

EXCURSION TO THE OREGON.

lish language, and possessing institutions resembling our own. Yet, although the extension of the Anglo-American settlements be comparatively rapid, it is not effected without numerous difficulties. Those who first penetrate into the wilderness are usually parties of fur traders; and by these hardy pioneers, and the volunteer travellers who accompany them, the way may be said to be in some measure paved for the more formal visits of surveyors, and the new occupants of the country. The journeys of these pioneering parties are attended with many dangers. The setting out of an expedition resembles a caravan of pilgrims sallying forth across the African deserts; civilisation is for months, perhaps for years, left behind; no vestige of house or road is seen on the apparently interminable wastes; journeying is performed only on horseback during the day, while repose is enjoyed in tents pitched for the night; a constant outlook must be kept for prowling wild beasts, or the not less stealthy steps of the Pawnee Loup Indian: in short, all is wild nature, romantic enough perhaps to untamed minds, but as we can imagine altogether unendurable by persons accustomed to the quiet and orderly life of cities. Strange as it seems, however, there are highly cultivated individuals who, inspired by a love of science, or for the mere sake of sport, voluntarily make part of the fur-trading bands, and consent to remain for years from home, friends, and the world of refinement.

Believing that the account of one of these romantic expeditions cannot but be acceptable to our readers, we offer in the present sheet the history of an excursion performed a few years ago by Mr Townsend, an enthusiastic ornithologist, and his friend Professor Nuttall, of Howard university, an equally zealous botanist.* Being desirous of increasing the existing stock of knowledge in the departments of science to which they were respectively attached, these gentlemen agreed to accompany a body of traders, commanded by a Captain Wyeth, to the Columbia river and adjacent parts. The traders belonged to an association called the Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company, and on this occasion they designed to fix a permanent branch-establishment in the west.

On the evening of the 24th of March 1834, the two friends arrived in a steamboat at St Louis, on the Missouri, from Pittsburg. At St Louis, which is the last great town within the settlements, they furnished themselves with several pairs of leathern pantaloons, enormous overcoats, and white wool hats with round crowns, fitting tightly to the head, and almost hard enough to resist a musket ball. Leaving their baggage to come on with the steamer, about three hundred miles farther up the

* We draw the materials for our account from "An Excursion to the Rocky Mountains, by J. K. Townsend;" a work published at Philadelphia in 1839.