

defence, trusting to Providence and his throat to do all the rest. His rescue was easily completed by the settler's rifle. Pumas are very destructive to the flocks of sheep kept by the Puget Sound Company. I must not linger longer on the way—though numerous objects come under my view, as we ride along, well worthy of being described.

We push through a kind of gap in the timber, which is thicker here than I have seen it anywhere along our route; and imagine, if you can, a level surface, extending as far as eye can follow it, so thickly covered with conical mounds, from five to eight feet in height and from four to six feet in diameter at their bases, that it was almost impossible to walk about amidst them. I can find no comparison which will bring this wondrous place familiarly before the reader; it was like to nothing I had ever gazed on before, and I have never seen any formation, even approximately, resembling it since. I examined and measured dozens of the mounds, and several I contrived to dig open, but only to find the whole substance was shingle, kept together by a kind of calcareous concrete. All were covered with bunch grass, and on most of them a botanist might have gathered many species of flowering plants. I looked at them from a height, I scrambled about amongst them for miles, sat upon their summits, and held council with my friend the Doctor; but all my theorizing failed to satisfy me as to how these thousands upon thousands of mounds, more or less exactly alike, and in contact at their bases, could have been formed. There was no evidence of a current having "flowed" in a given direction in bygone ages, and so caused eddies, by which mounds might have been formed. No; it was, and is, to me still inexplicable. I saw several prairies subsequent to this visit to "the mound prairie," with small mounds sparsely scattered about over the surface—mounds too, in shape and size, very analogous to those of the "mound prairie," and it is just possible they will eventually be found to have the same origin; still it is the vast aggregation of mounds, covering miles of land, and that so thickly as to leave no room to jam in another, that bothers me. It may not be amiss, having confessed my own utter inability to form even a reasonable theory as to how the mounds were either built up or deposited, to give the opinions of other observers.

Mr. George Gibbs, who was attached to the United States Boundary Commission, and of whom I can say, from personal knowledge, that there are very few keener observers, supposes "the mounds might have been produced by the immense growth of the 'giant root' (*Megarhiza Oregana*), forming a nucleus around which the soil has been gradually washed away."* From this opinion I must beg leave to differ in toto. I have often seen the plant growing further south, but

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