pass which Providence had foreordained; and, on the other side, the most conspicuous obstacle in the path of the coming change had become so firmly rooted in its place, that no available earthly power seemed adequate to cope with it. But as the chemical

disintegration of a drop of water liberates an immeasurable force, so a chance word, accidentally overheard, put in action a power which gave to a race its inheritance, and out of a small nation developed the mightiest that the world has known.

When, in 1805, Lewis and Clarke descended the mountain pass to the valley of the Clearwater, they no doubt thanked God for their deliverance from the perils of cold and famine. Be that as it may, they found occasion to mention to the Indians the name of the white men's God, and further informed them that God had made the white race the strongest and richest on the globe. The Nez Percés were an ambitious and intelligent people; and what they saw of the accoutrements and appurtenances of their visitors, especially their weapons, together with what they had learned concerning the white race from other tribes, led them to think that it would be expedient for them to come into closer relations with so powerful a Deity. Subsequent arrivals from the East confirmed these earliest reports, and a certain Book was spoken of, which was said to contain the secret of the incantations whereby the white God might be propitiated.

These rumors were disseminated and canvassed among the tribes during more than twenty years; and at length, in 1832, a deputation of four or five Flathead chiefs was despatched to St. Louis to procure the magic volume. This is a pathetic circumstance—the savages evidently supposing that the mere physical possession of the Book would enable them to rival the power of the whites, and dominate their own brethren. As to reading it, they had no conception of such a thing. The idea of leading a virtuous and Christian life entered not into their calculations; they expected immediate magical results; out of the Book were to proceed rifles, knives, beads, and calico without limit, and victory over enemies.

The deputation reached St. Louis, but among the variegated throng of desperadoes and adventurers that

they encountered there, no one seemed to have a copy of the precious Book; and the plaintive inquiries of the Indians met only with ridicule. Two of the deputation died in St. Louis, others on the way back to the tribe, and one only reached his native boundaries. But some individual, whose name has not come down to us, chanced to overhear this savage express his longing for the Book of the white God, and he sent word to the Board of American Missions that there was a spiritual harvest in Oregon waiting for the reaper to come and gather it in.

The American Board of Missions neither knew nor cared anything about politics, right of discovery, the ethics of treaties, or about the value of the fur industry and the East India trade; but they understood that there were heathen to be converted, and they lost no time in making their preparations. The Methodist Board was the first in the field; it appointed the Rev. Jason Lee, with Rev. Daniel Lee, and Cyrus Shepard and P. L. Edwards as his associates. They took advantage of the departure of the second Wyeth expedition in 1834, and passing through Walla Walla, reached Fort Vancouver on September 15th. McLoughlin was there to meet them, and this time the warmth of his welcome is not so open to misinterpretation as it had been on other occasions. In truth, he seems to have quite failed to detect anything menacing to the well-being of the Company in this Methodist invasion. The missionaries were intent not upon material gains, but upon human souls—a commodity with which the company had never concerned itself. At the same time, it was possible that converted Indians might become more efficient in the company's service than could be expected of them in their present unregenerate condition. The sagacious factotum, therefore, was disposed to look with favor upon the arrival of Mr. Lee and his associates, and not only put no obstacle in the way of their settlement in the



PORTLAND'S NEW OPERA HOUSE, "THE MARQUAM."

country, but persuaded them to build their ark in his immediate neighborhood—in the upper Willamette Valley—where he could keep a close watch upon their proceedings, and could avail himself of their services for the education of his own children.

There were two aspects of the situation which the factotum, with all his shrewdness, did not happen to consider. The first was, the notorious fondness of Protestant missionaries for the society of their wives and children. Whenever circumstances made it practicable, the frontier preacher had his family to live with him; and the wife was frequently quite as active and efficient as her husband in softening the hearts and improving the manners of the savage parishioners. Up to this time no white woman had set her foot on the soil of Oregon; but nothing was more probable than that other missionaries would follow these pioneers, and that women-folk would come with them. And when that happened, the arrival of the lay white population was not far off. They would learn that the far Northwest was a land to be lived in as well as hunted in; that it was capable of furnishing homes as well as forts and posts; and when the first canvas-topped wagon from the Eastern plains had toiled through the pass and descended into the Oregon valleys, the beginning of the end of the reign of the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company was in sight.

The second consideration was of a different character. McLoughlin, in common with the missionaries themselves, was mistaken in hoping that any vital change of heart was to be wrought in the Indian tribes. The event proved this; and the record of missionary labors in all parts of this continent is additional evidence. Out of the millions of American savages, a handful have, indeed, become true Christians, and a larger number have been trained to till the soil and otherwise manifest the qualities of inoffensive and not unuseful citizens. But the great mass of the redmen have not been touched.

The Jesuit and other Catholic missions in Mexico and California have greatly subdued them, and they have died off quietly, as good Indians should do ; while intercourse with a depraved class of frontier desperadoes has been the occasion of a vast and less peaceful mortality among the remainder of our aboriginal population. But earnestly and heroically though it has been preached and promulgated among them, the Protestant faith has had only the most moderate success among the tribes. And the reasons for this are not far to seek.

To begin with, the Indians (as we have already hinted) expected something totally different from the thing they were to receive. They were doubtless ready to make large sacrifices in order to "experience religion ;" but this was due to their deeply seated conviction that the religion, when they got it, would bring them material power and wealth. They were much in the condition of the Jews in the time of Christ, who expected a temporal kingdom, and were mortally offended when they were offered only the dominion over those very passions and appetites which they had hoped most freely to indulge. Jew and Indian were alike unable to comprehend what power could exist in a creed that enjoined meekness, forgiveness, charity, and continence ; that forbade war, pillage, revenge, cunning, and nearly everything else that they had been brought up, from time immemorial, to regard as the chief virtues. They saw plainly that if they followed the injunctions of the clergymen, they were liable to be massacred or enslaved by the first unregenerate tribe that happened to come across them ; and it was not in a year, nor even in several generations, that they could learn such a lesson as that.

Again, there was nothing in the forms of Protestant worship to attract them ; and in this respect our missionaries were at a fatal disadvantage compared with those of Rome. Savages are affected through the eye, through action, through the imagination. To sit and listen by the

hour to doctrinal discourses of which they understood nothing, delivered by one who, perhaps, had not been endowed by his Creator with the gift of magnetic eloquence, and to find this trial result in no visible and tangible benefit, was not conciliating to their hopes. How, they asked themselves, was it possible for the white race to have attained its supremacy by such practices as these? For a while they waited for the secret to be declared; but when months and years passed by, and no sign was given to them, and when they saw that the majority of the white men with whom they came in contact were far from observing the precepts which their own Book inculcated, they naturally began to suspect that they were being unfairly dealt with. Perhaps, they thought, the whites were playing a deep game; they were enjoining inoffensiveness and forgiveness of injuries, in order to destroy them the more easily when their training should have borne its fruit. Such a notion could not but awaken their active resentment.

In any case, it is difficult to overestimate the magnitude of the disappointment that the labors of the missionaries finally brought upon the Indians. After all their enthusiastic visions of splendor and authority, they were required to become patient drudges, to give up the use of their red, blue, and white paint, and to look with indifference upon dyed porcupine quills and colored beads. The white God was not to appear to them during their lifetime, nor to help them in the only ways in which they desired help; but after death, if they had been deaf to every impulse of nature, they were to be permitted to glorify Him with harps and song. Nothing could have been devised more distasteful to them. They were baptized by hundreds; but still nothing happened. It is a marvel not that the great majority finally rebelled against this doctrine, but that any individuals were found to intelligently accept it. It is no marvel that, when the Catholics came, with their picturesque ritual,

their crosses, rosaries, and statuettes, their embroidered vestments, the swinging censers and glimmering candles, their dramatic gestures, posturings and genuflections, their sacred pictures, their mystic elevation of the Host, their strange chants and processions—it is no marvel that the savages, thirsting for something that could awe, entertain, and stimulate them, eagerly welcomed the priests' claim that this was the paraphernalia of the true God, and that the colorless Protestants defrauded them in the present and deceived them as to the hereafter.

But although the missionaries did not see the realization of their hopes, and although the noblest and strongest of them all, as we shall presently behold, suffered martyrdom as the recompense for his devotion, yet they served an end even greater than they imagined. The Indians, converted or unconverted, may safely be left to the infinite mercy of that Father whose ignorant children they were. But to the missionaries and their wives belongs the glory, denied to the powerful, of opening half a continent to a waiting people. The far-reaching extent of such a benefit can never be estimated. It is a signal illustration of the truth that no good effort, made in singleness and sincerity of heart, is ever wasted, though its fruit may be widely different from that which the agent had anticipated.

Jason Lee and his companions hastened to erect their little log dwelling at a point on the Willamette a few miles nearer the Columbia than the present site of Salem. In such haste were they to begin the good work, that they were already instructing their pupils before they fitted their house with a roof; and three weeks later they baptized twenty-one persons, most of them children. It was to the latter that they wisely devoted their most assiduous energies, believing it easier to mould an inherited disposition than to influence one in which the inheritance has been confirmed by the life. In order to be assured of the speediest results, they kept the chil-



John H. Mitchell

dren with them ; the parents, supposing the little ones would presently develop into mighty medicine-men, being nothing loath. To support this large family, a garden was set out, and the aborigines were encouraged to try their untamed hands at the plough and the hoe. The imagination finds a pleasure in dwelling on this scene : the beautiful valley, with the broad river winding through it ; the wooded range of mountains toward the east, with the white summits of Mount Hood and Mount Jefferson rising above the rest, barely visible in the blue distance ; the fringe of maple and ash along the margins of the stream, and the levels of rich bottom-land, with its black loam. The cabin of rough-hewn logs seems as yet hardly at home amid its wild surroundings ; the white chips and shavings still lie around it, and beams and rafters that have not yet been fitted in their places are piled together at hand, or lean against the walls. The ground in the immediate vicinity has been turned up by the primitive wooden plough, and the dark furrows lie glistening in the sunshine. Hither and thither move briskly the busy, earnest, strenuous men of God, distracted between their carpentering, their agriculture, and their pupils ; while the latter, who alone appear normal in the landscape, stare in silence at the strange doings of the dominies, or squat in circles, exchanging guttural comments and speculations ; or half laughingly, half shyly try to perform some of the unfamiliar duties that have been assigned to them. Near by stands a group of the older Indians, in their blankets and feathers, with red streaks and chevrons diversifying their dark countenances, gazing, wondering, criticising, partly awed, partly curious, and perhaps a little contemptuous. But these bustling, semi-ridiculous white medicine-men, in their cotton shirt-sleeves and black vests and trousers, are the vanguard of a civilization before which the blanketed savages will vanish, the tall trees fall, the green meadows teem with various crops, the wild river

be tamed with boats, and noisy cities arise along its banks. Only the crags and rocky cañons of the hills shall remain as they are forever, and the austere peaks of Hood and Jefferson lift skyward their eternal snows.

Unfortunately for Jason Lee, the low, moist land in the vicinity of his dwelling bred a fever, of which several of the Indian children died. To the tribe, this calamity was incomprehensible; death was an evil; if the white God could not keep death from these strangers, He must either be less powerful than they had asserted, or He had withdrawn His favor from them. They were angry, and wanted satisfaction; one of them armed himself with the design of making a martyr of Mr. Lee without more ado; but being dissuaded from this, yet feeling it necessary to express his feelings somehow, he hastened to slay the family of his own mother-in-law. For it was evident to Indian logic that if the white God was justified in killing the children, then the mothers who brought them forth must be guilty of producing offspring who were fit only to be killed. Consequently, the mothers merited punishment; and how can one more fitly punish his wife than by immolating his mother-in-law?

It was in this year, 1835, that Marcus Whitman, whose name will be remembered and honored as long as Oregon is an American State, made his first appearance there. He was accompanied by a certain Samuel Parker, of whom we need only say that he preached several times to the Indians, enjoyed the hospitalities of Vancouver, and returned home by way of the Sandwich Islands and Cape Horn; afterward publishing an account of his experiences. Whitman was escorted to Green River by agents of the American Fur Company. A band of Nez Perces Indians happened to be at this rendezvous, and a conference was held with them. It was decided, with the cordial approval of the Indians, to establish two missions in the neighborhood of their tribe. Parker,

guided by one of the chiefs, went on to Walla Walla to look over the ground, while Whitman, accompanied by two youthful members of the tribe, returned to the East to provide means for erecting the two missions.

Marcus Whitman was a physician as well as a clergyman; he was born in Rushville, N. Y., and was at this time thirty-three years old. He was a man of great vitality and energy, clear and swift in judgment and instantaneous in action. His character was straightforward, vigorous, and unconventional, and he had the faculty of rendering his enthusiasm and purpose contagious. His views had a statesmanlike breadth; he comprehended the nature and relations of events, and he understood men, and could control and lead them. He penetrated unerringly to the heart of a subject, estimated its significance, and assigned to it its proper relative place. His individuality was dominant and even aggressive; but it was tempered by warm Christian charity and manly good humor.

On a Sunday morning in the early winter of 1835 the congregation had assembled in the little church in Rushville, N. Y.; among the rest was an elderly lady, some sixty years of age, and a young woman of twenty-seven. The services were about to begin: and mingled with their religious thoughts, these two women were picturing in their hearts the strong, active figure and impressive face of a man whom they both loved, and who was, as they supposed, at that moment separated from them by more than two thousand miles of prairie and mountain, surrounded by savages, perhaps in deadly peril. Suddenly, steps were heard in the aisle; some belated worshippers were entering the church—a stalwart man in the prime of youth, his countenance tanned by sun and wind; and closely following him, two strange figures, wrapped in blankets, with fringed leggings of buckskin, and with bright-hued feathers in their black hair. "Marcus!" cried his mother, forgetting, in her

passion of joyful amazement, the sanctity of the church, and starting up from her seat with outstretched arms. The younger woman said nothing, but her heart bounded in her bosom, and joy sent the blood to her cheeks. For she was Narcissa Prentiss, the affianced wife of the Christian pioneer, and not less devoted and heroic than himself. When the commotion had subsided, the services went on ; but after the benediction had been pronounced, the pastor extended the invitation for which the congregation had been eagerly waiting, and Marcus Whitman ascended the pulpit, and in a narrative of vivid interest told what had been seen and done beyond the Western mountains and what remained to do.

Everything gave way before the strong current of Whitman's hope and resolution. Before the winter was over all the preparations had been completed. A party had been assembled ; horses, wagons, cattle, tools for farming and for carpentry, seeds to plant and clothes to wear—everything was provided. And in February, 1836, Narcissa Prentiss gave her hand to Marcus Whitman at the altar of the little church, and, for the love of God and of her husband, went with him from the friends and associations of her girlhood, to share his labor and martyrdom in the remote wilderness. It is a beautiful story, and illustrates the lofty, self-abnegating spirit of the best American character.

With the Whitmans in this journey were associated the Rev. H. H. Spalding and his wife, W. H. Gray, and the Major Pilcher who had escaped the tomahawk some years before. Leaving the Missouri at its junction with the Platte, they followed that stream toward Fort Laramie, just west of the Nebraska border. The scenery of the journey was savage and beautiful. Sometimes, when the river ran broad and shallow, its bed would be crowded with countless thousands of the brown, shaggy bodies of the buffalo, floundering, grunting, drinking, thronging together in struggling masses. Sometimes



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the trail lay through arid and barren lands, when the naked hills and buttes of clay and sandstone assumed strange shapes, castellated and pyramidal. Again, the mountains would sweep together, forming awful cañons, from whose bed staggering precipices climbed upward to the sky. Through these grand and perilous regions, piloted by trappers of the American Fur Company, the Whitman party pressed on to Fort Laramie. Here they were assured that the wagons must be abandoned, and the rest of the journey made in the saddle. No wagons had ever passed the Wind River Mountains or traversed the tortuous trails of Idaho.

But Whitman was not a man to be governed by precedent. If no wagons had yet been taken through to Oregon, the attempt to take them should at all events be made, and he would make it. In this determination he was actuated not only by the natural wish to provide comfortable accommodation for the two women, but he desired to demonstrate that a wagon route across the mountains was practicable. A report to that effect disseminated in the East would do more to stimulate emigration on the part of a desirable class of married emigrants than any other argument. Men will not attempt to make homes unless they can bring women with them; and in order to bring women, wagons were indispensable. Too much importance can hardly be ascribed to the wise foresight and sturdy will that prompted Whitman, at this particular historical moment, to stick to his four wheels. Had the feat been achieved a few years later, it would have been too late.

One wagon, then, left Fort Laramie, and made its way to Fort Hall, across the Idaho border. From this point, along the banks of the Snake to Fort Boisé, near the western boundary, progress had to be made on two wheels; and at Boisé the lumbering structure had to be abandoned altogether. But enough had been done to show that no impossibility was involved; and more was

not needed. Leaving the fort, two white women, for the first time in history, entered the much-disputed territory of Oregon; and from that moment, little as companies and governments may have imagined it, its American ownership was secured.

The party was greeted by the Nez Perces and by Mr. Pambrun at Walla Walla, and by McLoughlin at Vancouver. Leaving the women there, Whitman, Spalding, and Gray returned to Walla Walla, to determine the sites for the two missions. One was established among the Nez Perces, and Mr. and Mrs. Spalding were put in charge of it. It was called the Lapwai Mission. The other, known as the Whitman Mission, was erected within a few miles of the present town of Walla Walla. Gray made himself useful in the building of both stations, and was also helpful in the missionary work.

The next five years were full of labor and vicissitudes, and of alternating hope and disappointment. By the spring of 1837 Whitman and Spalding had decided that an extension of the missions was desirable, and Gray was sent East to make the necessary arrangements. He took with him four Nez Perces Indians, who convoyed a drove of mustangs, which they intended to sell, and to give the proceeds to the mission. But on the banks of the Platte they were attacked by a band of Sioux, who captured the horses and scalped the Nez Perces, Gray alone escaping. He continued on his journey, and in 1838 he reappeared in Oregon, accompanied by the Rev. E. Walker and Cushing Eels, with their wives; the Rev. A. B. Smith, Cornelius Rogers, John A. Sutter, and Mrs. Gray. All the way from New York to Fort Hall, in Idaho, they had been at much pains to bring with them fourteen thoroughbred cows, with the progeny of which they hoped to stock Oregon. But the British governor of the fort had a fancy for fine cows himself, and he persuaded the guileless missionaries to leave them with him, assuring them that the cattle, which had come two

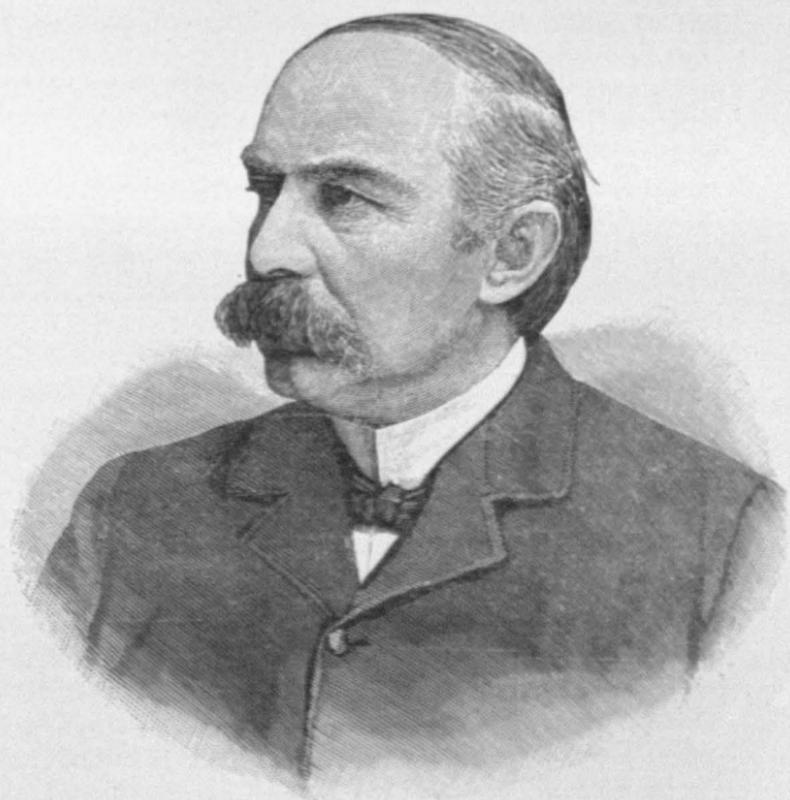
thousand miles in safety, would perish on the trip of four hundred miles that lay before them. In exchange for the animals, he gave them not money, nor money's worth, but an order on Fort Vancouver for an equal number of wild heifers! It was not until the party reached their destination that a sight of their wiry and athletic cattle reminded them of the old saying that the Children of this World are wiser in their generation than the Children of Light.

Early in 1839 a new mission was opened among the Spokane Indians, near the eastern boundary of what is now the State of Washington; and another at Kamai, in the Nez Perces section. The Rev. A. B. Smith was assigned to the latter station, and Walker and Eels to the former. For a time they succeeded in interesting the Indians, and many hundreds of them attended the schools, and received instruction, both religious and secular. At one time more than two thousand of these painted savages made "a public confession of sin;" though it is hardly to be supposed that a single one of them had any conception of the meaning of the transaction. But, for that matter, the same may be said of the many thousands of civilized persons who to-day attend revivalist meetings, and mistake the nervous excitement of hysteria for the gift of the Spirit. Of more solid encouragement was the action of those of the aborigines who provided themselves with spades and hoes, and set themselves deliberately to work to cultivate the earth, and to subsist upon their crops.

Other missionaries were meanwhile arriving from the East, and not only helped in the missions already established, but founded new ones. Nearly a dozen men and women came to the assistance of Jason Lee, who was still bravely struggling against fever and the hostile suspicion of the Indians in his station on the Willamette. In 1838 Daniel Lee and H. K. W. Perkins opened a mission on The Dalles. This singular region was not at-

tractive as a residence. It was a stern and rugged valley, floored with plates of basaltic rock, deposited ages ago by the volcanic action of the Cascade Mountains. The channel of the Columbia, which a short distance higher up is nearly a mile in width, here rushes furiously through narrow crevices but a few hundred feet across. It is surmised that the region toward the east may formerly have been an inland sea, which found its way through the rifts opened by the internal fires. The scene was harsh and desolate, treeless, and diversified only by racked and battered crags, and other chaotic *débris* of terrestrial convulsion. Dalles is a French term for the prevailing rock formation, and was probably bestowed upon this spot by the early Canadian *voyageurs* of the Hudson's Bay Company. In the autumn of 1839 Jason Lee went to the East to raise money for the carrying on of his work, returning the next year with a company of forty-eight persons, of whom more than one-third were women. In the interval Mrs. Lee and Cyrus Shepard had died; but the work still went on.

By this time, however, McLoughlin had become enlightened as to the possible result of all this missionary activity, and had been asking himself how he might most effectually counteract the growing evil. The religion of the Canadian servants of the company was Roman Catholic; and though the light-hearted fellows cared little for any form of worship, yet, if worship they were to have, they would be likely to prefer that of their own faith to the Protestant forms. Be that as it might, it so happened that two Roman Catholic priests came overland from the headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company in Montreal, baptizing as they came, and at once applied themselves to the task of undoing the work which the Protestants had so painfully been building up. Whether these two men came at the suggestion of the company, or of their own initiative, it is needless to inquire; but there is no question that they played admirably into the



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company's hands. For it was inevitable that there would be a conflict between them and the Protestants; that each side would endeavor to discredit the other in the minds of the Indians, and that the latter would be apt finally to lose confidence in both. Thus the missionary agitation would be the agent of its own destruction, and the wilderness would once more be abandoned to the company.

If this were McLoughlin's calculation, he came measurably near the truth as to the first part of it. The Catholics attacked their enemy both in their own strongholds and in outlying districts where their influence had not yet penetrated. They were trained and skilful servants of the Roman Propaganda. They knew how to cater to the savage taste, to arrest their attention, startle, awe, excite, and gratify them. They inculcated no ascetic moral precepts, but merely pointed out the advantages of confession and absolution; gave a picturesque and sensational flavor to their religious exhortations and narratives, and failed not to paint in the sternest colors the fate of those who should hearken to the voice of the heretics. Withal, there was a charming mystery about them; they wore the long black gowns of their order, and dealt in religious knick-knacks of magical potency. They resembled the Indians' own medicine-men much more than did the simple and conscientious workers in the Protestant vineyard. There is a comico-pathetic story about a picture that the Catholics painted, showing allegorically the doom of the Protestants. A large tree was represented, with many branches, each occupied by a sect of the heretics; while below was an undying fire, into which, one after another, the heretics dropped, and were stoked down by one of the true faith, who, moreover, fed the flames with the accursed volumes which contained the false doctrine. This language was adapted to the savage intelligence; they crowded to its perusal, and were solemnly impressed by its lesson.

Perceiving this, Mr. Spalding designed a sort of colored panorama, representing a series of scenes from Biblical history. The waning allegiance of the tribe was somewhat restored by the new diversion, and the panorama show in its turn became popular. If this were not religion, it was, after all, at least amusing. Little real advantage can be gained by methods like these; but if the Devil may quote Scripture for his purpose, perhaps the faithful may resort to secular devices to arrest backsliders.

Upon the whole, however, the Catholics gained ground. The Indians became insolent and insubordinate in their demeanor to the Protestants. In 1841 the Rev. A. B. Smith, discouraged by the outlook and by the state of his wife's health, gave up the fight and went home. In 1842 the Board of Missions were on the point of recalling their agents. But Whitman, who foresaw the political discomfiture which must follow the withdrawal of the missionaries, was in no mood to be checked in his career; and for this and for other good and sufficient reasons, presently to be set forth, he formed the decision whose nature and effects will be detailed in the ensuing chapter.

It must be admitted, meanwhile, that the Catholic opposition was not the only element of weakness which in after times the Protestant missionaries had to face. Their strength was sapped by internal dissensions. Various sects were represented among them, and then, as now, sectarian feeling ran high. It would be unjust to say that forms of Divine worship and special interpretations of debatable texts in Scripture were of more importance to them than the simple groundwork of faith in God and dependence on Christ that underlay them all. But it would seem as if the perception of some one aspect of a truth were productive of a more uneasy and jealous state of mind than is rejection of any spiritual view whatever. The glimpse obtained is so rich in interior delights and satisfactions that he who has enjoyed

it cannot believe that it is to be had from any standpoint other than his own, and he vehemently resents any criticism thereof. As the quarrels of members of the same family with one another are said to be the bitterest of quarrels, so the animosities of sects toward their fellow-sects in the same general organization appear to be even more remorseless and violent than their war against the common enemy. These same worthy and devoted clergymen, who experienced such jealousy and unkindness toward one another, were full of love and service for the Indians, who were confessedly destitute of the virtues which characterized the least immaculate among themselves. We may perhaps venture to surmise that Providence permits these sectarian disputes for the wise purpose of keeping the essentials of religion free, and thus open to further enlightenment and development when the season for deeper insight shall arrive. Were any one mode of belief—no matter how good in itself—to crystallize into a dogma of universal acceptance, it would fail to respond to the gradual expansion and elevation of human knowledge and sentiment; and what should be the most vital and sensitive region of our thought and feeling would become lifeless, anachronistic, and cold.

The last notable event of the fight as between Catholics and Protestants was the secession of the Cascade Indians, in 1841, from the ministrations of Mr. Walker, then in charge of The Dalles Mission, to the Church of Rome. But such reverses were much less serious than they appeared at the moment. The Indians would do after their kind, and whether they wore the badge of one party or of another made little difference, inasmuch as both were alike unmeaning to them in any deep spiritual sense. But a great Protestant American population was standing with its hands on the gates of the mountains; and its passage through them would overwhelm Catholic and Indian alike, and institute an order of life

far larger, broader, and more wholesome than it lay within the scope of any individuals to either promote or prevent.

CHAPTER VI.

WHITMAN'S RIDE.

WE have now to consider the stirring incidents preceding and leading up to the great and decisive emigration of 1843.

The Methodist missionaries, with their wives and their wagon, had, as has been shown, proved that family emigration was possible. This was the successful aspect of their enterprise, though few of them save Whitman had borne it in mind or recognized its controlling importance. On the technical side—as efforts to Christianize and subdue the aborigines—their efforts had borne little fruit. The Catholics, fortified by the countenance of the Hudson's Bay Company, had outmanœuvred them; and they also suffered in Indian estimation from the fact that they were Americans, and in sympathy with the American element in the country. For the Americans, unlike the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, were appropriating the Indians' lands; and the more intelligent among the latter perceived that, were this appropriation to continue, they, the original possessors, would be forced out of their own dominions. The interests of the company, on the other hand, were identical with the Indians'—to perpetuate the primeval wilderness. The company had heretofore been careful to forbid any settlements being made even by its own retired servants; being thereto actuated partly by the desire to conciliate the savages, who were their most efficient auxiliaries in trade; and partly to prolong the existence of those furbearing animals on which their revenue depended.



W. W. Thayer

But circumstances must modify the most sagacious policies. It was becoming obvious that Oregon was going to be occupied by settlers of some kind, and the only remaining question was, which nationality should be the predominant one? The company's hand was forced; it must act without delay. Two measures were to be taken; all practicable means, legitimate or illegitimate, were to be employed to keep Americans out; and all possible energy to be used to bring British settlers in. In pursuance of the former branch of the programme, reports were industriously circulated throughout the Eastern States that Oregon was a quite uninhabitable region—a desert, savage and irreclaimable. This view was adopted and promulgated in Congress with much eloquence and pertinacity, and had some effect in the country. As for the British colonization scheme, it was carried out by the importation of settlers from the Red River lands owned by the company, to whom was imparted a description of Oregon very different from that disseminated for the benefit of the general public.

McLoughlin was, of course, the local agent of these proceedings. But he was a long-headed man, not incapable of seeing in the present the germs of what was to be. He saw that if it came to an open competition between a nation and a private organization, even so powerful as the Hudson's Bay Company, the latter must inevitably go to the wall. The number of settlers at the company's command could make no show against the thousands of Westward-looking Americans, surging onward like the bison under the mysterious impulse of the "migratory fever." Barring improbable accidents, therefore, the British factotum realized that America must win, and Oregon become an American province. There was but one promising way to prevent it, and that was to incite the Indians to massacre. If, at a given signal, the savages were to arise and put to death all Americans in the country, no doubt intending emigrants

would be deterred from taking the journey. And nothing was easier than to give that signal.

But McLoughlin was not the man to adopt a measure so desperate and tragic as this. It might lead, apart from its inhumanity, to serious complications. The American Congress, though sluggish and obtuse enough, was hardly likely to receive with equanimity the news of such a horror as this. Inquiries would be instituted, and might have an awkward issue. Besides, McLoughlin was very far from being a human monster. Though subtle and unrelenting within certain limits, he was no Bonaparte; he liked peace and comfort, and the amenities of social intercourse; he had no wish to swim in blood; he was now some way past the prime of life, and desired to end his days peacefully. It was hard to decide what was most expedient to be done; he ended by adopting a temporizing policy, by which he hoped to secure the good-will of both parties. It so happened, however, that he fell under the suspicion of both; he was censured by the American settlers and by his own employers; he was forced to resign his position, and the close of his life was passed in circumstances not altogether satisfactory to him. Yet he retained many warm friends to the last, and has been ably defended as a man of unblemished virtue and honor. He was certainly the best servant that the Hudson's Bay Company ever possessed. They ought to have procured him an English peerage, and made allowance for the difficulties of his position.

Although the missionaries had been the pioneers (with a few individual exceptions) in actually living in Oregon, the idea of colonization did not, as we have seen, belong to them by right of discovery. Hall J. Kelley spent a fortune of \$30,000 in futile endeavors to carry out this design, his efforts covering the period from 1817 to 1834. Ewing Young settled in the Willamette Valley in that year; John Turner, Bailey, Woodworth, and Gay arrived

there in 1835, after much suffering from Indians and exposure. In 1837 there were, including the missionaries, forty-nine Americans in the country. In 1840 there were two hundred. One hundred and eleven persons arrived in 1841, and nearly as many in the year following. Meanwhile, Senator Linn had introduced a bill in Congress to donate lands to settlers; and the publication of Irving's "Astoria" and "Bonneville," and of the narratives of Samuel Parker and John Dunn; the favorable reports of the soil and climate gathered from the trappers of the Rocky Mountains—these things, aided by a temporary financial depression in the Mississippi States, encouraged the Oregonian idea; while the fact that California was still under Spanish control prevented the bulk of emigration from being diverted in that direction.

It has been said that if half a dozen Americans find themselves upon a desert island, they will forthwith organize a provisional government. The American settlers in the Willamette Valley began, in 1841, to ask one another whether some form of government were not desirable; and Congress had been memorialized (unavailingly) on the subject. The sudden death of Ewing Young, intestate, but possessed of some property, clinched their purpose. With Jason Lee in the chair, a Mr. Babcock was appointed Judge, with power to administer upon the estate; and George Le Breton, a young Catholic, was made Recorder. The proceeds of Young's estate were devoted to the building of a jail; but twenty years afterward Joaquin Young proved himself the son of the deceased, born in Mexico, and the Oregon Legislature paid him the value of the estate. There seems to be a romance here which some Oregonian novelist might profitably develop.

Commodore Wilkes, who visited the Columbia in his vessel, in the course of his trip round the world, advised the settlers against forming a provisional government;

but the commodore had been entertained by McLoughlin, who, as a representative of the company, was of course strongly opposed to any law save what the company decreed, and persuaded Wilkes to adopt his point of view. There were at this juncture three political parties in the valley—the Missionaries, the Independent American Settlers, and the Company, which was at one with the Catholic element. The Independents generally, though not invariably, took sides with the Missionaries. Under these circumstances, the combined American element decided to call a meeting, in order, if possible, to choose a committee to elect a temporary governor and officers. But by way of guarding against the contingency of the meeting's being influenced beforehand by the agents of the company, the promoters announced that it was to be held for the purpose of devising measures to protect the cattle from the depredations of wolves and bears; and that question having been disposed of, they were then to spring upon the audience the true objects of the gathering. Two "wolf-meetings" (as they were afterward called) were held. At the first, a negative resolution was adopted. At the second, upon a division, the Americans were found to outnumber the supporters of the company by two votes; and the committee was appointed. It held its meetings in a granary belonging to the mission—which thus became the first legislative chamber of the State of Oregon. Owing to the difficulty of conciliating the opposing political interests, the committee advised the election of an Executive Committee of Three, instead of a single Governor. Their recommendation was followed, and on July 5th, 1843, Alanson Beers, David Hill, and Joseph Gale became, collectively, first Governor of Oregon Territory, their rule extending over the region south of the Columbia River. The company had suffered its first political reverse.

Before entering upon the important occurrences which



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