

THE WEST SHORE.

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THE RIVER OF THE WEST.



ABOUT the history of the great Columbia clings a flavor of romance and adventure, which when tasted by those who sail upon the river's bosom, adds a new charm to the enchantments of its scenery. For two centuries the Columbia was a mythical stream, or rather

the United States army followed it from its source in the Rocky mountains to where it loses itself in the boundless expanse of the Pacific.

The first intimation of the existence of such a stream came through Spanish sources, early in the seventeenth century. After conquering Mexico and Peru and gaining a foothold in the Indies, at Manila, the Spaniards turned their attention to the exploration and settlement of the northern coast. Numerous expeditions were sent out, but because of poor navigators, unsuitable equipments and the ravages of scurvy, that dread scourge of the seas in those days of daring explorations in unknown waters, little was accomplished for many years. In 1603, Ensign Martin de Aguilar, in command of a small *fragata* which had been the consort of a larger vessel, the *Capitana*, under command of Sebastian Viscaino, became separated from his superior, in a storm, and while the latter turned about and made his way back to Mexico, continued the northern voyage. On the nineteenth of January, in latitude forty-three degrees, he passed a point which he named Cape Blanco, a name still retained on our maps, and the first ever given to any portion of

a shadowy reality, whose exact location could not be discovered, and which could not be sufficiently resolved from tradition and romance to assume tangible form and being. In the minds of geographers and explorers, it occupied a place second only to that held by the supposititious Northwest passage, and was sought with a zeal rivaling the long quest for the fabulous Straits of Anian. By land and by sea was it sought, until, finally, when the explorers of England, Spain and France had failed to find it, a Yankee trader discovered the entrance, and, a few years later, two captains of