

REPRINT DEPARTMENT

George Wilkes: *History of Oregon, Geographical, Geological and Political.* (New York, Colyer, 1845.)

[The reprint of this rare work was begun in the first number of the *Washington Historical Quarterly* and has been continued in portions of varying lengths. For the sake of librarians and others who have kept the files, the work is here continued.—*Editor.*]

As to wind, I have *witnessed* less, if such a term can be used, than at any other place I have ever been in, and I have but to say, that if the timber we have here, spread their lofty branches in the States, they would be riven by the lightning, and blown down to an extent that would spare many of them the blow of the settler's axe. Here, I have heard no thunder, and have seen but one tree that had been struck by lightning.

CHAPTER XI.

Aborigines of Oregon—Their Numbers and Character—Their Canoes—Their Mode of Fishing—Game—Timber—Fisheries—Water Power—Mountains—A Volcano—Commercial, Agricultural, and Manufacturing Features of Oregon—Value of the Arm of Labor.

The aborigines of Oregon form, at present, nine-tenths of the population of the whole country, and from their newly adapted habits, are deserving of a place in the social census. They were formerly much more numerous, but like all the savage race, they melt away from the white man's approach like shadows before the advancing sun. I have no means of accurately ascertaining their number, as large bodies of them are in the habit of moving from place to place to reap the varying harvests of the fisheries, but I believe they somewhat exceed 20,000. They are most numerous in the Nez Perces country, which extends eastward from Wallawalla, and considerable numbers of the Cheenooks attracted by the fisheries, are to be found at the Dalles and at the mouth of the Columbia river. They are, however, degenerate and broken, and instead of the proud and warlike being which presents itself to the imagination when the

idea of an American Indian enters it, they but offer to the actual beholder the specimen of a creature degraded almost to the level of a beast, and capable of submitting to the most servile abasement. Indeed, so completely are they under the control of the superior intelligence of the Anglo Saxon settler, that they can scarcely be considered in a much more dignified light than as a race of natural villiens or serfs. The Nez Perces Indians retain in a greater degree than any other, their ancient independence; but even the members of this tribe fall readily under the control and mastery of the whites.

The Indians between Wallawalla and the Dalles are a cowardly and thievish set, and the portion of them situated at the latter place, in addition to being degraded and ignorant in the extreme, are so addicted to stealing, that they lay hands on every trifle that comes within their reach. Those portions at Vancouver and in the valley of the Willamette, are abject, servile, and filthy in their habits, and most of them go half naked during the whole year. In both this and the adjoining region, they perform a great deal of work for the whites, and where labor is so scarce as it is here, they are of no slight assistance to the settlements. Many of them make very good hired hands, and they are found particularly useful in rowing boats, paddling canoes, herding cattle, and in the menial operations which require a sort of refuse labor, if such a term can be used, that would be dear at the outlay of a valuable settler's time. You can hire a Chenook to work upon a farm a week for a shirt worth 83 cents.

These Indians construct the finest canoes in the world. They make them out of the cedar which grows at the mouth of the Columbia, from twenty to thirty feet long, and from three to four feet wide. Their bottoms are flat, like those of skiffs, and being light, this construction, together with the sharp form of the bows, makes them very swift. In fashioning the canoe, they commence upon the middle and taper it gradually to a sharp point at each end, not turning it up with a flourish like the bows and stern of ordinary vessels of the kind. The only ornament they put upon them, is a sort of figure head made of a separate piece of wood, which is fitted on the bows, and is generally beautified with a rude mosaic of sea-shells imbedded in various figures in the wood.

The conduct of the Hudson's Bay Company towards the Indians, has been prompt and discriminating, both in the distribution of benefits, and in the punishment of offences. They have not held a whole tribe responsible for the unauthorized acts of individuals, but have in all cases carefully sought out the real perpetrators and punished them without fail. When the country was first visited by the whites, the natives were of a ferocious and warlike character, and it required sixty men to pass up

the Columbia in boats, to ensure the safety of the expedition; but now, a single individual can pass without molestation to the Dalles, and a squad of six or eight may travel in perfect security through any portion of the territory. The Flatheads and Snakes, formerly the most incorrigible, have long been peaceable, honest, and friendly. One of the gentlemen belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, told me that in the many trading expeditions they had had with these tribes, they had never lost the first article, and many times they had purposely exposed their goods to trifling depredations, for the purpose of testing their honesty.

All of the tribes of Oregon wear their hair long, and are exceedingly fond of the dress of the whites; but nothing holds so strong a claim to their admiration, or so firm a seat in their affections, as a *shirt*. A pair of pantaloons holds the next place, a coat next, and so on through the inferior articles of apparel. They show the most extravagant delight when dressed in these garments, but still prefer to display the shirt on the outside of all. Candor, however, compels me to declare, that those who are fortunate enough to possess one of these articles, generally makes it do the duty of a full dress. They call the Americans, "*Bostons*," which title they have adopted in consequence of having been originally informed by Captain Gray, the first pale face who ever entered their territory, that he came from a place called Boston. The English they call King George.

The Indians of Oregon are exceedingly addicted to gambling, and have been known to pursue this demoralizing passion to the fatal length of even staking their liberty on a game, and playing themselves, by a run of ill luck, into a state of perpetual slavery. When we estimate the love of a savage for independence, we can arrive at some measurement of the degree of passion which exacts its sacrifice. Upon the whole, these Indians are of vast benefit to the whites of this region. In the present condition of the settlements, we should lose much by their absence.

FISHERIES.—The fisheries of this country are very great, and foremost among all the varieties which they produce, is the unrivalled salmon. It would be impossible to estimate the numbers of this excellent fish annually taken in the Columbia and its tributaries; but they have been set down at ten thousand barrels a year, which number I do not think by any means too large. The salmon in this country are never caught with a hook. They are sometimes taken by the Indians with a small scoop net, but generally are caught with a sort of spear of a very peculiar description. These are made by the natives after the following fashion. They take a pole, made of ash, or of some hard wood, about ten feet long and one inch thick, and gradually tapering to a point at one end. They then cut a piece, about four inches long, from the sharp prong of a buck's

horn, and hollow out the large end so that it fits the pole. About the middle of the buck horn, they make a small hole through which they put a cord, or leather string, that runs along the pole and fastens to it about two feet from the lower end. When they spear a fish with this weapon, the pole is withdrawn and the buck horn barb is left imbedded in the animal's body, or having run through and through it, remains fastened on the other side. Escape is thus rendered impossible, and the prey unable to elude the prong, is securely drawn in by the string. All the salmon caught here are taken by the Indians, and sold to the whites at about ten cents each, and frequently for less. One Indian will take about twenty upon an average per day.

The salmon taken at different points, differ greatly in kind and quality, and it is only at particular places that they can be taken. The fattest and best are those taken at the mouth of the Columbia, and the next best are those taken in the Columbia, a few miles below Vancouver, at the Cascades, and at the Dalles. Those taken at the Willamette falls, are smaller in size, and inferior in flavor, and are said to be of a different kind. What is singular, this fish cannot be taken in any considerable numbers with large seines, and this is only to be accounted for, by their remarkable shyness, and their superior activity. I believe no white man has yet succeeded in taking them with the gig. They make their appearance in the vicinity of Vancouver, first in the Klackamus river, and the best quality are taken in June.

There are several other kinds of fish in the bays, rivers, and creeks of the territory, of which a species of cod and the sturgeon are the most important. The later are a large fish, and afford great sport in a leisure hour to take them with a hook and line. They are taken in the Willamette, below the falls; in the Columbia, at all points, and in the Snake or Saptin river, as high up as Fort Boisé. Of shell-fish, we have the crab, clams, muscles, and a small description of oyster.

Game.—The wild animals of this, the first section of Oregon, are the black bear, black-tailed deer, raccoon, panther, polecat, rabbit, wolf, beaver, and a few others. Of these, the deer and the wolves are the most numerous. We have no buffaloes, antelopes, or prairie chickens here, but in the second section the latter species of feathered game are plenty.

Of fancy birds, we have blue jay, larger, and of a deeper blue than those of the States; the nut-brown wren, a most beautiful and gentle little atom, scarcely larger than the humming-bird; also a species of bird, which resembles the robin in form, color, and size; and also a species of nightingale, that sings the livelong night; but though I have heard these evening songsters, time and again, I have never yet managed to get sight of one.

The bald eagle, so well described by Wilson, is found along all the rivers; but here, he is obliged to compromise a portion of his lordly character to his necessities, and to work for his own living, having no fish-hawks to catch his game for him. He feeds principally upon the dead salmon he gleans from the surface of the water, as they float downward in the stream, and changes his diet by an occasional swoop upon some unlucky duck, which he catches either while on the wing, or while feeding in the river. If the duck when pursued in the air, can reach the surface of the water, he does so with the utmost speed of wing, and seeks a momentary refuge by diving under it. The eagle, balancing himself over the spot of his victim's disappearance, waits until he rises, and then strikes at him again and again, until the latter's strength becomes wasted with the unusual effort, and giving out at length, the relentless conqueror bears him off as he rises languidly and for the last time to the surface of the water. We have also pheasants in abundance, likewise partridges, grouse, brant, pelicans, plovers, wild geese, thrush, gulls, cranes, swans, and ravens, crows and vultures. For a sportsman, this region is a paradise, and a dog and a gun will afford him a chapter of elysium every day of his life.

There is one peculiarly attractive feature, which this country possesses over most others, and that is, that like Old Ireland itself, it has no poisonous reptiles or *insects*, and better than Ireland, we are not burdened with obligations to any saint for the saintly office of extirpating them. The only snake we have, is the harmless garter-snake, and there are no flies to annoy the cattle.

Timber.—The timber of this section of Oregon, constitutes the main source of its wealth. It is found in inexhaustible quantities on the Columbia, and on the Willamette, just where the water power is at hand to cut it up, and where ships can easily take it on board. The principal timber of this section is the fir, the white cedar, white oak and black ash. There are three kinds of fir; the white, yellow, and red; all of them fine for plank, shingles, boards and rails.

The white fir makes the best shingles. The fir is a species of pine, which grows very tall and straight, and stands very thick upon the ground. Thick as they stand, however, when you cut one, it never lodges in its fall, for the reason that it never forks, and the limbs of the others are too small to stop the descent of its enormous bulk. In the Cascade mountains, and near the mouth of the Columbia river, they rise to the height of three hundred feet. They split exceedingly well, and make the finest boards of any timber I have ever seen. I cut one tree, from which I sawed twenty-four cuts of three foot boards, and there are plenty of such specimens all around me, yet untouched.

The white cedar is very fine timber, and is nearly if not quite equal to the red cedar of the States. In the vicinity of Linntan, it grows to the size of three feet in diameter, and is tall enough to make six rail cuts to the tree. I have cut two ware-house logs, thirty feet long, off one tree, and three of the same logs off a red fir, which was only about fourteen inches in diameter at the stump. The cedar splits remarkably well, makes fine rails, shingles, or house-logs, and lasts a lifetime.

The *white* oak timber is better for wagon-making than any specimens to be found east of the Rocky Mountains, and it is the best wood that can be had for axe-handles, and for similar purposes. It grows about as tall as in the States. The *black* oak, which also grows profusely in our forests, makes excellent fire-wood, and answers likewise for many other purposes.

In the range of mountains back of Linntann, we have plenty of the hemlock, the bark of which is fine for tanning hides; and I have no doubt that ere long, the skins that will be stripped from our large herds of stock, will be extensively converted into leather by its agency. We have also the dog-wood and cherry-maple, sprinkled among the firs and cedars. The hazel of this country is four times larger than that of the States, and is also much tougher in its texture; it is extensively used for hoops, and for the manufacture of a coarse kind of scrub broom. The fruit of this tree is of a lighter color than the hazel-nuts of the States, and they are of the shape and size of a chinkapin acorn. Persons coming from the States will find very little timber here like that to which they have been accustomed, for all of it is on a grander scale. The black ash and dog-wood are very similar to those of Tennessee and Kentucky, and the white oak is perhaps but little different from any eastward of the mountains. But we have no walnut, hickory, pecimmon, pawpaw, locust, coffee-nut, chestnut, sugar-tree, box-elder, poplar, sycamore, or elm.

Water Power.—The water power of this country is unequalled, and is found distributed through every section. That at the falls of the Willamette cannot be surpassed in the world. Any quantity of machinery can be put in motion there; but the good water power is not confined to the Willamette falls, for in many places on the Columbia, the Willamette, and the other rivers, there are mill sites as good, though none of them are quite so large. These advantages for converting the timber which surrounds them, into a marketable commodity of great value in the neighboring ocean, will ere long be appreciated to a far greater extent by even this region, than at present.

Mountains.—We have the most beautiful scenery of North America—we lie upon the largest ocean, we have the purest and most beautiful

streams,* the loftiest and most majestic trees, and the most stupendous mountains of the continent. The latter, as I have had occasion to mention before, are divided into three great ranges, but as the description of the features of the lower region is at present my especial object, I will pass over the Rocky Mountains and the Blue, and confine myself to the President's range which forms the eastern wall of our valley. The several peaks of this range are grand and imposing objects. From Vancouver you have a full and fair view of Mount Hood, to the south, which is called by some the tallest peak of the Cascades, and rises more than sixteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, and ten thousand above the mountains immediately around it. This lofty pile rises by itself in a regular and perfect cone, and is covered with perpetual snow. It is the only peak you can see from Vancouver, as the view in other directions is obscured by tall fir timber. At the mouth of the Willamette, as you enter the Columbia, you have a full view of Mt. St. Helens or Mount Washington, and also of Mount Hood. From Linntan you have a very fair view of the former mountain, which is almost fifty miles distant from this point, though it looks as if it were almost within reach. This peak is very smooth and perfectly conical in its form. It is nearly as tall as Mount Hood, and is the most beautiful of the range. It lies immediately on a line with the mouth of the Columbia, and is a land-mark visible several miles at sea and useful in directing vessels to its harbor. Like Mount Hood it stands alone in its solitary grandeur far above all surrounding objects and awing them into insignificance. This mountain, which until last year, towered serenely in the air covered with ten thousand perpendicular feet of snow, suddenly burst into a burning volcano, in which state it now remains. The crater is in its side about two-thirds of its distance from its base, and by the account of the Indian inhabitants in its vicinity, it emitted a flood of lava at the time of its eruption, which poured its stream of fire through the whole depth of the virgin sheet that wrapped its sides. A savage who had been hunting deer some distance up the mountain, finding his return to his wigwam thus cut off, took a run and attempted to jump across it, but not being able to clear its breadth, he fell with one foot in the glowing torrent, and was so severely burnt, that he came very nearly being lamed for life. He hastened to Vancouver, however, and by the assistance of Dr. Barclay at the Fort, was gradually cured.

This mountain is second in height to but one in the world, (Cotopaxi in South America), and like other volcanoes it burns at intervals. On one side of it near its top, is discovered a large dark object amid the

*We protest against this claim for their rivers, for it is at variance with the writer's own description of the whole line of streams which he traversed from the Rocky mountains to the ocean.

surrounding snow, which is supposed to be the mouth of a huge cavern, and doubtless is the ancient crater of some expired issue. On the 16th February 1844, the mountain burned most magnificently. Dense masses of smoke rose up in immense columns and wreathed the whole crest of the peak in sombre and massive clouds; and in the evening its fire lit up the flaky mountain-side with a flood of soft yet brilliant radiance. The range, of which this is the most distinguishing feature, runs throughout the whole length of the territory and is remarkable for its separate and independent cones.

Commercial, Agricultural and Manufacturing Advantages.—The commercial advantages of this country are very great. The trade with the Sandwich Islands is daily increasing, and surrounded as we are with a half civilized race of men, our manufacturing power will soon have a home market for itself; besides, South America, California and the Sandwich Islands must depend upon us for their lumber. Already large quantities of shingles and plank are sent to the latter market, and we shall also have a full demand for all our other surplus productions at the same port, for most vessels visiting the north Pacific, touch at these islands for the purpose of obtaining supplies of fresh provisions. The Russian settlements are already dependent upon us, and even the markets of China are within our reach. For the supply of the regions of the Pacific, and the more northern settlements of the coast, there can be no competition with us in the way of provisions, as we have no neighbors in the producing line.

I consider Oregon, in many respects, superior to California, as in the latter country, the climate is so warm that pork and beef cannot be put up, and consequently the grazer loses half his profits; besides, its enervating temperature like that of all warm countries, has a degenerating effect upon the enterprise of the inhabitants. For a commercial and manufacturing people, the climate of Oregon is warm enough. We can here preserve our pork and beef without danger of its tainting before the completion of the packing; and we have finer timber, better water power, and are not subject to the ruinous droughts of California.

Since our arrival, the prospects of the country have very much improved. Business of all kinds is active and times are flourishing. We live in a state of primitive simplicity and independence; we are the victims of no vices; there is no drinking or gambling among us, and Labor meets with such ample inducements and ready rewards, that lazy men are made industrious by the mere force of the influences around them.

Farming is considered the best business of this country. The business of making and putting up butter, which is never worth less than twenty cents per pound, is very profitable. A good fresh article is, I am told,

never worth less than fifty cents and often brings one dollar per pound in the Pacific islands. There are now in operation, or will be this summer, mills enough to supply the whole population with flour. There is no scarcity of provisions at the prices I have previously stated, and I find that the emigrants who came out last year, live very comfortably, are perfectly content with their change, and are much improved in their appearance since the time of their arrival.

We have the finest spar timber, perhaps, in the world, and vessels arriving at the Columbia often take off a quantity for that purpose. The saw mills at the Willamette Falls cut large quantities of plank which they sell at two dollars per hundred. In speaking of the fir before, I omitted stating that it made excellent coal for blacksmith's purposes; and I will farther remark that it is singular that neither the fir nor the cedar, when burned, makes any ashes. It has been supposed that the timbered land of his country will be hard to clear up, but I have come to a different conclusion from the fact that the fir timber has very little top, is easily kindled, and burns readily. It also becomes seasoned very soon, and it is the opinion of good farmers that the timbered land will make the best wheat-fields of the country.

When an individual has any idle time, he can employ himself in making fir and cedar shingles, for the first of which he can get four dollars a thousand, and for the second, five; any quantity of them can be disposed of at these rates. Carpenters and other mechanics obtain three dollars per day and found. There is employment in abundance for every one desiring it, and it is only necessary for a man to be industrious to accomplish sure success and surround himself with all the comforts of an earthly paradise.

CHAPTER XII.

Concluding Remarks—Directions to Emigrants—Line of Route and Table of Distances, Etc.

Having now completed an account of all the material points of our expedition into Oregon, and furnished the inquirer a general idea of its character and capabilities, the only thing that remains for me to do in the limits of this sketch, is to add a few more directions for the emigrant, for whose particular benefit, as I said, before, these imperfect notes are furnished. I have shown, indeed the result of our general expedition proved, that the route from the Rendezvous in Missouri, to this point, is practicable for any description of conveyance, and the success of our cattle in coming through, adds an assurance that it is remarkable as well, for

its extraordinary emigrating facilities. If this needs any corroboration, a world of evidence can be furnished to sustain it, as well as every fact I have advanced; but in support of the peculiar feasibility of the route across the Indian territories of the States and along the line of the Platte, I will merely refer the reader to the fact, that Mr. Ashley, in an expedition in 1836, drew a field piece, (a six pounder) from Missouri, across the prairies, through the southern pass, to a fort on Utah lake (to the south of our southern boundary line,) the whole journey being a distance of 1200 miles; and to the additional fact that in 1828, a large number of heavily laden wagons performed the same journey with ease and without an accident, as will be seen by a reference to Congressional documents on file.

It will be remarked that I have slurred over portions of the route and neglected the regular incidents of much of our daily travel, but when it is remembered that the journey lasted six months, and that the events of many successive days scarcely varied from each other, the reader will come to the conclusion that it would have been hardly wise in me to have taxed his patience with each day's dull routine. The great object, I considered to be, the furnishing the course of the route, a view of its general aspect and difficulties, the distances between points of travel, (the main object of the present chapter) and to impart an accurate notion of the region which the settler must make his future home. I have therefore avoided everything that did not contribute to this design, with the exception of a few trifling incidents of humor inseparable from such an expedition, which I introduced to enliven the monotony of the narrative, and which, moreover, I considered useful as affording an idea of camp life, and the amusements of a journey over the prairies.

Emigrants should start as early as possible in ordinary seasons. The first of May should be set down if possible as the outside limit, and even as early as the first of April, would do. For those coming from the Platte country, it is thought to be most advisable to cross the Missouri at McPherson's ferry in Holt county, and to take up the ridge between the Platte and Kansas rivers.

Companies of forty or fifty wagons are large enough, and I would advise bodies of travellers for this region to keep within that measure. Large bodies prove unwieldly to arrange and to control; the numerous stock attached to them become troublesome, and moreover large bodies of Americans are prone to differ in opinion. Small collections offer but few inducements to a disordered ambition, but large ones are conducive of selfish strife and discord. This has been seen to have been the case with our expedition; which divided after crossing the Kansas; and which was further subdivided afterwards, on the other side of the mountains. I did

not particularize this latter circumstance because I considered it of minor importance at the time, and it is now sufficient for my purpose to mention it here, as a caution against the error which induced it, in the future.

In driving stock to this country, about one in ten is lost; not more. Having started, the best way to proceed to save your teams, is to drive a reasonable distance every day, and to stop and go into camp about an hour before sundown. This gives time for all the necessary arrangements of the encampment and affords the teams an opportunity to rest and eat before the night sets in. About eight hours drive in the long days—resting an hour at noon—is, I think enough for one day's travel, and you should make it a rule never to drive irregularly if you can help it. Along the whole line of the Platte, on the Bear and Boisé rivers, and in many other places, you can encamp at any point you please; but at some points of the route you will be compelled to drive hard to get water and range for your cattle.

When you reach the country of the buffalo, never stop your wagons to hunt, as you will consume more provisions during the delay than you will save by the amount of your game; for it is generally consumed at once from the difficulty of curing it, in consequence of the warmth of the weather. Let your horsemen and scouts perform this duty, and supply this want for you; and if they use proper exertions, they can keep you all in fresh meat throughout the whole of the country of game. Any one wishing the amusement of this sport, should bring along an extra horse, and not use him until he reaches the buffalo region, as the hunting of this animal is rough work, and emigrants must needs be very careful they do not break their horses down. A prudent care should be taken of horses, teams, and provisions from the start, and no extra exertion should be required from the two first, and nothing of the last should be thrown away that can be eaten.

If a prudent course is taken, the trip can be made in ordinary seasons, in four months. It is true it took us longer, but we lost a great deal of time upon the road, and besides, we had the way to break. I have reason to believe, that other and better routes than the one travelled by us can be found. Captain Gant, our pilot, was decidedly of the opinion, that to keep up the south fork of the Platte, and to cross it just above the stream called the Kooshlapood, and thence up the latter stream, passing between the Black Hills on your right, and the Rocky Mountains on your left, and striking by this course at last the ordinary route by Green river, would be a better and nearer way into Oregon, and more plentifully supplied with game than the one we took. He had travelled both, and only brought us through the road he did, to avoid the large

bands of Sioux and Black feet Indians, whom he had been informed were hunting upon the southern route.

The following table of distances, it is proper for me to say, is a rough calculation made up from an estimate of our daily travel. It consequently does not claim the accuracy of a geometrical admeasurement, but it is thought by those to whom I have submitted it, to be not far out of the way.

A Table of Distances From Independence, Missouri, to the Intermediate Points Between That Town and Astoria at the Mouth of the Columbia River

	Miles.
From Independence to the Rendezvous,	20
Rendezvous to Elm Grove	15
From Elm Grove to Walpalusia,	22
Walpalusia to Kansas river,	31
Kansas River to Big Sandy creek,	31
Big Sandy to Hurricane Branch,	12
Hurricane Branch to East fork of Blue River,	20
East fork to West fork of Blue River,	15
West fork to where we came in sight of the Republican fork of the Blue River	41
Up Republican fork of the Blue River to where we left it to cross over to the Big Platte River	66
Up the Platte to where we saw the first herd of buffalo,	56
Up the same to the crossing on the South fork of same,	117
South fork to crossing on North Fork of same,	31
Crossing of North Fork to Cedar Grove,	13
Cedar Grove to Solitary Tower,	18
Solitary Tower to Chimney Rock,	18
Chimney Tower to Scott's Bluffs,	20
Scott's Bluffs to Fort Larimie,	38
Fort Larimie to Big Spring at foot of Black Hills,	8
Big Spring to Keryan on North fork of Platte,	30
Keryan to crossing of North Fork,	84
Crossing of North Fork to Sweetwater River,	55
Up Sweetwater River to where we first saw the eternal snows of the Rocky Mountains,	60
From the above point to main dividing ridge of Rocky Mountains, ..	40
From dividing ridge to Little Sandy River,	16
Little Sandy to Big Sandy,	14

Big Sandy to Green River,	25
Down same,	12
To Black's fork of Green River,	22
From Black's fork to Fort Bridger,	30
Fort Bridger to Big Muddy River,	20
Big Muddy to Bear River,	37
Down Bear River to range of hills mentioned as running up to its bank,	57
Down Bear River to Great Soda Spring,	38
From Soda Spring to the Portneuf River, the first water of the Co- lumbia,	25
To Fort Hall in the Snake or Saptin River,	58
From Fort Hall to the Portneuf again,	11
Portneuf to Rock Creek,	87
Rock Creek to Salmon Falls on the Saptin,	42
Salmon Falls to crossing on the Saptin,	27
From crossing of Saptin to Boiling Spring,	19
Boiling Spring to Boisé River,	48
Down same to Fort Boisé on Saptin,	40
Fort Boisé to Burnt River,	41
Up Burnt River for,	26
From last point to Powder River at "the Lone Pine,"	18
From "the Lone Pine" to Grand Round,	15
Grand Round to the Umatilla River on the west of the Blue Moun- tains,	43
Umatilla to Dr. Whitman's Mission,	29
Mission to Fort Wallawalla,	25
Wallawalla to the Dalles Mission,	120
Dalles to Vancouver,	100
Vancouver to Astoria,	80
Astoria to the ocean,	10

Making in all from Independence to the Pacific ocean, 2036

From Independence to Vancouver by the above computation is 1946 miles by the route we traveled. I am well satisfied that the distance does not exceed 2000 miles for the reason that our ox teams could not have accomplished a greater distance within the time of their actual employment.

The trip to Oregon is neither a costly nor an expensive one, and an individual can travel here at as small an expense, as he can move from Tennessee or Kentucky, to Missouri. All the property he starts with he

can bring through, and it is worth, upon his arrival, more than when he set out.

To conclude, there is no country in the world where the wants of man can be so readily supplied, and upon such easy terms as in this; and none where the beauties of nature are displayed upon a grander scale.

The chief value of this country, I must remark in closing, lies in the advantages it offers to the United States for a direct route to the East Indies and the ports of the Pacific ocean. Already these have been embraced by the Hudson's Bay settlers, and even now, the products of this region have grown to an importance that would make them sadly missed by several of the island markets and settlements upon the western coasts which they have of late supplied. Every day adds to their amount and their demand, and an ordinary sagacity may see in this fact, the promise of our future importance in the commercial world. There are many considerations involved in the first steps of our advance which it would please me to allude to in detail, but they are not embraced within the scope of my present purpose, and I leave them to the treatment of abler political economists.

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The more extended political organization of which I before spoke, is about to take place, and I was waited upon two or three days ago by a party from the Falls, to consult upon a plan of a general territorial government, with a legislature of two houses, and a Chief Justice for its first executive officer. This arrangement will embrace all the settlements of the valley into one common government, the representatives of which will convene in general congress, at stated periods, at Multnomah or Oregon city, and there transact all the necessary business for our little body politic. When this plan is adopted, (as it doubtless will immediately be), it will perhaps, be the peculiar honor of your humble servant, to sit in a curule chair of the first Republican Government beyond the Rocky mountains. We shall then be able to make our own laws, and likewise to do our own voting and our own fighting. Let not our brethren of the States mistrust our ability to maintain ourselves in our new position! We have strong arms and stout hearts; we have despised the toils of two thousand miles of travel to build our homes upon the soil, and we will never leave its face, until we sink beneath it.*

*Recent accounts from the west inform us that there are now gathered near Independence, Missouri, about 7,000 emigrants, all destined for Oregon and California. They are to set out in convenient detachments about the 1st of June.

CONCLUDING NOTE.

FALCONER'S RECENT WORK ON THE OREGON QUESTION.

The author cannot say his last word without allusion to a British republication which appeared when the foregoing pages were in press. It is entitled, "THE OREGON QUESTION; OR A STATEMENT OF THE BRITISH CLAIMS, IN OPPOSITION TO THE PRETENSIONS OF THE UNITED STATES, BY THOMAS FALCONER, BARRISTER AT LAW, OF LINCOLN'S INN."

It is unnecessary to our purpose to travel after the writer through all his tortuous sophistries, as they are fully answered by the plain statements of the previous portions of this work; but, as Mr. Falconer is a special advocate of international law, and advances some rather novel and interesting positions, it may not be amiss to glance at the main points of his performance. The learned barrister somewhat ingeniously commences by adjudging us the French Title as the foundation of our claims, and having given it this position as his least formidable obstacle, pelts away at it with evident satisfaction. He is welcome to his pains, for if he succeeds in destroying it altogether, it will not affect our claims a jot. He next insists upon the discoveries of Drake with the utmost pertinacity, though he succeeds but poorly, and can manage to defend the varacity of the freebooting Preacher, on whose romantic statements they depend, no better than by asking—what motive he could have to lie? This appeal, in the face of the fact, that navigators had for nearly a hundred years previous been struggling for the renown of the furthestest northern advance, is the very superlative of absurdity, and is undeserving of a grave reply. Mr. Falconer lays great stress upon the concessions of Spain by the Nootka treaty, (a rather strange mode by the way of fortifying the antagonistic claims of Drake and Cook,) and insists that, "this convention was an admission of the *right* of the English Government to make settlements." Well, suppose it was, what then? She did not consummate that privilege by any settlement, as we have before shown, previous to the succeeding war 1796 which swept the right away with the other conditional agreements and reciprocal privileges dependant upon a state of amity! Had she, in the mean time, made an actual settlement and retained it through the war, her proposition that "the right to make settlements was a cession of territory," would, in its application to this case, wear a graver aspect. But throwing aside the Nootka treaty, and granting Britain the privilege of settlement in unoccupied wastes as a nat-

ural right, and still she gains nothing by it, for, by her own rule: "discovery alone and an *alleged* intention to occupy do not give a perfect title, unless an actual occupation takes place." This is an unfortunate quotation of the learned barrister's, for we have seen that Britain's very first settlement in any part of Oregon, was at Astoria, after the purchase of the Pacific Fur Company's effects in 1813; while on the other hand, the United States reaps the harvest of the principle by a number of explorations and settlements extending from 1792 to the above period. But these formidable circumstances must be overcome, and the gentleman of Lincoln's Inn seeks to accomplish his purpose by a farther burrowing into international law. By the outlay of a little industrious research, he finds that this grand system accords to the subjects of monarchial governments privileges by discovery and settlement, which it denies to the Citizens of a Republic; that while the former may be empowered by their sovereign to discover countries, to take possession and establish laws, the later cannot receive similar powers from the President of the United States, "and without such authority," continues he, "they are mere outcasts and vagabonds upon the face of the desert, and no political inferences can be drawn from their acts. Hence," concludes the learned barrister, "the British settlement on the Columbia in 1813, was the first of a national and legal character, recognizable as such, by foreign nations." This is all very well as an ingenious obliquity of argument, but we understand the political distinction between Americans and Britons in a different sense. By our institutions every Citizen of the United States is in himself a sovereign, and possesses, as a matter of course, every natural right and its consequences, that monarchs grant by special act of grace to their obedient subjects. While Europeans range in varying subordinate degrees, the Citizens of our glorious Republic have a right to rank with kings.

Satisfied with his deductions, the learned gentleman finally winds up with an appeal to the commercial interests which will be injured by a state of war, and with a suggestion that the whole dispute be referred to the arbitration of some foreign power.

Do we need more than this to prove the absurdity of international law as applied to us? Is not the above insulting construction of our institutions, a sufficient argument to induce us to reject at once the system it is based on with the contempt it deserves! Instead of gravely inquiring what might have been the opinion of this or that monarchial writer some hundreds of years ago, would it not be more dignified—more just, to decide for ourselves upon the merits of the case, and according to first principles?

APPENDIX.

CONTAINING THE DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENCE—
TREATIES AND NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA,
SPAIN, GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES,
REFERRED TO IN THE FIRST PORTION OF THE
FOREGOING WORK.

(No. 1.)

*Convention between the United States and Russia, signed at St. Petersburg,
on the 17th of April, 1824.*

ARTICLE 1. It is agreed that, in any part of the great ocean, commonly called the Pacific Ocean, or South sea, the respective citizens or subjects of the high contracting powers shall be neither disturbed nor restrained, either in navigation or in fishing, or in the power of restoring to the coasts, upon points which may not already have been occupied, for the purpose of trading with the natives; saving always the restrictions and conditions determined by the following articles.

ART. 2. With the view of preventing the rights of navigation and of fishing, exercised upon the great ocean by the citizens and subjects of the high contracting powers, from becoming the pretext for an illicit trade, it is agreed that the citizens of the United States shall not resort to any point where there is a Russian establishment, without the permission of the governor or commander; and that, reciprocally, the subjects of Russia shall not resort, without permission, to any establishment of the United States upon the north-west coast.

ART. 3. It is, moreover, agreed that hereafter there shall not be formed by the citizens of the United States, or under the authority of said States, any establishment upon the north-west coast of America, nor in any of the islands adjacent, *to the north* of 54 degrees and 40 minutes of north latitude; and that, in the same manner, there shall be none formed by Russian subjects, or under the authority of Russia, *south* of the same parallel.

ART. 4. It is, nevertheless, understood that, during a term of ten years, counting from the signature of the present convention, the ships of both powers, or which belong to their citizens or subjects, respectively, may reciprocally frequent, without any hinderance whatever, the interior seas, gulfs, harbors, and creeks, upon the coast mentioned in the preceding article, for the purpose of fishing and trading with the natives of the country.

ART. 5. All spirituous liquors, fire-arms, other arms, powder, and

munitions of war of every kind, are always excepted from this same commerce permitted by the preceding article; and the two powers engage, reciprocally, neither to sell, nor suffer them to be sold, to the natives, by their respective citizens and subjects, nor by any person who may be under their authority. It is likewise stipulated, that this restriction shall never afford a pretext, nor be advanced, in any case, to authorize either search or detention of the vessels, seizure of the merchandise, or, in fine, any measures of constraint whatever, towards the merchants or the crews who may carry on this commerce; the high contracting powers reciprocally reserving to themselves to determine upon the penalties to be incurred, and to inflict the punishments in case of the contravention of this article by their respective citizens or subjects.

(To be continued.)