

vitas; its rivers and bays swarm with fish—salmon, sturgeon, cod, herring; whales and sea otters sport along its coasts; and the interior is inconveniently populated with antelopes, elk, wolves, rats, and buffaloes. Out of all this live stock a brisk trade could be got up in a variety of articles, which in course of time might furnish materials for the establishment of a respectable tariff between Oregon and most parts of the Pacific. But as yet few people seem to consider the speculation a safe one. Not a single independent British settler has struck his spade in the earth, warned off partly, perhaps, by those prudential considerations which always hover round disputed titles, and partly by the exclusive privileges guaranteed by act of parliament to the Hudson's Bay Company, who possess complete jurisdiction over the whole of the territory claimed by the British government. The only stray individuals who have ventured into Oregon, with a view to colonize on their own account, are Americans. We hear of caravans of these adventurous people—whose lives seem to be of as little value as their bonds—setting out for the Rocky Mountains, and making their way by the help of canoes, hatchets, and horses, into the savage desiles. But even the American historians who record these exploits, confess that they have never heard what became of their heroic countrymen. Upwards of a thousand emigrants went off in this way from the United States in the years 1842 and 1843, and more have gone since, and more, we believe, are still going, in defiance of all perils by land, water, and treaty; and all that is known about them is, that a few families are squatted somewhere on farms so small and miserable, that the only wonder is that they should still survive as a warning and example to the rest of their compatriots. The American passion for going a-head, and keeping in perpetual motion, so curiously exemplified on quarter-day in the large towns, by wagon-loads of flitting furniture, is exhibited in its last agony by this desperate emigration beyond the Rocky Mountains. The journey itself—which we shall presently take an opportunity of touching upon—is replete with hardships and dangers; its successful accomplishment is extremely improbable; and its results, when accomplished, are for the most part such as, instead of drawing men from their homesteads, would deter any other human beings except the restless and reckless race that rove about the United States. They have not even the excuse for expatriation which is furnished by over-populated soils; for the population of the United States, replenished as it is every day by draughts from all other parts of the habitable globe, is insufficient for the daily necessities of the country. Nor have they the plausible pretence of bettering their condition; for it requires, in Oregon, the labor of three men to effect the same quantity of profit that is produced in the United States by the labor of one. Nor have they the higher plea of desiring to render available to the commonwealth this immense tract of territory, by carrying into it their arts and their patriotism; for Oregon, to whomsoever it may be ceded in the long run, certainly does not belong to the United States yet, and never may belong to them. So that this daring movement is unsustained by a single prudential consideration, is opposed, on the contrary, to every argument of policy or expediency, and must be referred to that inexplicable love of change and contempt for consequences, by

which Brother Jonathan is preëminently distinguished in all the affairs, great and small, in which he is engaged.

As we have alluded to the difficulties of the journey over the continent, and across the Rocky Mountains in the Oregon Territory, it may be as well to show what they are. The expedition of Lewis and Clarke, undertaken at the instance of the American government, in 1804, may be selected as the most favorable illustration, because it was carried out under the sanction of advantages which no private party of emigrants could, under any possible circumstances, be supposed to possess.

The party consisted of forty-four men, who embarked in three boats on the Missouri, in the month of May, well supplied with all resources necessary for the journey. They worked slowly and laboriously against the mighty current until the month of October, when, finding themselves no further advanced than the country of the Mandan Indians, they disembarked to winter on the shore, further progress at that season of the year being impracticable. Here they were compelled to remain until the following April, when they resumed the ascent of the river with thirty men, having sent the others back, for reasons which it is unnecessary to investigate. At the end of three weeks they reached the junction of the Yellow Stone, and towards the Middle of June were arrested by the falls of the Missouri, a series of stupendous cataracts which extend over a distance of ten miles. At this point their boats became useless to them, and making for the water above the falls, they embarked in canoes hollowed from the trunks of the cotton-wood trees that grow on the banks of the river. On the 19th of July they reached the gates of the Rocky Mountains, where the Missouri narrows itself into a dark and rapid channel between perpendicular rocks, rising 1200 feet above its surface. They had now been out fourteen months, and had only gained the entrance to the mountains, where the most formidable difficulties of the journey really began.

The passage of the Rocky Mountains occupied them three weeks. Their sufferings and privations were of a kind to appal the stoutest nerves. The anguish of a fatiguing and apparently hopeless expedition through the dreary gorges, and over the fearful heights, crossing streams which they dared not venture to navigate, and pursuing tracks which they were constantly obliged to abandon, was enhanced by the extreme severity of the cold and the want of provisions. Before they had entered upon this passage they had buried their goods and canoes in pits, and they must have perished in these frightful solitudes but for some horses and guides which they were lucky enough to procure from a party of Shoshonee Indians. From July to October they were unable to find a stream upon which it was considered safe to intrust themselves, subsisting the whole way upon a scanty and precarious supply of berries, dried fish, and the carcases of dogs and horses. At last, in the beginning of October, they embarked upon the Kooskooskee river, for which they constructed five canoes, and at last reached the Columbia. The passage down the Columbia was sufficiently dangerous, but having, by an infinite variety of stratagems, and at a cost of toil and endurance which cannot be very easily estimated at a distance, succeeded in evading the