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From the Foreign Quarterly Review.

1. *Exploration du Territoire de l'Orégon, des Californies, et de la Mer Vermeille, exécutée pendant les Années 1840, 1841, et 1842.* Par M. DUFLOT DE MOFRAS, Attaché à Légation de France à Mexico, &c. 2 Tom. Paris: 1844.
2. *The History of Oregon and California.* By ROBERT GREENHOW, Librarian to the Department of State of the United States. London: 1844.
3. *The Oregon Question, &c.* By THOMAS FALCONER, Esq. London: 1845.
4. *History of the Oregon Territory and British North American Fur Trade.* By JOHN DUNN, late of the Hudson's Bay Company. London. 1844.

RUNNING almost due north and south, at an average distance of about 500 miles from the waters of the Pacific, a ridge of lofty mountains may be traced on the map of the New World. To the north, this savage ridge fades off into the inhospitable plains that skirt the Mackenzie River, to the margin of the Arctic Sea; to the south, it is continued into another climate, to east its shadows over more luxuriant scenes, by that chain which is known amongst geographers as the Mexican Alps; the whole line constituting, according to Humboldt, under various denominations, the course of the mighty Andes, which, from one extremity of the continent to another, from Cape Horn to the Arctic Circle, extends over a distance of 10,000 miles.

This ridge is called the Rocky Mountains. Its desolate peaks vary considerably in height, from 10,000 to 16,000 feet above the level of the sea. Its arid steeps and dismal gorges present no variety of surface, except where accumulated snow lies frost-locked in its sightless depths, or where a gigantic forest climbs the face of the precipice, or some rare nook in the recesses of the stony hills, instead of being a quarry, as it ought to be, is pranked out by the capricious hand of nature with wild and scanty pasturage. This grim barrier limits the British Canadian possessions on the west down to nearly the forty-ninth degree of latitude, and then forms the north-western, as it is the natural frontier in that direction of the United States. A desert plain stretches from its base to the south-east, and beyond that plain lies the great world of American settlement—explorers, hunters, squatters, trappers, trappers, Lynchers, and bowie-knife men. With that side of the mountains we have nothing to do. Our present business lies on the other side.

The region between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean—or rather that portion of it which is bounded south and north by California and Russian America—is called the Oregon Territory. A glance at the map will enable the reader to fix its limits at once, for they are so intelligibly indicated by unerring landmarks, as not to be mistaken. With the Rocky Mountains on the east, and the ocean on the west, a chain of lakes, rivers, and rocks on the north, and the grisly Klamet hills, and the sandy plains and salt springs of California on the south, there is no difficulty in ascertaining the natural outline of the Oregon Territory. Differences of opinion exist as to the political boundaries; the American government is for extending them, the British for contracting them. But these differences are

apart from the great question at issue, as to the right of either over any, and what portion of this disputed country, whose political geography is so dubious.

The character of a region, thus hemmed in and scarred in every direction by great mountains, traversed by innumerable streams, and dotted all over by lakes and swamps, cannot be supposed to be especially favorable to vegetation. Within a hundred miles of the sea, and parallel with the Rocky Mountains, rises another enormous chain of mountains, bearing evident marks of volcanic action at a remote period. The Americans have appropriated the cap of nearly every peak of this stupendous range to their own glorification, and christened them after the names of their presidents—so that Tyler has his cap, and Harrison has his cap, and even Van Buren has his cap, without waiting for the settlement of the right by which alone any of these worthies will be suffered to wear their caps in the presence of posterity. No doubt Mr Polk will come in for a peak of his own in the course of time, and nobody has so good a claim, seeing, that of all the American presidents, he is the only one who has ventured to assert that the region belongs to America, in the teeth of a treaty which, at least, leaves that question open by the common consent of both countries. The name assigned by Humboldt to this range, is that of the Californian Maritime Alps. The space westward to the sea is the most fertile on the whole surface, with the exception of a broad and tolerably rich plain to the south of the Columbia river. All the rest is rank, or barren—vast forlorn steppes, hopeless jungle, marsh, lake, sterile rocks, and aboriginal woods. Here and there may be found patches of practicable soil; but nothing grows in them except by dint of incredible labor; and when wheat and potatoes require to be forced with the care and outlay of the daintiest hot-house fruit, it is not difficult to anticipate the issue of agricultural experiments in such districts. The Hudson's Bay Company have a few small farms on the banks of the rivers, which serve the local purpose for which they were undertaken, sustaining a few settlers who, from one cause or another, have clustered round the fur stations; but agricultural speculations on a large scale can never be undertaken in that major section of the territory which is shut up between the Rocky Mountains and the Maritime Alps.

Indeed, the only places in the interior which present any temptations to the agricultural experimentalist, are those which lie on the banks of the rivers, especially the great Columbia river, the principal stream in Oregon. The Columbia rises in the Rocky Mountains, pursues a vagrant and sinuous course to the sea, is occasionally expanded into a line of lakes, by the accession of numerous tributary waters, and frequently broken in its downward race by rapids, falls, and eddies. In the intervals of these obstructions, it is available only to boats and canoes; but vessels of twelve feet draft may sail up 120 miles from the embouchure, where they are stopped by rapids. Beyond the rapids there is a still water navigation of about forty miles; above that point, the river is accessible only to the boats or canoes of the country.

But, although the Oregon Territory is not very seductive to the agriculturist, it has some natural advantages of a commercial kind. It abounds in valuable timber—ash, cedar, arbor-