

HISTORY OF OREGON.

CHAPTER I.

OREGON DISCOVERED BY SPAIN.

FORTY years after the discovery of the Western Continent, Hernan Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico, having explored the neighboring countries, in search of rich nations to plunder, turned his attention to the north and northwest. At the commencement of the sixteenth century, the most northern settlements of the Spaniards in North America, were Culiacan, a small establishment on the eastern side of the Gulf of California, in about twenty-five degrees north latitude, and Panuco, situated near the spot now occupied by Tampico, on the Mexican Gulf.

Of this expedition, made under the direction and orders of Cortez, little authentic is known. In 1532, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, a relation of Cortez, sailed from Acapulco in a small ship, accompanied by Juan de Mazuela, in command of another vessel. They proceeded along the southwest coast of Mexico, as far as the twenty-seventh degree of north latitude. Here a tempest separated them, and the vessel commanded by Mendoza was lost. After the storm abated, Mazuela was obliged to return to the river Culiacan, where the greater part of his crew deserted. Those who remained endeavoring to bring the ship back to Acapulco, ran ashore in the province of Jalisco. There the crew, excepting three, were murdered by the savages; and subsequently the vessel was rifled by Nuño de Guzman, the chief of a band of adventurers who pretended to be independent of Cortez. The next year, as no news of these vessels had reached Acapulco, Cortez sent out two others in the same direction, under Hernando de Grijalva and Diego de Becerra, who set sail from Tehuantepec in October, 1533.

Grijalva, separating from his companions, sailed to the westward, and having discovered a group of small islands about one hundred and fifty miles from the main land, (now known as the Revillagigedo islands,) he returned to Mexico without making any further discovery. Becerra also