

the northwest coast, which redounded to the glory of their country; and as the result thereof, our government has sustained successfully its claims to millions of acres of lands which border on the Pacific ocean, and that their investments resulted in a ruinous loss to those who engaged in the enterprise. (See Ingraham's Journal, vol. i, p. 2, vol. iv, p. 180.)

It has already been stated that the Spaniard Heceta in 1775 saw an entrance in latitude $46^{\circ} 16'$, south of the promontory he called St. Roque, and supposed there might be a river or harbor. In 1788, John Meares, in the *Felice* from Macao made an attempt to discover it, as will appear from the account of his voyage, page 167, London, 1790. He says:

"After we had rounded the promontory a large bay, as we had imagined, opened to our view, that bore a very promising appearance, and into which we steered with every encouraging expectation. As we steered in, the water shoaled to nine, eight and seven fathoms, when breakers were seen from the deck right ahead, and from the masthead they were observed to extend across the bay; we therefore hauled out, and directed our course to the opposite shore to see if there was any channel, or if we could discover any port. The name of *Cape Disappointment* was given to the promontory, and the bay obtained the title of Deception bay. By an indifferent meridian observation it lies in the latitude of $46^{\circ} 10'$ north, and in the computed longitude of $235^{\circ} 34'$ east. We can now with safety assert that there is no such river as that of *Saint Roe* exists, as laid down in the Spanish charts."

Vancouver, in 1792, April 27, examined this portion of the coast with Meares's description before him, but so formidable were the breakers and shoal-waters that he, *not considering this opening worthy of more attention*, continued his pursuit to the northwest. On the afternoon of the 29th, the next day but one, he met the American ship *Columbia*, commanded by Mr. Robert Gray, belonging to Boston, whence she had been absent nineteen months. Her Captain, Gray, informed him of *his having been off the mouth of a river* in the latitude $46^{\circ} 10'$, where the outset or reflux was so strong as to prevent his entering for nine days. "This was probably," adds Vancouver, in his journal, "the opening passed by us on the forenoon of the 27th;" and as if determined to put on record his confidence in his own superior sagacity, and his discredit of the observations of the American captain, he says:

"It must be considered as a very singular circumstance, that in so great an extent of seacoast we should not until now have seen the appearance of any opening in its shores which presented any certain prospect of affording shelter, the whole coast forming one compact, solid and nearly straight barrier against the sea."

But the interview with the British commander served not to discourage, but to arouse the energy and spirit of the American captain, who returned to the dangerous opening, resolved to enter it and brave its perils. The annals of commerce can show but few instances of similar perseverance and daring on the part of a merchant captain. It required more than common resolution to be the *first* to hazard life and property in that unknown solitary wilderness of breakers, reefs and shoals, not for the sake of pecuniary reward, but to discover and make known to the civilized world the existence of a mighty river, which had for ages rolled in undisturbed solitude through an unknown portion of the globe.

Captain Wilkes, in his valuable narrative, vol. iv, p. 313, says:

"Mere description can give little idea of the terrors of the bar of the *Columbia*. All who have seen it have spoken of the wildness of the scene, the incessant roar of the waters, representing it as one of the most fearful sights that can possibly meet the eye of the sailor."

From the log-book of the ship *Columbia* it appears that Captain Gray