

within British territory, the seaboard and Lynn Canal are within that of Russian America.

Sir John Richardson furnishes very interesting notes respecting the geology, forest growth, and botany, the quadrupeds, and birds and fish of the Mackenzie valley. After enumerating many species of each, he says:—"There is, in fact, notwithstanding the near neighbourhood of the Arctic Circle, no want of flowering plants to engage the attention; and many of the feathered inhabitants of the district recall pictures of southern domestic abodes. There is an intermingling of the flora of both coasts—the Atlantic and Pacific—as well as of the migratory feathered tribes, the Rocky Mountain range not proving a barrier to either."

The improvement of the navigation between the Methye Portage and Hudson's Bay, either by the Churchill River, to its mouth, or across the Burnt Wood carrying place down the Port Nelson River to Fort York, or from Lake Winnipeg, through the Hayes River, would effect an abbreviation of about 1500 miles on the routes to all parts farther W. That this immense abbreviation is practicable, and would prove very advantageous, notwithstanding the comparatively short period of the year during which Hudson's Bay forms a serviceable communication, is abundantly proved by the fact that it is the channel selected by the Company for carrying on the trade of the whole vast interior. It would be eagerly used as the most speedy and economical route to the Pacific during the period of the available season. By whichever of the directions between Ile à la Crosse Lake and the Rocky Mountains the first westward communication might be perfected, there would still only remain the few comparatively trifling and conveniently-situated carrying places, that have been pointed out to be improved, before the length of the Mackenzie would be added to the wonderful facilities that would exist for traversing the continent in every direction. The north-west passage, which for ages has been vainly sought for, though formed in a very different direction, and which by Lake Wollaston is a geographical fact, would then be a navigable reality. The objects for which it has been sought would, indeed, be accomplished by a different, and a more generally useful channel, through those links between the foot of the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific that yet remain to be considered; but independently of the varied resources of the Mackenzie River and valley and of the adjoining waters in fish, game, and fowl; in herds of deer and wild cattle; in metals, minerals, and coal,—the navigation of the river offers great advantages, compared with the trifling impediments opposed to it. Experience has shown the superiority of inland expeditions for purposes of exploration and of search. These would be immeasurably increased when the parties *could start with the first*

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