

notes which passed between the courts of Madrid and London on the occasion of these negotiations. She had enough to do in New Mexico.

From this review of the actual events which determined in the British crown all rights of sovereignty in the Oregon Territory, it will be seen that the claims of Spain, whatever they might have been before, were now finally set aside. This recalls us to the point which, for the first time, introduces the United States into the discussion—the sale of Louisiana by the French as it was ceded by the Spaniards. As Spain had no possessions in Oregon, she clearly could not have included in her cession to France any portion of that region. The question then is, what district of country did she cede to France under the name of Louisiana?

It is much more easy to answer this question in the negative than in the affirmative. We can much more readily decide what was *not* Louisiana than determine what was understood to be included under that designation. The Americans themselves never had any clear notion of that district; they very candidly avow that its boundaries were indefinite from the earliest period; and the Spaniards, who protested against the sale to the United States, as being a violation of subsisting engagements on the part of France, and who were well disposed to dispute the entrance of the Americans, declared that France had no right to a foot of territory west of the Mississippi. In this dilemma we are thrown upon a complicated tissue of treaties, to trace amongst them, as well as we can, what were the real or supposititious limits of Louisiana. One thing alone is certain, that they could not, by any political or geographical stratagem, be strained across the Rocky Mountains into the Oregon Territory.

The confusion respecting these boundaries is perfectly bewildering. Louisiana was originally a French colony. It was settled by a charter of Louis XIV., which charter left its eastern and western frontiers to the imagination of the settlers. The Sieur Crozat, to whom this ambiguous charter was granted in 1712, was glad to give it up in 1717. Probably, he was afraid of committing involuntary trespasses on the property of others. The Illinois country was then annexed to it, the Illinois country itself being in a similar condition of doubt. This, of course, only increased the perplexity. Louisiana, thus rendered more difficult of definition than ever, was made over by royal decree to Law's Mississippi Company, who escaped from their vague responsibility in 1732. The onus of this boundless province then reverted to the crown of France, and the said crown, in 1762, got rid of it by cession to the crown of Spain. But Spain seems to have been as uneasy under the obligation as France, and ceded it back again in 1800. The sly terms of these cessions and retrocessions are distinguished by a spirit of evasive finesse worthy of the palmiest days of the French and Spanish comedy. It would puzzle a conjuror to discover from these documents what country it was that was thus ceded and retroceded. France gave to Spain "all that country known under the name of Louisiana," and Spain gave back to France this same Louisiana, taking care to guard against accidents, by adding "with the same extent that it now has in the hands of Spain, and that it had when France possessed it." The conscientious caution of the Spaniard cannot be too highly commended. In this condition France sold

the unmapped Louisiana to the United States for 15,000,000 dollars; and the United States are now trying to make the most of their bargain. Finding that the limits of the country were never laid down, they are endeavoring to persuade the world that it had no limits but the ocean.

The way in which Mr. Greenhow speaks of Louisiana forms a suggestive commentary on this curious dilemma. He says, that from the time when Louisiana was ceded to Spain, until it "came into the possession of the United States, its extent and limits were not defined." This is tolerably decisive of the difficulty America has yet to encounter in the attempt to prove that it extended to the Pacific, seeing, on the confession of the Americans themselves, that its extent was not defined. But this is nothing in comparison with the admissions made in the following remarkable passage, which, if there be any meaning at all to be wrung from the English language, when it is employed by American historians, sets the question at rest forever.

"How far Louisiana extended westward, when it was ceded by France to Spain, history offers no means of determining. The charter granted to Crozat, in 1712, included only the territories drained by the Mississippi south of the Illinois country; and, though the Illinois was annexed to Louisiana in 1717, nothing can be found showing what territories were comprehended under that general appellation. In the old French maps, New France is represented as extending across the continent to the Pacific; in British maps, of the same period, a large portion of the territory thus assigned to New France, appears as New England, or as Virginia; while the Spanish geographers claimed the same portion for their sovereign, under the names of New Mexico and California. *While Louisiana remained in the possession of Spain, it was certainly never considered as embracing New Mexico or California*; though whether it was so considered or not, is immaterial to the question as to its western limits in 1803, which were, by the treaty, to be the same as in 1762. In the absence of all light on the subject from history, we are forced to regard the boundaries indicated by nature—namely, *the highlands separating the waters of the Mississippi from those flowing into the Pacific or the Californian Gulf—as the true western boundaries of the Louisiana ceded to the United States by France in 1803.*"

The completeness of this admission—that the western boundary of Louisiana was the chain of the Rocky Mountains, and that, consequently, America acquired no rights by her purchase beyond that boundary—is final. But we must not, therefore, pass over in silence the spirit of subterfuge that runs through this very disingenuous passage. Notwithstanding that Mr. Greenhow is thoroughly convinced that Louisiana never could, in the nature of things, have extended beyond the mountains, and, indeed, does not hesitate, at last, to say so, he tries to insinuate, that in 1762 it *might* have extended to the Pacific. Mr. Greenhow knows perfectly well that New Mexico, or California, never belonged to France, and, therefore, could not have formed a part of the territory called Louisiana, which was ceded by France to Spain, in 1762. The question turns upon what was Louisiana in 1762, for we have seen that Spain returned it back again, precisely as she got it. Now, whatever it was, it is as clear as the sun at noonday, that New Mexico could have been no