

moreover, extensive mines of coal, invaluable in its future applicability to the steam navigation of the Pacific. He was not aware that from the possessions of Russia to the Isthmus of Panama, there existed any other place near the coast capable of furnishing this important article. Whenever a communication should be made, either by railroad or by a canal, across the Isthmus—and that time could not be very distant—the Pacific must become the highway of maritime nations to China and other parts of the eastern world; and in that event Vancouver's Island would become a position essential to our commercial superiority. The opinions of politicians on subjects of this kind were often exaggerated; they were liable to be warped by transitory and personal interests—an object which was in contest, whether in war or negotiation, was likewise too often overappreciated by contending Powers. Scientific authorities on this account were more to be relied on; and he therefore appealed with confidence to the testimony of the eminent geographer, Malte Brun, who seemed to have discovered, almost by intuition, the future destinies of Vancouver's Island. His observations on the subject were as follows:—

“The vegetable earth in some places forms a bed of ten feet in thickness. A traveller is agreeably surprised to find a milder climate here than on the eastern coast of America in the same latitude. In the month of April, Fahrenheit's thermometer was never below 40° during the night, and in the day it rose to 60°. The grass was already a foot in height. The climate is as favourable to the growth of trees as that of the Continent. What negligence on the part of the Spaniards not to have taken possession of this agreeable and fertile country!—a country which being situated in the rear of their country might, in the hands of intel-