

alleged extract from Captain Gray's log, first produced in a note to a report on the Oregon question drawn up by a committee of the House of Representatives in 1826. This log had never before been heard of, and has since unaccountably disappeared.* The case is one calculated to excite suspicion even as it stands, but a singular circumstance remains to be recorded. Captain Gray, according to the mysterious extract, took in fresh water from the river when he had sailed up it for ten miles. It is a fact that the water of the Columbia River is salt for twenty miles up its course. However, brushing all these doubts aside, and giving the Americans credit for everything alleged to have been done by Gray, it remains impossible to defeat the British claims on the Columbia by reliance on his exploits, for Vancouver's narrative shows that an English vessel, the 'Jenny' Captain Baker, entered the river in the early part of the same year that it was visited by Gray. There is no evidence to show whether Captain Baker or Captain Gray was the first discoverer. In any case the commander of the 'Chatham,' Vancouver's tender, Lieut. Broughton, was the first white man who fairly worked his way up the stream for any distance. Sent by Vancouver to examine the river, he ascended it for eighty-four miles from its true mouth, which he places higher up the bay than Captain Gray, and formally took possession in the name of the King of England. Vancouver declares, judging from this survey, that Captain Gray never was within five leagues of the entrance of the river.

The American claim to the valley of the Columbia by right of discovery is thus shown to be as weak technically, as it would be weak morally, if Captain Gray's exploit stood alone. For the theory that the Power whose flag is identified with the discovery of the mouth of a river, can on that account claim exclusive dominion over the whole country which it drains, is so extravagant as to be refuted by its own mere expression in plain language. But the United States did not rely, in arguing its claim, on the discoveries of Captain Gray alone. They appeal to the inland discoveries of Captains Lewis and Clarke, who were sent in 1804 to explore, on behalf of the United States, the upper valley of the Missouri. These travellers struck one of the tributaries of the Columbia during the latter part of their journey, and passed down the river to the sea, wintering on the south bank in 1805-6. American diplomatists lay great stress on

this, but again minute research shows the hollowness of their claim. The upper branches of the Columbia had been explored, previous to the arrival of Lewis and Clarke, by Mr. David Thomson, surveyor and astronomer of the British North-West Company. If it were just, as the Americans contend when basing their claims on the discoveries of Lewis, Clark, and Gray, that the first explorers of a river give their country exclusive territorial rights over the region it waters, then the United States are shut out from attributing any importance whatever to the travels of Lewis and Clark, for Thomson preceded those travellers. Finally, the route followed by Lewis and Clark lay wholly within the territory that Great Britain was willing to resign to the United States. They entered the Columbia by tributaries on its left bank and south of the 49th parallel. All along that portion of the river which they traversed Great Britain was willing to let the river itself be the boundary-line.

In 1811 a settlement, called Astoria, was established at the mouth of the Columbia river. An American claim, based on this circumstance, may be disposed of in a few words. Astoria was a free trading station—not a colony—set up by nine partners, calling themselves the Pacific Fur Company, of whom three were American and six Scotch. When the war of 1812 broke out, the whole settlement was hastily sold to the North West Company for 58,000 dollars. When the British sloop 'Raccoon' arrived to take it from the enemy, it was found to be already British. At the conferences of Ghent the Americans claimed to have it delivered back to them. Great Britain pointed out that it had been bought and paid for; still the United States claimed the sovereignty. With almost fantastic generosity the British Government agreed that, pending negotiations for settling the territorial dominion, the United States flag should be re-established at Astoria in the *status quo ante bellum*. This was done, but Astoria did not pay. The place was deserted, and had ceased to exist before the negotiations of 1845. Finally, Astoria was on the south side of the river, and within the territory that Great Britain was willing to leave in the hands of the United States. Our readers may find it difficult to believe that sober American statesmen could found on the history of Astoria a claim to the whole valley of the Columbia River; but such is the fact nevertheless. We merely refrain from giving extracts from despatches in illustration of the point, to avoid overloading this narrative.

It may, perhaps, be observed, that all purely technical claims of the kind we have

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