

"In describing the country it will be desirable to consider it in the divisions which the different claims and propositions mark out.

There are:—

1st. "The country between 56° and 40° N., which were the most moderate of the American propositions given effect to, would fall to the share of Great Britain.

2nd. "The country between 40° and the Columbia River, which, (with a slight reservation to be adverted to) might some years ago have been secured for England.

3rd. "The country between the Columbia River and 42°, the Spanish (now Mexican) boundary acknowledged by the United States in 1810.

"The first of the above divisions has a coast line of about 500 miles; its breadth is about 350 miles. It thus forms a territory of 175,000 square miles, exclusive of the adjacent island—Queen Charlotte's—which has an area of upwards of 5,000 square miles.

"This extensive territory is, at present, occupied solely by Indians, and by a few officers and servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, engaged in the fur trade. This trade is conducted at two positions on the coast, and six in the interior country; the coast trading houses being supplied by a coasting vessel from Vancouver, while the wants of the establishments in the upper country are supplied by land transport from the northern waters of the Columbia. The Indians of the coast are numerous, fierce, and treacherous. Their natural intelligence considerable; and, occupying a country in which deer and fish are abundant, they are but little dependant on the traders. In the interior country, the natives are much inferior in character and position.

"This extensive tract is quite unfit for agricultural settlements. It is sterile and rocky; and its climate, though not so cold as that of the eastern side of America under the same latitudes, is more than equally objectionable from continual rains during six months of the year, and dense fogs during the other six months. The shores are covered with forests of pines of peculiar value for ship-building; and numerous indications have been observed of the existence of strata of coals, and mines of Iron.

"The second division of territory has a coast line of two hundred miles, and its breadth (to the northern branch of the Columbia, which here runs parallel to the coast) is about the same, thus forming an area of forty thousand square miles.

"This district is also, at present, valuable to civilized man only for the few furs traded with its Aborigines. The agricultural settlement at Fort Vancouver supplies merely the wants of those engaged in the fur trade, and another attempted on the Cowlitz River, near the straits of Juan de Fuca, has failed of success. The country is not so rugged as that which I before described; the climate is also better; and the soil though not naturally fertile, is capable of successful cultivation.

"To this division the extensive island known as 'Vancouver's,' may be considered to belong. This island has an area of nearly twelve thousand square miles, and it possesses far greater advantages, in soil and natural configuration for settlement, than the adjacent parts of the continent.

"The diplomatists of the United States would, I have learnt from good American authority, until the present excitement arose, have surrendered both the above regions to England, with the reservation of the tract bounded by the Columbia River on the south, the Straits of Fuca on the north, the Pacific on the west, and the Cowlitz River on the east. This reservation would have given to their country the command of the Columbia River for fifty miles from its mouth.

"In describing the third section of country, the most prominent subject is the River Columbia, which forms its principal outlet to the ocean.

"The valley of the Columbia for one hundred and fifty miles from the sea, is to a distance of twenty miles covered by a dense forest of trees of gigantic growth, quite beyond the efforts of puny man to clear away. Open plains do occur, but they are few and far between, and not adapted for settlement, in consequence of the want of water in summer. The climate is but indifferent. The rainy season extends from November to March, and the quantity of rain poured down upon the earth during that period is very great. Frost and snow are unfrequent. The summer is dry, and the heat intense and long continued, the thermometer for four months frequently attaining 100° in the shade.

"The country higher up the river is much in contrast to this. More distant from the wide Pacific, rains are here unfrequent; the woods give place to plains of immense extent, and health and vigour are enjoyed by the residents, instead of the languor and depression felt by those of the valley."

Until within a late period the Indians and the Officers of the Hudson's Bay Fur Company, have been almost the only inhabitants of Oregon. The manners, customs, and mythology of the Indian tribes possess a high degree of interest, but our space precludes all reference to them here.

The trade in this region is conducted principally under the auspices of the Hudson's Bay Fur Company. The whole number of its officers and servants resident in the region does not exceed three hundred. They are as mingled motley and unwarlike a rabble as can be well imagined. Hebrideans, Orkney-men, Canadians, and Sandwich Islanders, being in about equal numbers."\*

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