

portion of it; for this very reason, that in 1762, when the original cession was made, New Mexico belonged to Spain herself. The whole of the territory in that direction, west of the Rocky Mountains, was Spanish ground, adjoining this vague Louisiana, a fact which Mr. Greenhow, only two or three pages before, frankly, but perhaps unconsciously, states in very exact terms. "That any settlement," he observes, "of the western boundaries of Louisiana, should have been made on the conclusion of the treaty of 1762, is not probable. It would have been superfluous, as *Louisiana would certainly have joined the other territories of Spain in that direction.*"

It is impossible, upon the whole of this evidence, to make a loophole for the slightest doubt on this point—that in purchasing Louisiana from France, the United States acquired no rights beyond the base of the Rocky Mountains. President Jefferson explicitly affirms the limits in a letter written at the time of the purchase. "The boundary," says Jefferson, "which I deem not admitting question, are the highlands on the western side of the Mississippi, enclosing all its waters—the Missouri of course—and terminating in a line drawn from the north-western point, from the Lake of the Woods to the nearest source of the Mississippi, as lately settled between Great Britain and the United States." And in some negotiations which took place four years afterwards, he desired the omission of a clause which referred to the north-west territory, because it "could have no other effect, than as an offensive intimation to Spain that the claims of the United States extend to the Pacific Ocean." We, therefore, dismiss this branch of the subject, by restating the only conclusion consonant with the facts of history, at which any human being can arrive, after a sifting investigation of the whole question—namely, that the claim set up by the United States to a right of territory in Oregon, arising from the purchase of Louisiana, in 1803, is utterly fallacious, and totally unfounded.

Recalling the reader, then, to the point from which we started, we ask what is to be thought of the integrity of the writer who, with all these facts and disproofs before him, could be capable of making the sweeping assertion already quoted, that from the moment of the purchase, "the route across the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific lay open to the Americans?" We have been accused of dealing severely with the poets of America (an accusation which in good time we shall notice as it deserves); but we confess we are in some doubt whether they should not be called upon to evacuate the regions of fiction and give place to the historians.

The settlement between the United States and Great Britain, alluded to by President Jefferson, took place in 1783. It recognized the independence of the States and fixed their boundaries; but does not in any way affect the Oregon question, which at that time had not come into dispute.

Pursuing the subject in the order of time, we shall now proceed to state the steps that were taken by America in consequence of her presumed claim, and the arrangements of every kind that have been entered into since 1803 in reference to that claim; conducting the inquiry chronologically to the present moment, so that the English reader may be put in possession of the exact state of the case as it now stands in litigation between the two countries.

In 1805, Lewis and Clarke were commissioned by President Jefferson to explore the country west of the Rocky Mountains. We have already stated that, according to the constitution of the United States, the president cannot exercise any act of sovereignty—he cannot annex new territories to the Union. This commission, therefore, was not invested with an official character, and could not take possession of the country in the name of the American government. No title, consequently, can be raised upon this exploring expedition; nor is any such title asserted. "Politically," says Mr. Greenhow, "the expedition was an announcement to the world of the *intention* of the American government to occupy and settle the countries explored." "But," rejoins Mr. Falconer, "such intention had already been announced to the world by the English government in a public, authentic, and legal manner, and its sovereignty over the country declared."

In 1810, an attempt was made by a Captain Smith to found a post for trade with the Indians on the south bank of the Columbia. He built a house and laid out a garden, but the speculation was a failure, and he abandoned it before the close of the year. Mr. Falconer very properly observes, that this was the act of a private individual, and does not carry any political inference whatever.

In the same year the fur station called Astoria, rendered famous by Washington Irving's romance, was founded by a German merchant of New York, Jacob Astor, near the mouth of the Columbia. This was simply a private trading speculation, and although it has been dragged into the Oregon question with a view to help out the American claim, we need scarcely observe that it has no political character at all. The government of the United States might as well set up pretensions to sovereign authority in England because some stray ship-broker from New York establishes a packet-office in Liverpool, as pretend to any right over Oregon arising out of Mr. Astor's attempt to establish a fur company there. The brief history of the affair is as follows:—

Mr. Astor, whose experience in the commerce of the Pacific pointed out to him some probabilities of success in such an experiment, devised a scheme for the establishment of a Pacific Fur Company. The rivalry he principally apprehended was from the North-west Company of Montreal (which has been since amalgamated with the Hudson's Bay Company;) and he was so impressed with the policy of conciliating the English interest that he offered one third of the project to that company. But they prudently declined the offer. The company, however, was formed, and although it originated with an American merchant, such was the unavoidable ascendancy of British capital and British influence, that even Mr. Greenhow admits that, "the majority not only of the inferior servants, but also of the *partners*, were British subjects." This majority was so decisive that a reasonable doubt arises whether Astoria was not actually an English settlement; and when, in October, 1813, it was found necessary to dissolve the partnership, the whole of the establishment and stock being then sold to the North-West Company, the immediate cause of the dissolution is directly traced by Mr. Greenhow to the fact, that the company was governed by English and not by American directors. He puts this statement into *italics* by way of marking its importance; we adopt his *italics* for the same reason. "The