

a single object referred to. In his design, it is true, the most pretensions were set up by the exclusive navigation of the coast not be permitted to prejudice the ground of discovery and occupied purposes she had in view. who appeared on the north- Francis Drake. He left England expedition against the do- Pacific. In 1579, after hav- object, and carried devastation protected Spanish settlements ended in 38° north latitude, to be that of San Francisco, he in repairing his vessel. of the country and called is pretended that Sir Francis coast as far north as 49°; the fix the northerly limit which was a mere inspection 39°, the supposed boundary of more than a quarter of a century sh negotiators have abandoned is a part of the basis of their well upon it, excepting to add were accidental; they were of any purpose of ex- ent; they led to the discov- ritory; and they were not uld occupation of the soil. For m that I am aware of was set on the ground of Drake's pre-

was the Greek pilot, Juan de to the northwest coast in 1593, Drake, by the viceroy of Mexi- of discovering the imaginary used, at that day, to connect the north Atlantic ocean. In the voyage he entered an extensive he supposed, between the 47th latitude, and sailed more than Such is his own account as de- cker; and it accords, as well as early with the actual nature of is now generally conceded that ue; and his name is conferred on the strait between the 48th latitude. Spain had thus made northwest coast before the close, as far north at least as the 48th and the nature of her explora- tent and the settled purpose in they were made, excludes all others down to that period of

a distinguished naval com- der from the king of Spain, of the coast of California to a parallel of latitude; and he at as far north as the 43d par- several bays and promonto- During the seventeenth centu- attempt attempts were made by the ablishments in California; but, the natives, and other causes, so far as any permanent set- excepting the last, which was within sixty years from this establishments were formed western coast of America, be- California and Cape Mendocin,

one of which was in the bay of St. Francisco, near the 38th degree of latitude. During the whole period from the landing of Fernando Cortes in California, and the latter part of the eighteenth century, Spain had uniformly asserted her title to the northwest coast of America, and had from time to time made efforts not only to extend her discoveries there, but to perfect her right of empire and domain by permanent establishments.

In 1774, Perez was ordered by the viceroy of Mexico to proceed to 60° north latitude, and explore the coast south to Monterey, and to take possession, in the name of the king of Spain, of the places where he should land. He succeeded in reach- ing the 54th parallel, within two-thirds of a degree of the northern boundary of the disputed territory, whence he returned along the coast to Washington's island, as it was called by Capt. Gray, or Queen Charlotte's island, as it was afterwards named by the British navigators. In latitude 49° 30' he entered a capacious bay, where he remained for some time, trading with the natives—the same bay, be- yond all question, which was four years afterwards called King George's sound by Capt. Cook, and is now known as Nootka sound.

The next year, (1775,) Heceta sailed as far north as the 48th degree of latitude, and explored the coast south, filling up the outline which Perez had left incomplete. He had previously landed at 41° 10', and erected a cross with an inscription setting forth that he had taken possession of the country in the name of his sovereign. In latitude 46° 17' he discovered a rapid current outward from the land, opposite to an opening, which he immediately pro- nounced to be the mouth of a river. From him it was first called the *Entrada de Heceta*, and af- terwards the river St. Roc. He made repeat- ed attempts to enter it, but was constantly baffled by the violence of the current. This is now con- ceded to have been the mouth of the river Columbia, which was discovered and entered by Capt. Gray, of Boston.

During the same year the coast was also explored from the 56th to the 59th degree of latitude by Quadra (y Bodega) and Maurelle, who erected crosses in testimony of their discoveries. On their return, they visited the coast at the 47th degree of latitude, and explored it from the 45th southwardly to the 43d.

It will be perceived by these details, which I have deemed it necessary to state with some particu- larity, that previous to 1778, the year in which Cap- tain Cook visited the northwest coast, the Spaniards had examined it with great care and perseverance from 37° to 49° 30'. They had also examined it from the 54th to the 59th parallel, and visited it at inter- mediate points. And in these explorations they were wholly without competitors, excepting on the part of some Russian navigators, who had made dis- coveries north of the 56th parallel, and Drake, who had visited the coast at the 38th. During the two cen- turies which intervened from the expedition of Drake to the third voyage of Cook, no attempt had been made, nor any design indicated on the part of Great Britain, to avail herself of any pretended right by virtue of the transient visit of the former to the coast; while Spain constantly asserted her claim to it by virtue of previous and subsequent discoveries. And in California and its neighborhood she had, af- ter repeated efforts, succeeded in effecting the per- manent occupation of the country, which was her earnest object—an object which no other power dur- ing that long period had even in contemplation.

The third voyage of Captain Cook, undertaken

in 1777, gave the first indication of a desire on the part of Great Britain to appropriate such parts of the northwest coast of America as she consid- ered open to settlement, and subject them to her dominion. He was intended to take possession, in the name of the king, of convenient situations in the countries he might discover that had not been already discovered or visited by any other Euro- pean power. In 1778 he landed at Nootka sound, in 49° 33' north latitude, where he remained nearly a month trading with the natives and refitting his vessel. I believe this was the only point within the territory in dispute at which Captain Cook landed; and it is proved by its latitude to be the same bay which Perez discovered four years before, and in which he passed some time, like Captain Cook, trading with the natives. The subsequent explorations of the latter were made further north, (I believe he did not see the coast south of 55°,) with a view to the discovery of a passage between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, and they have no bearing on the question under discussion.

The explorations of Captain Cook gave no title whatever to Great Britain on the score of discovery—the only place where he landed having been pre- viously visited by Perez. Besides, if she had gained a contingent right of possession by virtue of his explorations, she did not proceed to perfect her title by a formal occupancy. The neglect of Great Britain to take actual possession of Nootka sound, even if she had gained a contingent right by discov- ery, is conclusive against any claim on her part to a right of property in it. For eight or nine years the British flag was not once unfurled there, as I can learn, although the place had, in the mean time, been visited by navigators of other nations; and it was not until several years later still that it was even entered by a public armed vessel of Great Britain; and then not until the Spanish government had taken formal possession of it.

In 1787, Berkeley, an Englishman, in the service of the Austrian East India Company, saw the strait of Juan de Fuca, but without attempting to enter it. In like manner, Meares, a lieutenant in the British navy, though in the service of a Portuguese merchant, and sailing under the flag of Portugal, sent a boat a few miles into the strait in 1788, having learned from Berkeley that he had re-discovered it the preceding year. Meares also explored the coast in the vicini- ty of the mouth of the Columbia river, and came to the conclusion, to use his own language, that "no such river as that of St. Roc exists, as laid down in the Spanish charts."—*Voyage, &c., John Meares, esq.,* page 168.

As the transactions, in which Meares was en- gaged, on the northwest coast, are intimately con- nected with the claim of Great Britain to a right of joint occupancy in respect to Oregon, I trust it will not be deemed superfluous if I examine them some- what in detail.

Before making the explorations above referred to, Meares had landed at Nootka sound, and left a party to build a small vessel. He had for a trifling con- sideration obtained the grant of "a spot of ground" from Maquinna, the king of the surrounding coun- try, to build a house for the accommodation of the party. The occupation was avowedly for a tempo- rary purpose, and he had stipulated with Maquinna to restore the possession to him, when he (Meares) should finally leave the coast.\* In the autumn of

\*Maquinna had not only most readily consented to grant us a spot of ground in his territory, whereon a house might be built for the accommodation of the people we in- tended to leave there, but had promised us also his assist-