

degrees of longitude, and from the Mexican possessions, in latitude forty-two, to an undetermined boundary separating it from the Russian colony on the north, about the fiftieth or fifty-fourth degree of latitude, and embracing nearly 300,000 square miles. Most of this territory, excepting a strip about two hundred miles in breadth along the coast, is destitute of forests, and much of it is so broken by mountain ridges, steep precipices, and deep ravines, and is withal so barren as to render it unfit for cultivation or the abode of civilized men. As you approach within four or five hundred miles of the Pacific, you will find on some of the rivers extensive valleys with a fertile soil, and well adapted, when subjected to human industry and skill, to be the abode of happiness and plenty.

The geological structure of the mountain region seems to be generally regarded as indicating volcanic action; and it is said that in some parts of it there are marks of craters which probably have not been many centuries extinguished. The vast piles of basaltic rock, extending with occasional interruptions, many hundred miles along the Snake and Columbia rivers, the boiling springs which the traveller frequently meets with, the precipitous character of the mountains, the fractured stone which sometimes covers the surface for a great extent, and the many rivers and streams which lose themselves in the earth, indicate that the territory has been subjected to some violent commotions.

The soil, from the ocean as far back as the falls of the Columbia, and in most of the valleys and on the water courses, is of the most productive character, yielding in abundance of the grains, fruits, and every kind of vegetable common to temperate climates. As a grazing country, it is probably unequalled by any other in the same latitude, on the continent. The climate is far less severe and variable than in the latitude on the east of the mountain. Although the mouth of the Columbia is near the forty-seventh parallel of latitude, snow is seen there but in small quantities and for short periods; and so little power has the frost, that the ploughman is seldom incommoded by it during any part of the winter. Horses, multitudes of which are found in the country, and all kinds of cattle, find abundance of food through the year without care from man. The most marked variations of climate during the year are the dry season, embracing three or four months, from July to October, during which rain seldom falls, and the wet season of about as many winter months, during which rain falls abundantly.

The only rivers of considerable magnitude, which water this extensive tract, are the Columbia and its tributaries; the two principal of which are Lewis' river, often called Snake river, issuing from the mountains on the southeast, and Clark's river, proceeding down from the northeast. These two, having united their waters about 450 miles from the Pacific, constitute the Columbia river—a noble river which will admit ships of 300 tons to the junction of the Multnomah, 140 miles from the ocean, and smaller vessels about 180 miles, to the head of tide waters. Above this its current is broken by rapids and narrows, and often hemmed in for long distances by precipices of perpendicular rock, hundreds of feet in height, presenting the most picturesque appearance, and forming nearly an impassable barrier between those residing within call of each other on its opposite shores.

The history of the country west of the mountains, so far as it has been known to the civilized world, is brief. Previous to the year 1790, the coast adjacent to the Columbia river was an unknown land. During that year captain Gray of Boston, made a trading voyage along the shore and entered the river. Between the years 1803 and 1806, Lewis and Clark explored the country under the auspices of the United States government. In 1811 the first white settlement in the territory was made by Mr. Astor, the enterprising and successful pioneer in the fur trade, near the mouth of the Columbia. This establishment, after having cost an almost incredible amount of hardship and suffering, and much loss of life, was taken by the British in 1813; and the whole country, especially that portion lying near the ocean, has been in the almost exclusive possession of trading companies from that nation to the present time; though traders from the United States have, within the last few years, crossed the mountains and established a number of posts on the western slope. The two principal posts of the British Hudson's Bay Company which you will find, are Fort Wallawalla on the Columbia river, about 300 miles from its mouth, and Fort Vancouver, about 200 miles further down the same river. These, you will be happy to learn, are not only extensive trading and agricultural establishments, indicating in their whole appearance the presence of the arts and comforts which belong to civilization and refinement; but, owing to the excellent regulations according to which they are conducted, and the exemplary character of most influential persons concerned in them, they have exerted a salutary moral influence on the Indian bands in their neighborhood.

Within the last few years a new interest seems to be awakened among our citizens in regard to this extensive and important country; and probably, if the political relations of it were settled definitely, colonies would be established there with little delay. But by a convention made in the year 1818, between the British government and that of the United States, and renewed in 1827, it was agreed that the territory west of the mountains should be left open to the citizens of both nations for the space of ten years. That period has now expired without a renewal of the stipulation, or any arrangements having been made by either government for taking a more formal possession, or exercising jurisdiction over the disputed territory. What the resolutions recently introduced into our Congress may result in is uncertain. There can be little doubt, however, that at no distant day flourishing settlements, the germs of a great and powerful nation, will be seen scattered along the shores of the Pacific, and through the fertile valleys of the interior. The mildness of the climate, the fertility of the soil, and the abundance and variety of its productions, the forests of valuable timber which abound along the coast, the excellent fish which fill the rivers, and the openings for trade, especially for the productions of such a country, which abound in almost every part of the Pacific and Indian oceans, obviously mark out this territory as the seat of a nation of great commercial importance.

But it is the aboriginal population of this territory in which you are specially interested, and to whose benefit you are consecrating your lives. The Committee call your attention to the natural features and capabilities of the country, to the attractions which it holds out to enterprising nations, and as an embroilment, for the more sent occupation, make moi to offer n may have intercour. them by averice either ext sive steps prejudice white me most itac Respec country to little infc When fir cially alor populous numbers wars proeases, the murderou among th were then Clarke, 1 years ear small-pox ple which to be def mountain. can tribe. disease, the ruins been thus rate thirt, which the about 80, embraced country regarded and with consider The R. try two y Board, tween the bla, embr thirty and stretching second an being at population the mount mates als to accurac elers agre wasting d down fr tribes, and terrible d. tribes on northerly recent inte credit, these neg him from a strok and stay t. has unhap brought u.