

ale of violence with a retail furrier suggested
 een Fort Garry venture in Canadian peltries,
 on the eastern side, which paid him well; and then
 Naturally he began to cherish dreams of his
 d to keep receiving as a prince of commerce.
 ous and discrete profits of his fur trading were
 when ambushed in building lots in New
 slaughter work, and so he gradually built
 and paid the a gigantic fortune. But Astor,
 were fired and, though a keen man of business,
 ed or emptied. Nothing of the pettiness of
 se something of a trader. He was a patriot and
 ical accounts; ambitious; his audacious schemes
 ed assaults of the matured with cool calcula-
 rs on the Sea; and, like Louis Napoleon,
 en men were knew how to wait, for he had
 women were re than his share of disappoint-
 ians, subsidised, its and reverses.
 rewarded by before 1804 the Californian
 position and unst was separated from Man-
 etability." The stan and Boston by something
 oken up for a six months' voyage round
 rve the fur monor Horn, supposing the weather
 er died at Pau e favourable. The land route
 e country marked "unexplored"
 nning of the cen never been attempted, and was
 e Russians in Al considered impracticable. Trap-
 n fur trade was, and hunters had penetrated
 monopoly. The Nin sight of the Rockies, visible
 any, in possession many hundred miles in that
 land, had been, a parent atmosphere, and had
 erprise far into ight back evil reports of the
 g to the United Stendous barrier. Imagination
 ly belonging, foled it, like the mythical
 ississippi the ntains of the Moon, with
 hing to explore ous horrors. If the horrors
 e assert their r fabulous, the perils were real
 hercial treaties, igh, as Lewis and Clarke
 with Canada, in 1804, when, ascending
 rned their atte Missouri to its mountain
 urs. The Mackes, they forced the passes and
 s formed, and ounded on the Californian Gulf.
 ort business. I now that the way had been
 man emigrant, eered, and the vague terrors
 ad the idea of me Unknown dissipated, future
 illionaire, and munications became possible,
 e profit of his ad only a question of time. Astor
 ast internal tra the first to realise that, and it
 the unknown ced him to enlarge a daring
 ted as a shopprise he was meditating. He
 way of business meant to organise a fur trade
 ing on a sea-ue Pacific, establishing regular

connections with the lucrative mar-
 kets in Canton. Captain Cook,
 among his many discoveries, may
 be said to have discovered the sea-
 otter. It is only to be found on
 the shores of the Northern Pacific,
 and its fur is the most valuable of
 all, not excepting the silver fox.
 The Californian gold deposits were
 as yet unsuspected, and the wealth
 of the sea furs had only been pre-
 cariously *exploité* by the Russians
 and by some enterprising mariners
 from New England. Astor founded
 a company, with a capital of a
 million dollars—said to have been
 mainly provided by himself—and
 he obtained a charter from the
 State of New York. He was to
 establish his Pacific headquarters
 in some safe anchorage. An an-
 nual ship was to bring supplies
 from New York, and transport the
 furs to Canton. The freight was
 to be collected by a flotilla of ten-
 ders, touching everywhere along
 the coast and landing agents to
 traffic with the Indians. A great
 company would have the advantage
 of its petty rivals, and he proposed
 to get rid of Russian competition
 by offering what was virtually a
 sleeping partnership. He under-
 took to supply their Alaskan posts,
 for the difficulty of victualling was
 their great drawback; they, on the
 other hand, were to carry his furs
 direct to the northern Chinese
 ports, where they were chiefly in
 demand. Thus he would be spared
 the cost of land-carriage from Can-
 ton, which was the sole distribut-
 ing centre for other European
 traders. His plans promised to
 work out satisfactorily; he had
 almost come to an understanding
 with the Russians; he had already
 floated the Mackinaw Company,
 and was making overtures to the
 great corporation of the "North-
 West," when these, after long
 hesitation, were rejected. The