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EXCURSION TO THE OREGON.

THE continent of North America is about three thousand miles across, from the Atlantic on the east to the Pacific on the west; and, after an interval of three centuries since the discovery and settlement of the country, the civilised races, who are chiefly of English origin, have not generally penetrated with their possessions above a third of the entire breadth. The progress of encroachment in the western wilderness, however, is now exceedingly rapid. Since the deliverance of the New England and other states from British control, the Anglo-Americans have evinced a singularly energetic spirit of migration towards what was, seventy years ago, an almost unknown land. Crossing the Alleghany range of mountains, from the Atlantic or old settled states, they have taken possession of the valley of the Mississippi, a tract as large as all Europe; and approaching the head waters of the Missouri and other tributaries of the Mississippi, appear prepared to cross the Rocky Mountains—"the Great Backbone of America," as they have not unaptly been called—and take possession of the Oregon country, lying on the shores of the Pacific.

This extension of the boundaries of civilisation over a country hitherto abandoned to roaming tribes of Indians, and herds of wild animals, is at present one of the most remarkable facts in social history. Since the beginning of the present century, the population of the United States has increased from four millions to twenty millions; and following the same rate of increase, in less than a century hence the population will have increased to upwards of a hundred and fifty millions—all speaking the Eng-