

nesota) river, and from thence up a branch of the river Messorie, (Missouri), till, having discovered the source of the Oregon, or River of the West, on the other side of the summit of the lands that divide the waters which fall into the Gulf of Mexico from those which fall into the Pacific Ocean; they should sail down that river to the place "where it is said to empty itself, near the Strait of Anian." Nothing further, however, ever came of Carver's explorations.

The next land expedition in the interests of Great Britain, was undertaken in 1769 by Mr. Samuel Hearne, one of the Hudson's Bay Company's agents. This gentleman discovered the *Great Slave Lake* and the *Coppermine river*, which he traced to the sea; but his explorations destroyed the hope of finding any passage from Hudson's Bay across the continent, though it did inspire the English Government to hope that a passage might be found to exist between the two oceans through the sea to the north of the continent. It was this new hope that suggested the second offer of a reward of twenty thousand pounds for the discovery of any passage by sea between the Atlantic and Pacific, and which led to the voyage of Captain James Cook to the Pacific Coast.

Meanwhile the fur-trade was prosecuted with great success both by the Hudson's Bay Company and the free and independent traders of Canada. These latter penetrated as far into the northwest as the country drained by the Saskatchewan and Athabasca rivers, finding their enterprise well rewarded by the value of the peltries obtained. They could not, however, escape the annoyances placed in their way by the Hudson's Bay Company, who claimed all the territories drained by streams emptying into Hudson's Bay, as granted them by their charter. The better to enable themselves to contend with these difficulties, a number of Montreal merchants, in 1784, formed themselves into an association for the prosecution of the fur-trade, under the name and style of the "Northwest Company of Montreal." The organization of this company was in every way very efficient and thorough, like that of the older one of Hudson's Bay, so that, though the two companies often came in conflict, no material injury was sustained by either.

Like the Hudson's Bay, the Northwest Company were ambitious to become discoverers of a more extended field for the prosecution of their business, rather than to open the country to general commercial operations; and yet were not averse to the honor to be obtained by explorations, so long as the country remained exclusively under their control. Large parties of traders sometimes pushed their enterprises far to the west and northwest, dividing their forces so as to cover the largest extent of country possible, and bringing the result of their traffic or their discoveries to the general rendezvous, which had been previously agreed upon.

On one of these expeditions, in 1786, a party of one hundred Canadians penetrated to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, but were unable to proceed further on account of the warlike character of the tribes inhabiting there, and returned to winter on the Assiniboine river, which empties into Winnipeg Lake. Such other of these expeditions of the Northwest Company as were made, up to 1805, were purely in the interest of the fur-trade, and with the hope of extending their traffic with the Indians. Great Britain, however, afterward founded upon the widely extended roivings of this company, a claim

to the country traversed, as we shall have occasion to mention by and by.

In 1794, Mr. Alexander McKenzie, a gentleman of the Hudson's Bay Company, left Fort Chipewyan on Athabasca Lake to continue the discoveries commenced by Hearne twenty years previous. He descended the Slave river to the Slave Lake, and there searched for the large stream supposed to be its outlet. Such a stream was found at the northwest extremity of the lake, and was explored to the sea, by McKenzie, who gave it his own name. He further explored the country to the east of McKenzie's river, and returned to Fort Chipewyan; but two years later he renewed his efforts at discovery, and this time ascended Peace river, which flows into Lake Athabasca, until he came to the Rocky Mountains, at whose base he spent the first winter in camp.

The following summer, McKenzie resumed his voyage, and ascended Peace river until he came to its springs, in latitude about 54 deg. Within a short distance of these, were also discovered the sources of another river, which the natives called *Tacoutchee Tesse*, on which McKenzie embarked his canoes, and floated down a distance of two hundred and fifty miles. Here he disembarked, and proceeded overland in a westerly direction, for about two hundred miles more, until he reached the shores of the Pacific at *Cascade Canal Inlet*, which had been surveyed by Vancouver, only a few weeks before. From this point McKenzie returned home, having crossed the continent at its widest part, and with the belief that the *Tacoutchee Tesse*, whose headwaters he had discovered, was the river entered by Capt. Gray, four years previously, and named by him the *Columbia*. This impression of the British explorers was not removed until 1812, when the *Tacoutchee Tesse*, now known as *Frazier's River*, was traced to its mouth in the Gulf of Georgia, where Vancouver, with all his careful surveying, had failed to discover it.

Taken in conjunction with the coast surveys of Vancouver, the land explorations of McKenzie determined the question of any water passage across the continent, and was believed to determine in the negative, the practicability of navigation between the Atlantic and the Pacific by the way of the North Sea. With a foresight worthy of his nation, McKenzie urged that the British government should assist in establishing commercial communication across the continent, and that the East India Company should open a direct trade between China and the northwest coast of America; giving as one argument in favor of the immediate adoption of this policy, that this commerce was "left to adventurers of the United States, acting without regularity or capital, or the desire of conciliating future confidence, and looking only to the interests of the moment."

This benevolent policy of wishing to do well, that which the United States were only capable of doing badly, continued to animate the British Fur companies and the British government, half a century later. It inspired them to wish to take the port of Nootka out of Spanish hands, and the Columbia river out of American hands; and even as late as the Ashburton treaty, inspired them to the indefinite postponement of the boundary question in the northwest. The history of the Oregon territory discovers the fact that it was because it had but one great post on its whole coast, and that one early secured by American enterprise, and held by the indomitable will of American settlers, that the customary

benevolence of the British government failed to take it in charge.

During the remaining years of the eighteenth century, very little was effected toward the discovery of countries immediately east of, or lying to the west of the Rocky mountains. The Northwest company's agents once made an expedition to the foot of the Rocky mountains, near the headwaters of the Missouri; and the French and Spanish traders of St. Louis sometimes voyaged up that river for some distance above Council Bluffs; but, except that every nation visiting the interior claimed it for that nation's sovereign, the country remained absolutely in the hands of the native chiefs.

Meanwhile, the citizens of the United States continued to trade from the northwest coast to China, in the manner which McKenzie thus truthfully describes: "These adventurers set out on a voyage with a few trinkets of very little value. In the South Pacific they pick up some seal-skins, and perhaps a few butts of oil; at the Galapagos they lay in turtle, of which they preserve the shells; at Valparaiso, they raise a few dollars in exchange for European articles; at Nootka and other ports on the northwest coast, they traffic with the natives for furs, which, when winter commences, they carry to the Sandwich Islands, to dry and preserve from vermin; here they leave their own people to take care of them, and in the spring embark, in lieu of them, the natives of the islands, to assist in navigating to the northwest coast in search of more skins. The remainder of the cargo is then made up of sandal, which grows abundantly in the woods of Atosi and Owyhee; of abalone shells, shark's fins, and pearls of an inferior kind, all of which are acceptable in the China market; and with these and their dollars, they purchase cargoes of tea, silks and nankins, and thus complete their voyage in the course of two or three years." Thanks, Mr. McKenzie, for this encouraging bit of commercial history! It shows from what small beginnings may grow up in eighty years, a great national commerce like that of the United States. With such an historical example before him, let no young man despair of the success that belongs to industry and enterprise.

While the Americans monopolized this trans-Pacific trade, they were pretty effectually excluded from the central portion of the continent by the fact of the failure of Great Britain to surrender several important posts south of the great lakes, though belonging to the United States by the treaty which concluded the war of Independence, in 1783. However, by a subsequent treaty in 1794, these posts were surrendered, to the great inconvenience of the *Northwest Company*, and the proportionate benefit of the Americans, who wished to engage in fur-hunting.

Still, Louisiana, which was held by the French or Spanish alternately, up to 1803, was a very extensive domain, stretching from the Mississippi to the Pacific, and interfered with the expansion of commerce in that direction. Notwithstanding the restrictions, large quantities of furs were gathered in the countries about the great lakes, and shipped annually to London or Canton.

Yet another competition for the possession of the west coasts of America, was Russia. For half a century she was content with holding the coast north of the 55th parallel; but having been very successful in the fur trade, she attempted, in 1810, to drive American commerce from the North Pacific, affecting to claim the whole coast from Behring's Strait to the Columbia river.

Upon the establishment of diplomatic relations between Russia and the United States, and after the acquisition of Louisiana by the United States government, Russia intimated to its minister, John Quincy Adams, she intended to assert this claim; but Mr. Adams signifying that his government would not overlook the wholesale "jumping" of its claims, acquired both by discovery, and by the recent purchase from France of its territory acquired from Spain, and known as the Louisiana territory, the subject was dropped not to be again brought up in that manner.

But though Spain and Russia ceased to be troublesome as claimants on the northwest coasts of America, Great Britain through her powerful fur companies continued to dispute possession with the United States for another half century. It was a race between those two kindred nations for the country west of the Rocky mountains; how it ended, we all know; but how it was conducted it is our purpose to consider in the following chapter.

#### SCHOOLS OF IDAHO TERRITORY.

Idaho is a new country, full of enterprise, and much interest is paid in promoting the cause of education. School districts are being organized in all parts of the territory, and school houses are being built, and many schools are now in session. Last May Thorn Creek had but thirteen scholars enrolled on the census roll; it now numbers thirty-two, and we have a good school in operation, though we have no school house as yet, but occupy a private house at present. The coming spring we intend to build a house, 18x26, as part of the money is now ready for use. Other districts are taking similar interest in building and preparing to educate the youth. I would say to my fellow teachers who may read this article, that there is a good chance yet in this part of the country to get Government land, and one can spend his time profitably teaching school and at the same time hold and improve his farm. Wages are from \$30 to \$50 per month. There is no time to spare if you desire a farm, as immigration is immense.

Yours, etc.,

G. M. NICHOLS.  
THORN CREEK, Nez Perce  
county, I. T.

WAITSBURG AND DAYTON.—A correspondent of the *Willamette Farmer*, writes as follows:

"We came to the Touchet at Waitsburg. This is a lively little place and has enough good country tributary to it, to reward the enterprise that is displayed by the business men of the place. Along the little river are to be seen some good farms, but the wealth that is building up Waitsburg and makes Dayton, twelve miles above, a town of no little importance, is back toward the Blue Mountains. This rich and well watered section is thickly settled and produces an immense quantity of grain."

#### DESIRABLE HOMES.

Immigrants in search of homes would do well to take a look at the country situated in and about the great bend of the Snake river, where thousands of acres of rich rolling prairie lands yet lie vacant. The town of Pomeroy, centrally located, has a good flouring mill, thus affording a home market for grain. The settlers in this section have nearly all located here within the past year, are very hospitable, and will do all in their power to assist newcomers in obtaining desirable locations.

Those afflicted with neuralgia will find relief in the following: Prepare horse-radish, by grating and mixing in vinegar, the same as for table purposes, and apply to the temple when the face or head is affected, or the wrist, when the pain is in the arm or shoulder.