

tary officers in the service of the United States, and then by Thompson and others, in the service of the British and American fur companies. But no particular explorations, I believe, were made in the year referred to. The stock and property of the American company at Astoria were sold to the Northwest company in that year; but the place was restored to the United States in 1818, and no attempt was made by the government of Great Britain to extend its laws over any part of the territory until 1831, eight years after the time at which Lord Clarendon represents Astoria as being under the government of British laws, having the character of a national establishment of Great Britain, and recognised as such by foreign nations. Sir, it has never possessed such a national character, or been so recognised. If his lordship had taken the trouble to look at the statement of the British commissioners, (Messrs. Huskisson and Addington,) in 1826, he would have found they distinctly denied that it was "a national possession" or "a military post" in the hands of the Americans; and they endeavored to show by argument that it was not such in the hands of the Northwest Company after its purchase. Its restoration to us in 1818 is in compatible with the assumption that it has such a national character now. The assumption is equally inconsistent with the conditions of the treaties between Great Britain and the United States, which virtually preclude such an exclusive exercise of sovereignty on her part as to give any establishments made by her subjects a character of nationality. Nay, sir, it is inconsistent with the claims of Great Britain herself, whose commissioners in 1826 expressly renounced all pretensions to a right of exclusive sovereignty over any portion of the Oregon territory. It is difficult to fancy a paragraph of as many words so replete with error as the one on which I am commenting.

I regret to say that the subject was presented to the House of Commons with, if possible, still greater misrepresentations, and from an equally distinguished source; though I might not have felt myself called on to notice them, but for their connexion with the incidents I have been examining, and particularly the question of title.

The subject was introduced into the House of Commons by Lord John Russell, much in the same manner as it was presented to the House of Lords—not in the shape of a call for information, but in the nature of a protest against some of the positions taken by the President in his inaugural speech. This gentleman is a distinguished member of the whig party, a member of a former ministry, and was recently called on by her majesty to form another, but did not succeed. I will now read to the Senate that part of his lordship's remarks which relates to the discovery of the Columbia river, one of the principal historical facts on which the United States rest their claim to the Oregon territory:

"New. It appears that Captain Vancouver was sent out by the British government to discover the line of coast, and to take possession of certain parts laid down in his instructions; and here we come to another part of the claims of the United States—to a part of their claims where they put in their claim to discovery upon a transaction which I will now proceed to relate. It appears that a merchant vessel called the Columbia, under a Captain Gray, discovered an inlet, which was supposed to be an inlet of a river. It appears that after some days in the month of May, 1792, passed partly at anchor and partly in endeavoring to ascertain the limits of that bay, that this vessel sailed out again into the Pacific ocean. There is a very clear account given by Captain Gray, the commander of that vessel, that 'after some days,' he says, 'we thought we had found a channel, we found we were mistaken. There is no channel in the part which we endeavored to penetrate, and therefore we

must return.' Shortly after this, Captain Vancouver arrived on the coast. He not only went into the same inlet, but he sent his lieutenant—a Lieutenant Broughton—to discover the river, and to go in a boat to a distance up the river. Lieutenant Broughton was more successful than Captain Gray. He actually discovered the entrance of the Columbia river. He went up it in his boat several days, to the distance, I think, of some 80 or 100 miles. He discovered the territory surrounding it. It was agreed that the river should be called by the name of Columbia, and Lieutenant Broughton returned to his ship. But Captain Vancouver took possession of that river, the coast adjacent, and the Nootka sound, in the name of his majesty the king of England. (Hear, hear.) Then, sir, there was something of valid title.

I confess it was with equal regret and surprise that I read this statement of a transaction which has become matter of history, and in respect to the facts of which there is no reasonable ground for serious misconception. I have looked in vain for the quotation Lord John Russell professes to make from Captain Gray. There is no such statement in the only account which I have seen given by the latter of the discovery of the Columbia river—the certified copy of his log in the State Department. His lordship goes on to state that Vancouver shortly after arrived on the coast, and not only went into the inlet, but sent in Lieutenant Broughton, "who actually discovered the entrance to the Columbia river." Now, the Senate will observe that, in order to sustain this most unauthorized assumption, almost all the important facts relating to the discovery of the Columbia river—facts shown by Vancouver's own journal—are kept out of view:—the meeting of Gray with Vancouver on the 29th April, 1792, five months previously, near the strait of Fuca; the information given by Gray to the latter of the discovery of the river, and of his unsuccessful attempts to enter it; the incredulity of Vancouver, and his continued conviction that no such river existed; the return of Gray to the river, his success in entering it, the arrival of Vancouver at Nootka where he obtained copies of Gray's charts left with Quadra, by the aid of which Vancouver was enabled to find the stream, and send up his lieutenant, Broughton, to explore it. I say, sir, all these material facts are suppressed—I trust not intentionally—to sustain the unfounded assumption that Broughton was the discoverer of the Columbia. But it is worthy of remark that Mr. Falconer, a respectable British writer, who has recently published a pamphlet on Oregon, and who wrote about the time Lord John Russell spoke, admits that Gray was the first person who noticed the Columbia river after Heceta, and concedes the discovery to the latter. Happily, the historical facts are too well authenticated to be permanently misunderstood. They were so well known at the time, that even the rivalry—not to say the detraction—of the day conceded to Gray the merit of the discovery by designating the river by the name he gave it—the name of the vessel that first entered its waters. In regard to the attempt to restrict Gray's discovery to the bay or mouth of the river, it is only necessary to say that the settlement at Astoria is universally admitted to be on the Columbia river. Is it not so, sir? It is designated "the settlement on the Columbia river," in the despatch of Earl Bathurst directing it to be restored to us in 1818, as well as in the act of restoration. Now, sir, Capt. Gray ascended the river not only as high as Astoria, which is ten miles from the Pacific ocean, but at least six miles above it according to Broughton himself. Look at the map of Oregon on your table; by Capt. Wilkes, and you will find Gray's bay, so named by Broughton, (see Vancouver's journal, vol. 3, page 92,) on the north side of the Columbia and higher up than Astoria. According to Gray's own log, he anchored the day