

North-West Company had already been throwing out feelers towards the Columbia river, and now they decided on attempting to anticipate Astor and secure the Pacific trade for themselves. Probably it was that unexpected refusal which provoked him into extending his schemes. He would no longer be content with trading along the coast, and picking up what furs were consigned at the mouths of the rivers. He would embrace in his operations the unknown expanse which had been penetrated at the centre by Lewis and Clarke; his posts should extend from the Oregon estuary to St Louis, and be scattered about the upper waters of the Columbia on the one side, along the Missouri and its innumerable tributaries on the other. And to a great extent he realised his dream, although obstacles unforeseen delayed its fulfilment. The opposition of the North-West Company he must have anticipated. When they rejected his overtures it was a declaration of hostilities, and he knew what such warfare meant among fur-hunters. But he was not prepared for the quarrel between America and Great Britain, which broke out at a most unlucky moment for him, nor could he reasonably have counted on the exceptional catastrophes which must have daunted a less determined man, and drained less ample resources.

He had the spirit of enterprise in excess; he had provided the capital, but he had to hunt up agents with practical knowledge. There the hostile Association came to his aid. The North-West Company was a close corporation, and necessarily a limited one. Some of the best men they had trained were disappointed and resentful. These officials had

either thrown up their em-  
ments or been dismissed. Se in  
of them had come to the Awc  
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out from the Canadian mondl  
Astor found it easy to consta  
terms with them—the rather Co  
he behaved with great generost  
They signed on as partners i go  
new undertaking, but they cond  
uted little but their experiensel

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and his partners, his enter  
would still have seemed spa  
tive almost to folly. His so to  
as we have said, was twte,  
He looked forward to openis  
America west of the Missoe g  
his trade; but at first his n a  
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he intended to establish hishe  
quarters was still in dispu To  
tween England and the b, ye  
When at length his plansden  
matured, war appeared inews, an  
He was bound to come i. I  
understanding with his Rwalet  
rivals, who ruled in Alaska its  
military despotism. The sgger  
of his settlement and the sed l  
which were the currency led v  
commerce depended on the seam  
of the single ship, which thei  
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the Horn and run the gsans  
of the perils of the coast fr An  
Straits of Magellan to the Sco  
bars of the Columbia. Faibles  
arrive after prolonged seaten  
might lead to disorders, deatons.  
or mutiny. s-pun

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and the season's trading waquin  
perous, the whole profits dhe  
year must be staked on anise  
hazard. We have always te. T  
that Monte Christo was ing c  
venturesome when he stowe Shet  
all the treasures of his grots rag