

of the Hudson's Bay Company amongst them, renders the condition of our people in that quarter less secure ; but I think it will appear, at once, upon the most cursory examination, that no such opposition further south could be maintained, so as to weaken the benefits of such an establishment as is here suggested.

“ In considering this matter, the first question which presents itself is, where do these tribes now make their exchanges, and obtain their necessary supplies? They resort almost exclusively to the Mexicans, who, themselves, purchase from us whatever the Indians most seek for. In this point of view, therefore, *ceteris paribus*, it would be an easy matter for us to monopolize the whole traffic. All that is wanting is some location more convenient for the natives than that offered by the Mexicans, to give us the undisputed superiority ; and the selection of such a point requires but a knowledge of the single fact, that these nations invariably winter upon the head waters of the Arkansas, and there prepare all their buffalo robes for trade. These robes are heavy, and, to the Indian, very difficult of transportation. Nothing but necessity induces them to travel any great distance, with such inconvenient baggage. A post, therefore, established upon the head waters of the Arkansas, must infallibly secure an uncontested preference over that of the Mexicans, even at their prices and rates of barter. Then let the dragoons occasionally move about among these people in large parties, impressing them with the proper estimate of our power to protect and to punish, and at once we have complete and assured security for all citizens whose enterprise may lead them beyond the border, and an end to the outrages and depredations which now dog the footsteps of the traveller in the prairies, and arrest and depress the most advantageous commerce. Such a post need not be stronger than fifty men ; twenty-five to be employed as hunters, to supply the garrison, and the residue as a defence against any hostility. Situated here upon the good lands of the Arkansas, in the midst of abundance of timber, while it might be kept up at a most inconsiderable expense, such an establishment within ninety miles of Santa Fé or Taos would be more than justified by the other and more important advantages before alluded to, leaving the protection of the traders with the Indian tribes entirely out of the question.

“ This great trade, carried on by caravans to Santa Fé, annually loads one hundred wagons with merchandise, which is bartered in the northern provinces or Mexico for cash and for beaver furs. The numerous articles excluded as contraband, and the exorbitant duties laid upon all those that are admitted by the Mexican government, present so many obstacles to commerce, that I am well persuaded, that if a post, such as is here suggested, should be established on the Arkansas, it would become the place of deposit, not only for the present trade, but for one infinitely more extended. Here the Mexicans might purchase their supplies, and might well afford to sell them at prices which would silence all competition from any other quarter.