

both the Ohio and the Mississippi. It was left for Joliet and Marquette, a few years later, not to discover the Mississippi, but to reach the truth of its flow, and for La Salle to confirm it.

These latter explorations of the priest and trader gave the French such rights as came from traversing throughout the water-ways, which led with slight interruption from the water back of Newfoundland, to the Mexican gulf. In due time this immense valley of the Mississippi was entered by the British traders, as they discovered pass after pass through the mountain barrier, all the way from New York to Carolina. The French, indeed, had permanent settlements along the Illinois and on the lower Mississippi, but in other parts of the great valley, there is little doubt that wandering Britons were quite as familiar as the French trader or adventurer to the Indians. If the evidence is not to be disputed, there was among these hardy British adventurers, a certain John Howard, who was, perhaps, the first, on the English part, to travel the whole course of one of the great ramifications of the valley. It was in 1742 that he passed from the upper waters of the James over the mountains to New River, by which he reached the Ohio. Descending this main affluent, he was floating down the Mississippi itself, when he was captured by some French and Indians and conveyed to New Orleans. An air of circumstantiality is given to the expedition in the journal of John Peter Salley, who was one of Howard's companions. Fry, in his report to the Ohio Company at a later day, made something of this exploit as crediting the English with an early acquaintance with the great valley. The most western settlements of the Virginians are marked in Evans's map of 1755, as that of J. Keeney at the junction of Greenbriar and New River, and Stahlmaker's house on the middle fork of the Holston River. These isolated outposts of the English were an exception to their habit of making one settlement support another. As set forth by Mitchell,

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