

EXCURSION TO THE OREGON.

and next day they all arrived at the fort, which was the end of their journey across the wilderness. The time occupied in this dangerous expedition had been six months and three days. Unharmful by fatigue or accident, with a constitution strengthened by healthful exercise, and a mind buoyant with the novelty of the scenes they had passed through, the travellers felt sincerely thankful to that kind and overruling Providence which had watched over and protected them.

At Fort Vancouver, Mr Townsend left the trading part of the expedition, and procured a passage on board an American vessel, which carried him to the Sandwich Islands, and there he passed the winter months. He afterwards returned to the Columbia and its environs among the Rocky Mountains, to pursue his scientific researches; and his purpose being at length fulfilled, he returned by sea, touching at Valparaiso on the South American coast, and reached home after an absence of three years.

It is gratifying to learn, that the researches of the two naturalists were eminently successful. Besides procuring specimens of many rare animals, Mr Townsend discovered in the course of his expedition about fifty-four new species, sixteen of which were quadrupeds, and twenty-eight birds. Mr Nuttall also made many important additions to botanical science.

THE OREGON TERRITORY.

The large district of country on the Pacific, receiving the name of Oregon, which can only be reached from the eastern settlements, as we have seen, by an incalculable degree of labour, is of uncertain dimensions, but is generally considered to extend from the 42d to the 54th degree of north latitude, and from the Rocky Mountains westward to the Pacific. From the mountains, the country presents a comparatively abrupt slope, consisting of immense belts or terraces, disposed one below the other to the sea, but here and there interrupted by hilly ridges. The higher regions are rocky, wild, and covered with forests of huge pines and other trees; in the lower grounds, the land is open and fertile, furnishing grasses and edible roots in great profusion.

Towards the south, where the country borders on Mexico, the climate is mild, but afflicted with a rainy season, which, commencing in October, does not end till April. The tempests of wind and rain which occasionally occur are terrible. Near the northern limit, the extremes of heat and cold are greater, the winters being intensely severe. The principal animals found in the territory are bears, wild horses, small deer, wolves, and foxes; otters and beavers are plentiful on the banks of the rivers, whose waters abound with the finest salmon and seals. The Indian races are thinly scattered over this extensive region, and are not supposed to number more than 170,000 individuals.

Little, however, is distinctly known of the Oregon. Few have