

PREFACE.

THE geographical character of the Oregon Territory was unknown, if we except some small tracts on the coast, till the exploration of LEWIS and CLARKE. Information derived from their account, from public documents, from personal interviews with intelligent voyagers and travellers, or from their journals, contributes chiefly to the following sketch, as well as, to a more full history, to be published at some future day. The knowledge of navigators has been circumscribed within narrow limits on the coast; their objects in pursuits, precluding the possibility of its being otherwise. That of hunters and travellers has been general and inland. As far, however, as these persons were eye witnesses of the country, they are qualified justly to estimate its character. Some years of zealous and patient, if not indefatigable inquiry, have, likewise, qualified the writer to aid in its settlement and to promote generally a *plan*, the projectors of which avow as their purpose, to secure to themselves a greater repose and enjoyment of life; to meliorate the condition of the Indians, and to propagate among them, and the nations contiguous, the peaceful and refined principles of civilization, Christianity and civil polity.

The writer, fully conscious of his want of abilities to beautify his compositions with rhetorical embellishments, attempts nothing on this subject, transcendantly important, farther than to impress the public mind with simple and unadorned facts.

This sketch has been prepared for the benefit of the friends to the OREGON COLONIZATION SOCIETY, as well as, of those to mankind in general. To their indulgence he offers it, deeply sensible of its many imperfections. Some of its defects, however, are contingent. Not being possessed of that free and imperial command of words, which is the pe-