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LITERATURE.

OMOO—A NARRATIVE OF ADVENTURES IN THE SOUTH SEAS: *By Herman Melville; London and New York, and in Montreal, by Chalmers & Co.*

AN OVERLAND JOURNEY ROUND THE WORLD.—*By Sir George Simpson: Philadelphia; Lea & Blanchard; and J. McCoy, Great St. James Street, Montreal.*

It is not alone the circumstance that these works are both books of travel, nor that some part of the one, which stands second in our title, serves to illustrate the first, that has induced us to associate them for the purpose of review. There are still more striking affinities between the voyages and toils which they respectively describe. Our Canadian traveller has accomplished the dream of the earlier discoverers of this Continent—a passage westward to the rich countries of the east. The American has lived almost familiarly in long unknown islands, whose discovery was due to that same desire to circumnavigate our globe, which, having once taken possession of the European mind, seems have become constantly more intense, until it was gratified. The adventure which Columbus imagined, and which would, perhaps, have been achieved by La Salle, but for the accident which finished his expedition to China, at the village of Lachine, has since been accomplished, almost in the latitudes where he attempted it. Nor has experience discredited the sagacity of the great discoverer, who indicated the existence of a passage by water to the Asian continent. We shall not stop to inquire how much modern geographers owe to the restless search for the eastern shore of Cathay, to which the energies of the most able navigators and boldest explorers were so long directed; nor shall we attempt to show, at length, the many discoveries due to the difficulties they experienced in the research. It is sufficient to allude to the coasting voyages made by all the nations of the old world, in the hope of lighting on the long sought inlet which should grant the passage that alone could crown their labours with success. It was at last found; and the voyage of Magellaens having fulfilled the expectations of the great Genoese, another world was again added to the old, only less extensive and important, than the one which genius had gratuitously opened to the spoliations of avarice, about a quarter of a century before.

Our authors treat of various portions of the countries thus laid open to Western Europe, and of portions which have peculiar claims to the interest of Canadians. A great part of Sir George Simpson's journey, was through regions first opened up by the ancestors of the French inhabitants of this country. The exploration and in by far the greater part of the discoveries in the South Seas, are due to the English. Who can hear the names of Cartier, Champlain, Charlevoix, Marquette, and Hennepin, without astonishment at their chivalrous contempt of every danger, in the pursuit of their wondrous journeys through the savage woods, which two hundred years ago, covered North America? Who can compare the bravery of any battle-field, to the sustained valour that first directed two or three birch canoes, amidst savages, and perhaps foes, by way of the St. Lawrence and Mississippi, to the Mexican Gulf, at a time when a quarter of a million of whites could hardly have been found on the whole tract of country, embraced within the waters of that magnificent navigation? We confess, that when we consider the isolated condition of the Frenchmen—frequently two or three, or at most a dozen, amidst such numerous unknown tribes—we are almost constrained to award them the praise of having *manifested* the greatest example of courage which history records. The partizans of Dampier and Cook, however, would have no difficulty in finding ample arguments in favor of the claim of their peculiar favourites. Certainly, if any sea presents appalling dangers to the unaccustomed navigator, it is that great southern ocean, studded with myriads of islands, many of which never show themselves above the surface of a smooth sea, whose tranquility often hides the most destructive reefs. It was here, by night as well as day, without directions from any one who had gone before, exposed to the sudden freaks of wind and current, that Cook sought out those fortunate islands, which, perhaps, more nearly than any other lands, have realized the vain visions of a terrestrial Paradise.

What journeys to the West once were, may be judged from what they now are, if we only add the pleasant circumstances, now rare, though not obsolete, which rendered necessary a constant watch against hostile bands. Here is an extract from Governor Simpson, which gives a good idea of the toil of the Hudson's Bay Voyageurs:—