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Hall Jackson Kelley

Prophet of Oregon

By

FRED WILBUR POWELL

This strange, eccentric man can almost be called the prophet of Oregon, the father of migration to Oregon, the man who hastened the fulfillment of Oregon's destiny.—*Harvey W. Scott*

Reprinted from Oregon Historical Quarterly
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Portland, Oregon
The Ivy Press
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1790 - 1874

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Among a people prone to extremes the character of the individual rarely receives its deserts. For this hero the laurel wreath is made so big as to slip over one of his ears and hang by the other; then we laugh at him. For that hero there is no laurel wreath at all. And it is only to the great dead that we are steady in esteem. To spoil by a very insanity of hero-worship; to embitter by the most ignorant and callous neglect; in these extremes is contained the whole critical faculty of the cleverest, the most chivalrous, the kindest, and the most thoughtless people in the world.—*Gouverneur Morris*.

If a man does not keep pace with his companions perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music that he hears, however measured or far away.—*Thoreau*.

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PREFACE

In this monograph is presented the life story of Hall Jackson Kelley, a Boston school master who about 1817 became interested in Oregon, and from 1824 to 1844 was active in the movement for its settlement by American citizens. It tells of his success and of his failures, and of the service which justly entitles him to be known as the "prophet of Oregon."

So far as possible the narrative is given in Kelley's own words, but all available materials have been used which in any way supplement or amend his writings. At the most our information is fragmentary and unsatisfactory on many points; but as Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge has said, "We can only deal with what we have, and from what we possess must infer the rest, for that alone is permitted to us. The inference thus drawn is history." Not that inferential judgments have been formed where investigation might have disclosed the fact. The search for facts has been pursued for ten years through a score of libraries in all parts of the country, with the results which appear in the pages that follow.

To those who, in common with Mr. Lodge, require that history be "informed by imagination and presented with the finest skill of which literature is capable," this contribution may have little appeal. It is intended for those whose interest lies within the field of the great westward movement in American history and the history of the Northwest Coast. Surely a record of fact is desirable concerning a man who has been mentioned so often and yet so seldom with accuracy.

F. W. P.

Glen Ridge, N. J.

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Hall Jackson Kelly

Prophet of Oregon

CHAPTER ONE

YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

Any statement as to Kelley's early life must be pieced together from fragments now at hand over forty years after his death as a worn-out old man. That he was born at Northwood, New Hampshire, February 24, 1790, is set forth by the town records. He was a descendant of John Kelley, one of the settlers of Newbury, Massachusetts. His grandfather was Samuel Kelley of Salem, and his father was Benjamin Kelley, a native of Salem and a physician who practiced in the New Hampshire towns of Northwood, Loudon, and Gilmanton. His mother was Mary ("Polly") Gile of Nottingham.

Kelley was a boy of ten when his family went to Gilmanton after four years' residence in Loudon. He attended Gilmanton academy, and at the age of sixteen taught school at Hallowell, Maine.¹ In 1813 he graduated from Middlebury college, Vermont, with the degree of A.B.² From his own words it is possible to picture the sort of boy he was.

"Blessed with intelligent and pious parents, who led me in early youth to fear God, I came into active life *serious minded*; and much inclined to consider my ways, and to seek to know what could make me useful and happy. Before the years of manhood, I resolved on a fearless obedience to the divine commands . . .³ Pious, maternal instructions, in early youth

¹ Lancaster, *Hist. of Gilmanton*, 229, 250, 274; Cogswell, *Hist. of Nottingham, Deerfield and Northwood*, 584; Temple, *Hist. of the Town of Palmer*, 265.

² The nature of his college environment is indicated by the fact that thirteen out of twenty-nine members of his class entered the ministry.

³ Kelley, *Hist. of the Settlement of Oregon*, 6.

much inclined me to lead an active and useful life . . .⁴
It was a mother who taught me never to take the name of God in vain—never to be guilty of the sin of insulting the Almighty with the breath he gives. She impressed my mind with a profound and pious reverence for Jehovah, and with a high and solemn veneration for the institutions of Christianity; and so impressed it with the love of truth, that not a single doubt, as to the divine authenticity of the Scriptures, ever profaned the sanctuary of my heart. Her instructions and examples inclined me to be diligent and persevering in business, and faithful and patient in the discharge of duties; to be hospitable and merciful,—when enemies hunger and thirst, to feed them, and give them drink; and to bless them that persecute . . .

“Early in youth I acquired a fondness for reading. The post came along once a week and left at my father’s house the newspaper. Besides accounts of events, accidents and remarkable occurrences, it contained bulletins concerning the terrible wars then raging in Europe, and thrilling accounts of Bonaparte’s invading and devastating armies. They were new to me, and I read with an intense desire to know about them. . . . I read them, and was led to read books and papers of every kind as they came to hand. They were calculated to inspire ambition and to interest my feelings. . . . I did not then, so early in youth, understand the distinctions proper to be made as to the conductors in those wars. But afterwards, in riper years, reading, hearing and observations enabled me better to comprehend the meaning of what was read, and better to discriminate between lovers of their country and philanthropists, and traitors and misanthropes. Hence, was my fondness for reading and itching ears for news. At once I left my juvenile plays and sports, and turned to books and papers. I read at times through the day, and more than once through the night. When taking up a book, treating on some subject I would wish to comprehend.

⁴ Kelley, *Hist. of the Colonization of Oregon*, 5.

it was not laid down until I understood all its pages could inform me. 'Neil's History of the Indians of New England,' the first ever published, and other histories of that benighted and oppressed people were read. While preparing for college I have more than once studied my Virgil lessons by moonlight; in this way, often times I overstrained the optic nerves, the stress so often brought upon them caused near-sightedness and to be slow of apprehension. . . .

"At the age of fourteen I first experienced a difficulty in utterance. For one or two years I suffered an impediment in my speech; in the presence of superiors was unable readily to begin utterance. About the time of entering college I discovered myself to be 'slow of speech' (of apprehension). . . ."⁵

Earnest, introspective, and diffident, he was also religious to the degree of fanaticism. "In my youth the Lord Jesus revealed to me in visions the lonely, laborious and eventful life I was to live; and gave at the time of the visions, and afterwards, *unmistakable signs* that the revelations were by Him."⁶ In practical matters, however, he showed early in life a disposition to get at the truth through actual experiment. Thus he said:

"A year or two prior to my entering college, much was said in the papers in regard to a *perpetual motion*. I went into a workshop determined on knowing the reality of such a motion, spent several days in an attempt to find out the truth about it. After several days of study and mechanical labor, I was enabled to demonstrate its impossibility. . . ."⁷

Of his college life little is known except that he enjoyed the respect of his fellow students as a young man who could be relied upon to meet the problems which presented themselves.

"When 'in college,' my class was put to the study of astronomy. For the purpose of illustrating, I constructed an Orrery—a machine showing the pathways of the moon round

⁵ *Settlement of Oregon*, 6, 13-4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

the earth, and the earth round the sun. Lead pencils fixed to the axes of those bodies, and the machine put in motion, their orbits were exactly delineated on paper. It was similar to a figure on one of the plates of Ferguson's Astronomy. My class-mates thought me to have some inventive power and mechanical ingenuity. In my Junior year, a Senior, whose class had been required to calculate and project a certain eclipse of the sun, which would happen far in the future, came to me, saying, if he could be furnished within twenty-four hours, with an accurate projection of that eclipse, he would give me \$5.00. I promptly complied with his request, and the money was promptly paid, and was very acceptable, being, as I was at the time, in needy circumstances."⁸

Kelley sought his opportunity in Boston, where he again became a school teacher.⁹ On May 4, 1815, he married Mary Baldwin, a daughter of Rev. T. Baldwin, D.D.¹⁰ On the records of the school committee of Boston Kelley's name first appears as master of the West reading school, a position to which he was appointed on September 29, 1818, after several weeks' service as a substitute during the last illness of his predecessor. On June 17, 1820, Kelley was appointed master of the Hawkins Street grammar school, and on March 20, 1821 he became reading and grammar master of the Mayhew school. Here, it appears, he became involved in "difficulties" with the usher, whose dismissal was recommended by the sub-committee of the Mayhew school. Further inquiry was made into the matter by a special committee headed by the mayor, Josiah Quincy, with the result that on July 18, 1823, the secretary was directed to inform Kelley that the school committee would dispense with his services, but that his salary would be continued through the quarter.

As to the results of his educational activities, he claimed, "I improved the system of common school education in my adopted

⁸ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 51-2.

¹⁰ Middlebury College, *General Catalogue, 1800-1900*, 46; Temple, 265.

State. The Black Board and the Monitorial Desk were first introduced into the schools of Boston by me. The late distinguished Joseph Lancaster was the first to use them."¹¹ Now that the blackboard has fallen into disfavor and the Lancasterian monitorial system has been long since abandoned by educators, no one is likely to dispute the claim. He also interested himself in the subject of industrial education. "I attempted the founding of an institution, to be called, '*Massachusetts Mechanical and Agricultural College.*' The subject was two years before the legislature. The Committee on Education said to me, that if I would raise a fund of \$10,000, the State would give \$10,000 more. A munificent individual of Charlestown proposed to subscribe \$2,000; myself would give a portion of my estate in the town."¹² The project was abandoned; but Kelley expressed satisfaction that "his zealous efforts . . . excited in others of abler talents, correspondent intentions and labors, which resulted, in some small benefit, to our literary institutions."¹³ However active he may have been in promoting this movement, he was not its originator; nor does his name appear in any of the published documents relating to the matter.¹⁴

Kelley's interest in the welfare of youth also prompted him to take an active part in the organization of the Boston Young Men's Education Society, of which he was the first secretary, and in the founding of the Penitent Females' Refuge, which was organized in 1821 and incorporated in 1823.¹⁵ His strong

¹¹ *Settlement of Oregon*, 8-9.

¹² *Ibid.*, 4.

¹³ Kelley, *Geographical Sketch of Oregon*, 5.

¹⁴ In 1825 the legislature received a memorial from the town of Stockbridge praying for the endowment of "an institution best calculated to afford instruction to laborious classes in practical arts and sciences." A brief report was made by a committee of the house of representatives within the year, and a joint committee was appointed to "prepare and digest a system" for such an institution.—*Mass. Resolves*, 1825, c. 88. This committee presented two reports in 1826 and a third in 1827 and also a bill "To establish the Mass. Seminary of Arts and Sciences." This bill provided for an appropriation of \$20,000, not \$10,000 as stated by Kelley, the grant being contingent upon the raising of \$10,000 by subscriptions and donations.—*Governor's Messages in Mass. Resolves*, VI, 381, 579; also *H. Doc.* 5 and *S. Doc.* 23 of 2 sess. 1826-7. While this matter was under discussion, the legislature was also considering the needs of the elementary schools, the result being a revised education law, passed in 1827. It was undoubtedly this act that Kelley had in mind when referring to the results of the labors of "others of abler talents."

¹⁵ *Settlement of Oregon*, 74.

religious bent naturally led him to attempt to promote the systematic study of the Bible. "The first Sunday School in Boston and perhaps New England was organized by me with the assistance of the late Rev. Daniel Chessman. In 1820, or the year following, I prepared for the use of the Sunday Schools in Boston, a small book called Sunday School Instructor."¹⁶

As a writer of elementary school books, Kelley met with considerable favor, if we are to judge by the number and variety of editions. First came *The Instructor's First Book*.¹⁷ Diligent search has failed to bring to light a single copy of this work, and its date of publication is unknown. It was doubtless the same as the *First Spelling Book, Or Child's Instructor*, the eighth edition of which was published in 1827. In 1825 appeared *The American Instructor, Second Book*, which according to the title page was "Designed for the common schools in America; containing the elements of the English language; lessons in orthography and reading, and the pronunciation of Walker's Critical Pronouncing Dictionary; all made easy by the arrangement and division of words, and an improved use of figures and letters." A second edition was published in 1826. A fifth edition, published in 1827, bore the title Kelley's *Second Spelling Book*. There was a further change of title in 1832, when *The Western Spelling Book* was published in Cincinnati.

The American Instructor contains selections for reading on geography, agriculture, architecture, mechanics, astronomy, and prosody, with special attention to Thomson's poetry. Its frontispiece shows Minerva, book in hand, directing two boys to the "temple of fame" on a nearby height; a globe, a compass, and

¹⁶ Kelley, Explanatory Remarks, Ms. attached to a copy of Kelley's *Second Spelling Book*, presented to the Amherst college library about 1869.

¹⁷ "In 1818 provision was made for the instruction of children from four to seven years of age. The primary schools established for this purpose seem to have originated in a general desire of our citizens to relieve the Sunday-schools from the great amount of secular instruction received there, which was fast crowding out the religious training that should be the object of such institutions."—Dillaway, *Education, in Winsor, Memorial Hist. of Boston*, IV, 245.

¹⁷ *Settlement of Oregon*, 9.

several books giving to the scene a scholarly setting. "Delightful task to rear the tender thought;" so runs the legend. This, of course, was Kelley's only by adoption. It was typical of that generation of school masters who forced our grandmothers, while in their 'teens, to read and appreciate such ponderous books as Watts' Improvement of the Mind; and—it helps us to understand Kelley.¹⁸

According to the minutes of the meeting of the corporation of Middlebury college held on August 16, 1820, Kelley was "admitted to the degree of Master of Arts." This was not an "honorary" degree, as we now understand the term, for according to the president of the college, "as it was quite customary at that period to confer that degree upon any graduate of more than three years' standing who applied for it, it could not be regarded as a distinguished honor." Within the year Harvard also conferred the same degree *ad eundem gradum*.¹⁹

Kelley was twice married. His second wife was Mary Perry, adopted daughter of T. D. Bradlee of Boston, to whom he was married on April 17, 1822 at Boston. They had three sons, Benjamin, John S., and Charles H. His first wife also left a son, Thomas B.²⁰

After his second marriage, and probably after his dismissal from the Boston schools, Kelley took up his residence in Charlestown. Many years later, he gave a description of his property in Charlestown and Boston. There was an "estate in Milk Row, Charlestown," and four other "estates." "One comprised twelve acres of land; and is situate near Craigie's Point, Charlestown. . . . The other three consisted of houses and lands, situate in Boston, where at this time [1854] are the Lowell, the Eastern and the Western railroad depots.

¹⁸ "Perhaps no spelling book while this was extant, and its author was about in the land looking to its interest, had a wider circulation and was more popular; and perhaps there was no book of the kind more perfect in orthography and method of showing the true vowel sound and correct pronunciations. Walker's orthography as far as it regards words ending with *lick* and *our* is now an objection to its use—tuet of Webster now being generally adopted in the schools."—Kelley, Explanatory Remarks, Ms.

¹⁹ Harvard University, *Quinquennial Catalogue*, 1915: 817.

²⁰ Middlebury College, *General Catalogue*, 1800-1900: 46; Temple, 265.

. . . They had been purchased in anticipation of improvements which it was supposed would much enhance their value."²¹ This is evidence that early in life Kelley possessed a certain amount of business enterprise. His subsequent business ventures were of quite another sort.

We do not know when Kelley took up the work of a surveyor. We do know that he was interested in higher mathematics, and he tells us that as early as 1815 he had conceived what he considered an improved system of geographical and topographical surveying. After declaring that the system in general use was unsatisfactory in both theory and practice, he said:

"The system which I propose scarcely admits of an error. It points out an easy and correct mode of running the lines required in the survey. My method has many advantages over that now in practice.

"The numerous errors of the compass are entirely avoided. The interests of the land proprietor are better promoted, and the wide door so much open for litigation, which often costs him his freehold, is effectually closed. It is the only simple method by which right lines, having a given course, can be run with precision. It is attended with as much certainty as the high operation of trigonometrical surveys."²² His nearest approach to a definite description of his system appeared in the Manual of the Oregon Expedition, or General Circular, in which he set forth the manner in which divisions of lands should be made in Oregon.

"All boundaries of towns, and lots of land, will be identified with meridian lines, and parallels of latitude,—not by the parallels as found on the surface of the earth, where they are crooked, as the hills and depressions make them uneven; but by such, as they would be, provided the surface was smooth. . . . It is, however, true, that the divisions of land, as they lay south of each other, increase in quantity, in proportion to

²¹ Kelley, *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 6.

²² *Settlement of Oregon*, 11.

the divergence of the meridian lines; nevertheless their boundaries will be distinctly marked, and their contents exactly known. A country thus surveyed, gives the advantage of ascertaining, without admeasurement, the relative position or distance of any one place from another, consequently the latitude and longitude of the metropolis being determined, those of any other place are known."²³

Confident that the principle he advocated would be of great public utility if generally adopted and practiced, he presented his system to the national government in the form of a petition to congress on April 10, 1830.²⁴

It was as a surveyor that Kelley in 1828 became interested in the affairs of the Three Rivers Manufacturing company, which had been incorporated in 1826 to build and operate a textile mill in the village of Three Rivers in the town of Palmer, Massachusetts. This village, which was then but a hamlet, lies at the point where the combined waters of the Ware and Swift rivers join the Quaboag and form the Chicopee, which is one of the branches of the Connecticut. The company had met with unexpected difficulties in digging a canal, for its engineers were unable to make much progress on account of the solid granite rock near the dam which they had built. Kelley put his money as well as his efforts into the project. He made surveys and prepared a comprehensive plan, including the manufacturing plant, the water power, and the village itself. One of his hobbies was straight streets and rectangular blocks (a natural reaction in a Boston engineer),

²³ Kelley, *General Circular*, 13.

²⁴ "The [senate] committee [on naval affairs] to which the subject was referred, for a good and obvious reason, gave the investigation of the subject to General [Simon] Bernard, then at the head of the corps of civil engineers.

"This profound mathematician carefully examined the papers and the formula I had prepared for their illustration, reported an opinion highly creditable to his own talent, liberally estimating the talents of the memorialist. Notwithstanding the system was recommended as being worthy of public adoption, yet nothing was done to bring it into practice. President Jackson promised to adopt it, whenever a *book*, giving directions for its practice and a proper apparatus, should be prepared. I had described minutely the *apparatus* and the manner of using it, and had begun the *table of deflections* necessary for the book, and this was all my Oregon enterprise afforded me time to do. The tables might require for their preparation one or two years of assiduous attention of some learned mathematician."—*Settlement of Oregon*, 10-1; 21 cong. 1 sess. S. jour., 236, 275.

but the position of the rivers and the configuration of the land fortunately limited his efforts in that direction. True to his New England inheritance, he reserved land for a small common in the center of the village.

The company soon became bankrupt, however, and Kelley lost heavily. At the sale of the company's property, he purchased some land, having become enthusiastic about the ultimate prosperity of the village; and early in 1829 he brought his family from Charlestown and established his home there.²⁵

Kelley was now in his fortieth year; yet in the record of his life as here set forth, there is little that would seem to bear out his early vision of a "lonely, laborious and eventful life." It is a workaday record of a school master and a man of small affairs. We have now to consider the man of dreams—and his all-possessing dream of the settlement of Oregon.

²⁵ *Settlement of Oregon*, 23; Temple, 262-3; Allen, *The Town of Palmer*, in Copeland, *Hist. of Hampden County*, II, 144. Temple is authority for the statement that Kelley projected a canal from Three Rivers to the Connecticut river for the transportation of the supplies and goods of the mill and village. This plan was not new, however. The citizens of Brookfield, at a public meeting held on May 23, 1825, had proposed the construction of a canal to Springfield, via the Quaboag and Chicopee rivers.—*Springfield Republican*, June 1, 1825. The canal-building spirit was at its height in Massachusetts in the twenties.

CHAPTER TWO

YEARS OF AGITATION

The Biddle version of the journals of Lewis and Clark was published in 1814.¹ On December 24, 1814, the War of 1812 between Great Britain and the United States was terminated by the Treaty of Ghent, which provided that "All territory, places, and possessions whatsoever, taken by either party from the other during the war . . . shall be restored without delay," and ratifications were exchanged early in 1815. At the end of the war, Astoria, John Jacob Astor's trading station and fort at the mouth of the Columbia river, was held by the British, by whom it had been renamed "Fort George." Under the terms of the treaty the United States announced its intention of asserting sovereignty over this fort and the region of the Columbia, but no response came from Great Britain. Accordingly a sloop of war was dispatched in September, 1817 to take possession. This action compelled the British to declare themselves, which they did by asserting a claim to the territory upon the ground that it had been "early taken possession of in his majesty's name, and had been since considered as forming part of his majesty's dominions."

These events served to arouse great interest in the Pacific Northwest. It was only natural, therefore, that Hall Jackson Kelley should have sought out the Lewis and Clark journals and read with avidity all that they had to tell of the far-off land. Here was a young man with boundless enthusiasm and ambition, and with energy which refused to be confined. Fate had placed him in Boston, the home port of Captain John Kendrick, Captain Robert Gray, and the *Winships*. There were men in Boston who could tell of their voyages and of

¹ *The History of the Expedition Under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark, to the sources of the Missouri, thence across the Rocky mountains and down the River Columbia to the Pacific ocean.* Philadelphia, 1814. 2 v.

the nature of the disputed lands. Such an opportunity was not to be neglected. To Kelley it meant an objective which dwarfed all other interests and governed his thoughts and movements throughout the rest of his long life. Of his awakening, or "vision" as he termed it, he said:

"In the year 1817 'the word came expressly to me' to go and labor in the fields of philanthropic enterprise and promote the propagation of Christianity in the dark and cruel places about the shores of the Pacific. . . .² The perusal of Lewis and Clark's journal, personal conference with intelligent navigators and hunters who had visited and explored the territory beyond the Rocky mountains, and facts derived from other sources entitled to credit . . . satisfied me that this region must, at no remote period, become of vast importance to our Government, and of deep and general interest. . . . I foresaw that Oregon must, eventually, become a favorite field of modern enterprise, and the abode of civilization."³

In another place, writing in the third person, he declared:

"He then conceived the plan of its colonization, and the founding of a new republic of civil and religious freedom, on the shores of the Pacific Ocean . . . and without conferring with flesh and blood, and in despite of entreaties of prudent, worldly-wise friends, he resolved on the devotion of his life in the realization of his plans, hoping to do something worthy the sacrifice, by planting, in the genial soil of those regions, the vine of Christianity and the germ of Civil Freedom."⁴

His plans developed slowly, however, for he needed first to inform himself as to the nature of the Oregon country; its climate, its soil, its natural products, and its native inhabitants. The possibilities of trade with the Atlantic states,

² Kelley, *Hist. of the Settlement of Oregon*, 124; see also Kelley, *Petition*, 1866: 1. Kelley himself was uncertain as to the exact date of the conception of his colonization idea. In an earlier statement he said it was "about the year 1818."—Kelley, Memorial, 1844, in *Palmer Sentinel*, December 10, 1846.

³ Kelley, Memoir, in Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Territory of Oregon*, supplemental report, 47, 25 cong. 3 sess. II, rep. 101.

⁴ *Petition*, 1866: 1.

with Mexico and South America, and with the Asiatic peoples demanded investigation, and the possibility of a practicable route overland invited attention. No less important was the question of title to the territory itself. Besides, there was the immediate, personal matter of a livelihood. As we have seen, Kelley became a master in the Boston public schools in 1818 and continued in that employment until 1823, when he left it not at his own desire. The prudent man when he finds himself out of one position, looks for another; not so Kelley, who now took up the matter of Oregon to the practical exclusion of lesser interests.

Meanwhile, events had been shaping themselves in such a manner as to emphasize the need for action. In 1818 by the joint-occupation treaty it was agreed that the disputed territory west of the Rocky mountains should be "free and open for the term of ten years" thereafter; thus leaving the question of title unsettled while putting a premium upon early occupation. By the Florida treaty, Spain in 1819 ceded to the United States all claims to the Northwest country. Russia, however, in 1821 asserted a claim to lands in that territory as far south as the fifty-first parallel. Within the year, by act of parliament, the North-West company was merged with its great rival, the Hudson's Bay company, thus strengthening and consolidating British interests in that region. Already, December 19, 1820, the expediency of occupying the Columbia river had been brought to the attention of the house of representatives by John Floyd of Virginia, and a committee had been appointed to inquire into the situation, but "more through courtesy to a respected member, than with any view to business results";⁵ and the attitude of the succeeding congress was no more favorable to positive action.

We have no means of knowing as to how familiar Kelley was with contemporaneous developments on the Columbia, or even with the proceedings of congress, but we may safely assume that he knew of Floyd's activity and of the disposition

⁵ Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, I, 13.

of the national government to defer official action. To assume less would be to deny to Kelley that marked propensity for getting information which so distinguished him in all cases of which we have knowledge.

"In the year 1824," he tells us, "I announced to the world my intention to settle Oregon, and to propagate in regions beyond the Rocky mountains, Christianity."⁶ In the same year Russia formally abandoned all claims to territory on the American continent south of 54 degrees 40 minutes, thus removing another obstacle in the way of American occupation. Yet Kelley's first memorial to congress was not introduced until February 11, 1828. His name was first mentioned in the deliberations upon the Floyd bill on December 24, 1828, and then it was obscured through the reporter's error. It is necessary, therefore, to consider in some detail the activities of those persons, who like Kelley, but independently of him, sought to influence congress to act, particularly those who signified their desire to establish permanent settlements in the Oregon country.

Most prominent among those who interested themselves in the Oregon question was that champion of the West, Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri. Although a practicing lawyer, Benton edited the *St. Louis Enquirer*, perhaps as early as 1815, and used its editorial columns as a means of promoting Western interests and his own political advancement. Some of his articles he reprinted in 1844 in a booklet bearing the title, *Selections of Editorial Articles from The St. Louis Enquirer On the Subject of Oregon and Texas As Originally Published in that Paper in the Years 1818-19 and Written by the Hon. Thomas H. Benton*. According to the preface these articles were reprinted to arouse interest in the Oregon question at the State Democratic convention soon to be held, and to call attention to the "statesman-like foresight which those who now read them, for the first time, will duly appreciate." When a politician assumes to present historical materials tending to

⁶ *Settlement of Oregon*, 20. This was also the year in which Dr. John McLoughlin was commissioned Chief factor of the Hudson's Bay company in the territory west of the Rocky mountains.

show his "statesman-like foresight," the historian must exercise all possible caution. When that politician is Benton, the need for caution is imperative, for in him were combined the qualities of unquestioned personal integrity and of equally unquestioned political agility. So this booklet with its selections bearing no dates more specific than those on the title page, could hardly be accepted in the absence of supporting evidence.

Fortunately, we have such evidence and of a conclusive character. There is nowhere a complete file of the *St. Louis Enquirer*, but from the numbers available it is possible to identify one of the selections.⁷ Furthermore, if such evidence were lacking, it would be possible to prove that as early as 1819 Benton's newspaper was giving space to the discussion of the settlement of Oregon. In the *Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot* of June 9, 1819, appeared an article "from the *St. Louis Enquirer*" under the head, "The Columbia River." This article is reproduced in part below :

"The project of some citizens of Virginia to settle on the Columbia, revives the idea of a town or colony on that river.

"Mr. John Jacob Astor of New York, made an establishment at its mouth just before the commencement of the last war, which was broken up soon after by British and Indian hostility.

"The Virginians contemplate an establishment on the navigable waters of the Columbia, but we should think that the place of its junction with the Multnomah would furnish the most eligible.—These rivers unite their streams, in tide water, one hundred and twenty miles from the Pacific Ocean, and a short distance below the range of mountains. From thence to Asia the navigation would be easy and direct, the distance not great, and the sea so peacable, as its name indicates, that no more mariners would be wanting to conduct a ship, than hands enough to set her sails at the outset of the voyage, and take them down at its termination. To the same point also (the

⁷ The editorial, "Treaty of 1818—Columbia River" (Selections, 8-9) appeared in the *St. Louis Enquirer* of March 17, 1819. The *Enquirer* on January 6, 1821, reprinted an article "from the *Western Spy*" on "Commerce with Asia," which declared "A series of essays on this subject was published in the *St. Louis Enquirer*."

confluence of the rivers) would come the commerce, at present chiefly drained by the Multnomah and the Columbia; a region embracing fourteen degrees of longitude, and sixteen or eighteen of latitude, larger than all the Atlantic states put together, and possessing a climate as mild as that of Europe. An establishment formed at that place would doubtless receive many immigrants from Asia. . . .

“Whatever may be the result of the Virginia company, the progress of the fur trade itself, will form a town at the point indicated. Its trade may at first be limited to furs; but in process of time it will become the emporium of that rich East India commerce which is destined to find its way into the valley of the Mississippi; by the Columbia and Missouri rivers. And when this time arrives, a new Tyre will be seen in the west, of which the old, and although ‘queen of cities,’ will have furnished but a faint image of power and splendor.”

While this article does not appear among the Selections, the subject matter is the same and the style is the same. Both may be traced to a common source in the chapter on “View of the Country on the Columbia,” in Brackenridge’s *Views of Louisiana*, from which Benton quoted with credit in the Selections.⁸ Thus he quoted from Brackenridge the following paragraph:

“The route taken by Lewis and Clarke across the mountains, was perhaps the very worst that could have been selected. Mr. Henry, a member of the Missouri company, and his hunters, have discovered several passes, not only very practicable, but even in their present state, less difficult than those of the Allegany [sic] mountains. These are considerably south of the source of the Jefferson river. It is the opinion of the gentleman last mentioned, that loaded horses, or even wagons, might in its present state, go in the course of six or eight days, from a navigable point on the Columbia, to one on the waters

⁸ Henry Marie Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana*; together with a journal of a voyage up the Missouri river in 1811. Pittsburgh, 1814; 304 pp. Thus, Benton said: “Look to the map. See the Arkansas, the Platte, and the Yellow Stone, all issuing together from the Rocky Mountains in the neighborhood of the sources of the Buena Ventura and the Multnomah [Snake], which issue from the opposite side; the mountains between no more than gentle swells, over which loaded waggons may easily pass.”—P. 7.

of the Missouri.—Thus, rendering an intercourse with settlements which may be formed on the Columbia, more easy of access than between those on the heads of the Ohio, and the Atlantic States.”⁹

He quoted further from Brackenridge to emphasize that the soil in the vicinity of the Columbia is rich, the climate more temperate than in the same latitude in the United States, and the natives very numerous (although he omitted a sentence telling of the “almost continued fog, and drizzling showers of rain, which renders it extremely disagreeable near the sea”). From this he concluded: “This seems to indicate a capacity of supporting a dense population, practically exemplified by the number of inhabitants who live upon its spontaneous productions.”

He then proposed the establishment of a series of posts along the overland route from the Missouri to the Columbia, thus opening “A channel to Asia, short, direct, safe, cheap, and exclusively American, which invites the enterprise of American citizens, and promises to them a splendid participation in the commerce of the East. . . . Nothing is wanting, but a second Daniel Boone to lead the way, and thousands of ardent spirits would immediately flock to develop its vast means of agriculture and commerce, and to open a direct trade between Asia and America. . . . With the aid of the American government, the trade upon this route would immediately begin. That aid is not required in money, but in government protection; in giving to an American fur company an act of incorporation, with leave to form a port of entry at the mouth of the Columbia, and to establish a chain of posts and trading stations from thence to the upper navigable waters of the Missouri river. With these aids the enterprising citizens of the West are now ready to commence this trade. In two years, they would have it in operation, and would begin a revolution in commerce which would check the drain of gold and silver from the United States, and revive upon the banks of the

⁹ Pp. 11-2; Brackenridge, 96.

Columbia and Missouri the wonders of Tyre and Palmyra, of Memphis and Ormus. Without that aid, and the same revolution will be eventually accomplished."¹⁰

While Benton was writing of the necessity of a transcontinental route to the Columbia river country, another man was developing the same idea. This man (perhaps the editor, John S. Skinner) in an anonymous article, which appeared in the July 9, 1819 number of the *American Farmer* of Baltimore, proposed "The Bactrian camel as a beast of burthen for cultivators, and for transportation across the continent, to the Pacific ocean." Under this head he presented a glowing picture of the possibilities of the Northwest, its fertile soil, its great quantities of excellent timber, its productive fisheries, and its salubrious climate as indicated by its numerous and robust population of Indians. He continued:

"Settlements, will, no doubt, very soon grow up, and spread along the shores of the Columbia river with astonishing rapidity;—and the young athletic powers of our government will, ere long, launch into its waters a fleet to move along the coasts of the Pacific, and take under its protection the commerce, which the enterprise of our citizens will soon create and extend over those seas, to an incalculable amount. . . . To enable the government to wield its potent energies with effect, and to give to the American people the means of exerting their enterprising commercial spirit to the greatest advantage, and to enable them to make due profit from the great resources of their country, it has become necessary, that a short, direct, and certain means of communication should be established into every quarter, to the most remote point, and particularly over the continent to the Pacific Ocean.

"Steam Boats have effected much; our improvements and facilities of intercourse, in that way, have justly attracted the admiration of the civilized world; but there are physical difficulties and obstacles which that masterly invention can neither surmount nor remove, with all its skill and power. . . .

¹⁰ Pp. 12, 18, 22-3, 27. See also Brackenridge, 96-7, as to the practicability of an overland route as a means of developing the trade with the East Indies.

Therefore, whatever advantage may be derived from steam boat transportation of heavy articles, by the way of the Missouri, into the interior, it must certainly be abandoned as the mail route to the coast of the Pacific, and, also, I am inclined to believe, as the route for the transportation of any article across the continent, farther than the Yellow Stone River. . . .” He therefore proposed the establishment of communications by the most direct route and the use of the Bactrian camel, whose good qualities he proceeded to set forth at great length, and concluded with the question, “Why not add the majestic, long lived, placid, and valuable *Bactrian Camel* to the number of the auxiliary laborers & carriers for the active citizens of the nation?”¹¹

This question was answered by Robert Mills, in a Treatise on Inland Navigation, published in Baltimore in 1820, in which he proposed the application of steam as the “moving power to carriages, upon rail roads across the mountains” between the Yellowstone and the Columbia. In this book Mills followed the article in the *American Farmer* so closely as to suggest common authorship, were it not for his reference to a “late writer” in connection with an extensive quotation from that article.¹² This book went through two editions. Like the article upon which it was based, it served to spread abroad the idea that at our very doors lay an undeveloped territory of great possibilities, and that means should be devised to make it more accessible to emigrants.

When we come to inquire as to the source from which the unknown sponsor of the Bactrian camel obtained his information as to the Northwest, the name of Benton suggests itself. When we inquire as to the person responsible for arousing Floyd’s interest in that country, we find that again it was Benton.

At the opening of the second session of the sixteenth con-

¹¹ I, 113-5. The descriptive part of this article was reprinted in the *New England Palladium and Commercial Advertiser* of Boston, July 14, 1820.

¹² Pp. 53-9. See also Cleveland and Powell, *Railroad Promotion*, 259-64.

gress in December, 1820, Benton was in Washington as senator-elect from the new state of Missouri, awaiting formal admission to his seat. There he had quarters at Brown's hotel with Congressman Floyd, Ramsay Crooks of New York, and Russell Farnham of Massachusetts. Crooks and Farnham had been in the service of John Jacob Astor on the Northwest Coast. Floyd had already become interested in Western affairs during his early residence in Kentucky, and he had read the articles which Benton had published in the *St. Louis Enquirer*. These circumstances led to earnest conversations among the four men; and Floyd determined to bring the question of occupation to the attention of congress.¹³ He renewed his efforts in the following congress and continued his endeavors until 1829, when he became governor of Virginia. He died in 1837; and it does not appear that he was active in the movement after leaving congress.

On February 22, 1823, Peter Little of Maryland presented to the house "a memorial from eighty enterprising farmers and mechanics within his district, praying congress to pass the [Floyd] bill now on the clerk's table, for the occupation of the mouth of the Columbia river, intimating their wish to remove thither, for the improvement of that country, and of their own condition."¹⁴

Benton's first formal action in the matter was taken on January 10, 1825, when he reported to the senate the Floyd bill, which had already been passed by the house.¹⁵

Growing interest in the Oregon question is indicated by the proceedings of the twentieth congress. The terms of the joint-occupation agreement had been continued indefinitely in 1827, but made terminable upon a year's notice. On February 11, 1828, Floyd presented a "memorial of citizens of the United States, praying for a grant of land, and the aid of Government in forming a colony on the Northwest coast of the United

¹³ Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, I, 13; 16 cong. 2 sess. *Annals of Congress*, XXXV11, 679, 945-59; H. jour., 80, 171.

¹⁴ 17 cong. 2 sess., *Annals of Congress*, XL, 1077; H. jour., 250.

¹⁵ 18 cong. 2 sess. S. jour., 74.

States." The speaker, Andrew Stevenson of Virginia, also presented a similar memorial "from Alfred Townes of Kentucky."¹⁶ The memorial presented by Floyd declared that the "memorialists . . . are mostly engaged in agricultural and mechanical pursuits" and that "they for themselves, and three thousand others who will associate in solemn covenant with them" asked for a grant of land on the Oregon river between the forty-sixth and forty-ninth parallels of latitude and extending from the Pacific ocean to a longitudinal line one hundred miles from the mouth of the river.¹⁷

This memorial was the work of Kelley, as was explained by Edward Everett of Massachusetts during the following session on December 29, 1828. According to the record:

"His attention had been turned to the subject by the circumstance, that he had been called on by a constituent (at the head of an association which wished to emigrate to the region in question), to submit a memorial to congress, at the last session, which, in his own necessary absence, Mr. E. stated he had done, through the courtesy of the gentlemen from Virginia (Mr. Floyd). . . . His thoughts had been in this way directed to the subject and he confessed that he had formed a very favorable impression of the general nature of the proposed measure."¹⁸

On December 10, 1828, Henry H. Gurley of Louisiana presented "a petition of James M. Bradford, and twenty-four others, stating that they have associated together for the purpose of removing to, and permanently settling on, the waters of the Columbia or Oregon river, within the territorial limits of the United States, as a company to hunt, trap, and trade—praying for grants of land, and other encouragement."¹⁹

¹⁶ 20 cong. 1 sess. H. jour., 280.

¹⁷ *Settlement on the Oregon River*, 20 cong. 1 sess. H. doc. 139. 4 pp.

¹⁸ 20 cong. 2 sess. *Register of Debates*, V, 132. "As early as 1826, I began to communicate with members of Congress upon the subject of the settlement of Oregon; that year, I think, with the Hon. Timothy Fuller, member of the House [from Massachusetts], and with the Hon. Edward Everett in 1827."—*Settlement of Oregon*, 93. As Fuller's last term expired in March, 1825, Kelley was clearly in error; and if we are to accept his statement, which is unquestionably true as to Everett, we must give him credit for a year earlier than he claimed.

¹⁹ 20 cong. 2 sess. H. jour., 44.

The matter was taken up for discussion in the committee of the whole house on the state of the Union on December 23, 1828. Gurley proposed an amendment to the Floyd bill, providing for a grant of land forty miles square to Bradford's New Orleans company. Everett, however, "stated that, in that part of the country from which he came, there was an association of three thousand individuals, respectable farmers and artisans, who stood ready to embark in this enterprise, as soon as the permission and protection of the Government should be secured to them." He therefore raised the question whether an exclusive grant of land such as was proposed would be fair to other prospective settlers as enterprising and meritorious as those of the New Orleans company.

The obnoxious provision was therefore stricken out on the following day, and the amendment was further modified "by inserting the names of Paul and J. Kelley [sic], and his associates (a similar company from Massachusetts), and Albert Town [sic] and his associates, (a company from Ohio), as entitled to the permission granted by the bill."²⁰

Of Kelley's other activities during the years from 1824 to 1829, we know little. That he engaged in little if any remunerative employment is certain,²¹ though his engagement as a land surveyor by the Three Rivers Manufacturing company would suggest that he may have served others in like capacity. It would seem, however, that he neglected his personal affairs, and became involved in difficulties which threatened the loss of his property. These troubles he attributed to the efforts of the opponents of the settlement of Oregon.

"To accomplish their designs, and to prevent mine, and to make an end of my project, they raised an army in the city of Boston, and afterwards in '27, enlisted troops in the cities of New York and Washington, and in '29 raised a more bloody troop in the village of Three Rivers, to which place I had just moved my family. . . . As early as in the year '24 . . .

²⁰ 20 cong. 2 sess. *Register of Debates*, V, 126. See also p. 146.

²¹ Kelley, *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 7.

my adversaries first devised my hurt; and in the year '28, taking the advantage of the pecuniary embarrassments brought upon me by a heavy loss of property in the Three Rivers Manufacturing company, they planned to get from me my princely estate and comfortable home in Charlestown, Mass., believing that by so doing they would deprive me of the means which they supposed necessary for the accomplishment of the Oregon enterprise. . . .

"In the spring of '29, to be at a greater distance from adversaries who were coming daily to worry and impoverish me and to delay progress in my great and benevolent enterprise, I moved with my family to the village of Three Rivers . . . taking with me what household stuff the plunderers of my property had left."²²

These words of a half-crazed man, written long after the events which they suggest rather than describe, are at least sufficient as evidence that during those years he was active in the cause of Oregon settlement, so active in fact that he merged his personality in it and regarded all men who came into opposition to him as opponents not of him but of the idea which possessed him. Despite opposition, however, men were found who were willing to listen to him, and to lend their names and their influence in his behalf. These men in 1829 joined him in instituting the American Society for Encouraging the Settlement of the Oregon Territory. Individual agitation was now to be supplanted by organized propaganda. The "vision" was becoming more real and distinct.

²² *Settlement of Oregon*, 21, 23.

CHAPTER THREE

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY—PLANS AND PROPAGANDA

IN the course of the discussion of the Oregon question in congress and elsewhere, much was said of companies—Bradford's company, Kelley's company, Towne's company. Kelley, however, had no desire to become the leader of a mere band of adventurers, still less of a partnership for profit like Astor's. The name of his organization was carefully chosen. It was to be a "society" of American citizens who were interested in promoting his plan to secure the American title to Oregon by establishing a settlement in the valley of the Columbia.

At its organization in 1829, the American Society for Encouraging the Settlement of the Oregon Territory elected General John McNeil president, Washington P. Gregg treasurer, and Kelley general agent.¹ It was incorporated by special act of the Massachusetts legislature, approved June 22, 1831, McNeil and John L. Blake, D.D., being named as incorporators.² "This society was Hall J. Kelley. He was the body and brains, the fingers and tongue of it," said H. H. Bancroft,³ and the statement is true. The others were willing to "encourage"; Kelley was willing to sacrifice everything. The headquarters of the society was in Boston, and Kelley made frequent trips from Three Rivers to attend to its affairs. His duties were those of a publicity agent. When his domestic concerns admitted of his absence, he "traveled New England, everywhere lecturing on Oregon," but according to his own statement he was an indifferent public speaker, due to his extreme diffidence.⁴ His lecture tours could not have been very extensive, for his expenses on this account were but \$200.⁵

¹ Kelley, *Memorial*, 1848: 6-9. McNeil later became surveyor of the port of Boston, and Gregg, secretary of the common council of Boston.

² L. Mass. 1831, c. 63; XII, 132-4.

³ Bancroft, *Hist. of the Northwest Coast*, II, 545.

⁴ Kelley, *Hist. of the Settlement of Oregon*, 15, 24.

⁵ Kelley, *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 7.

Probably the opposition which he encountered on these tours, and of which he complained most bitterly, led him to direct his efforts to writing and to conferences with men of affairs and influence.

We have seen that he had convinced Edward Everett of the practicability of his plan as early as 1827. On January 25, 1830, upon motion of Everett, the petition of Kelley which had been presented to the house of representatives by Floyd on February 11, 1828, was referred to the committee on foreign affairs.⁶ On January 5, 1831, Benton presented to the senate a "memorial of the American Society for Encouraging the Settlement of the Oregon Country . . . praying that a military escort and transports, and convenient military posts, may be established for the encouragement and protection of emigration to that country," which was referred to the committee on military affairs.⁷

At the opening of the next congress Everett also presented to the house of representatives a memorial of the Society, "praying congress to aid them in carrying out the great purposes of their institution; to grant them troops, artillery, military arms, and munitions of war; to incorporate the society, with power to extinguish the Indian title to lands; and with such other powers, rights and immunities, as may be at least equal and concurrent to those given by Great Britain to the Hudson's Bay Company."⁸

This memorial appears in the Manual of the Oregon Expedition, or General Circular. As it sets forth in brief the contentions of the memorialists as to the right of sovereignty over the territory and the national advantages to result from its settlement, it is reproduced at length.

"They are convinced, that if that country should be settled under the auspices of the Government of the United States of America, from such of her worthy sons, who have drank of

6 21 cong. 1 sess. H. jour., 198.

7 21 cong. 2 sess. S. jour., 71.

8 22 cong. 1 sess. H. jour., 44

the spirit of those civil and religious institutions, which constitute the living fountain, and the very perennial source of her national prosperity, great benefits must result to mankind. They believe, that there, the skillful and persevering hand of industry might be employed with unparalleled advantage; that there, Science and the Arts, the invaluable privilege of a free and liberal government, and the refinements and ordinances of Christianity, diffusing each its blessing, would harmoniously unite in meliorating the moral condition of the Indians, in promoting the comfort and happiness of the settlers, and in augmenting the wealth and power of the Republic.

“The uniform testimony of an intelligent multitude have established the fact, that the country in question, is the most valuable of all the unoccupied parts of the earth. Its peculiar location and facilities, and physical resources for trade and commerce; its contiguous markets; its salubrity of climate; its fertility of soil; its rich and abundant productions; its extensive forests of valuable timber; and its great water channel diversifying, by its numerous branches the whole country, and spreading canals through every part of it, are sure indications that Providence has designed this last reach of enlightened emigration to be the residence of a people, whose singular advantages will give them unexampled power and prosperity.

“These things have excited the admiration of every observer, and have settled in the policy of the British nation the determined purpose of possessing and enjoying them, as their own; and have induced their Parliament to confer on the Hudson’s Bay Company, chartered privileges for occupying with their settlements the fertile banks of the Columbia; which settlements have been made; and are flourishing, in rapid growth, under the culture secured by the provisions of a Colonial Government.

“The Society conceive it clearly deduced, from all the facts in the case, that the right of sovereignty over the Oregon territory is invested in the government of the United States of America, consequently, in her is the exclusive right of

colonizing that country, and of introducing into it the various business and benefits of civilized life.

“The expense and labor necessary to the accomplishment of this work, planned by Providence, made easy by nature, and urged and encouraged by the persuasive motives of philanthropy, are in no degree, commensurate with the national blessings to be derived from it; among which are enumerated the following; viz.:

“The moral condition of the *Aborigines* . . . will be improved. . . . Their unjust and unequal alliances with *another nation* may be broken, and their friendship secured to *this*.

“By means, thus honorable, that valuable territory would be held from possession of an unfriendly power.

“Ports of Entry, and Ship and Navy Yards, might be established with great advantage, on the waters of Oregon, and thereby, the trade and commerce of both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans would become extended and enriched. Capitalists and Mariners might pursue, with more profit and safety, the whale and other fisheries in the Western Seas, and the salmon trade in the Columbia.

“A portion of the virtuous and enterprising but not least faithful population, whom misfortunes have thrown out of employment, and who throng our villages and sea-ports, and seek a better home,—might there find opportunities, under the paternal kindness of the government, to succeed to a happier condition, and to greater usefulness to themselves and to their country. . . .

“These are objects so obvious, so vast and valuable, as need not be urged . . . and seem necessarily embraced within the scope of a wise policy. They are yet deemed practicable. Another season—their possession will be thought expedient—but not so easily wrested from the grasp of British power.

“The Society view with alarm the progress, which the subjects of that nation have made, in the colonization of the Oregon Territory. Already, have they, flourishing towns, strong

fortifications, and cultivated farms. The domicile is made the abode of domestic comforts—the social circle is enlivened by the busy wife and the prattle and sport of children. In the convention of 1818, England secured for her subjects, the privileges of a free trade, that of buying furs of the Indians; but, at first, they practiced trapping and hunting; now, they practice buying and improving lands, and assiduously pursue the business of the farmer and mechanic. Their largest town is Vancouver, which is situated on a beautiful plain, in the region of tide water, on the northern bank of the Columbia. At this place, saw and grist mills are in operation. Three vessels have been built, one of about 300 tons, and are employed in the lumber trade. Numerous herds and flocks of horses, horned cattle, and sheep, of the best European breeds, are seen grazing in their ever verdant fields. Grain of all kinds, in abundant crops, are the production of the soil.

“Everything, either in the organization of the government, or in the busy and various operations of the settlements, at this place, at Walla Walla, at Fort Colville, and at DeFuca, indicate the intentions of the English to colonize the country. Now, therefore, your memorialists, in behalf of a large number of citizens of the United States, would respectfully ask Congress to aid them in carrying into operation the great purposes of their institution—to grant them troops, artillery, military arms, and munitions of war, for the defense of the contemplated settlement—to incorporate their Society with power to extinguish the Indian title, to such tracts and extent of territory, at the mouth of the Columbia, and at the junction of the Multnomah with the Columbia, as may be adequate to the laudable objects and pursuits of the settlers; and with such other powers, rights and immunities, as may be, at least, equal and concurrent to those given by Parliament to the Hudson’s Bay Company; and such as are not repugnant to the stipulations of the Convention, made between Great Britain and the United States, wherein it was agreed, that any country on the Northwest Coast of America, to the westward of the Rocky Mountains,

should be free and open to the citizens and subjects of the two powers, for a term of years; and to grant them such other rights and privileges, as may contribute to the means of establishing a respectable and prosperous community.”⁹

Everett was not prepared to give his unqualified endorsement to the memorial, and he took care to get into the record the following statement as to his attitude:

“Lest his opinions on the matter involved should be mistaken from the fact of his having presented the petition, he considered it a duty to state that he could not urge the granting of the prayer of the petition at this time; because it would be impossible to grant it, without violating the stipulations of the treaty on the subject with Great Britain. There was, however, one view of the subject in which it required the consideration of the House. It is stated in the memorial that flourishing settlements of British subjects existed in the Oregon territory. If this were so, it was in violation of a stipulation agreed to between Great Britain and the United States, that, during the convention, no settlement should be authorized to be made on the debatable lands, by the citizens of either country. This was a matter that required to be looked to, and was an appropriate subject of inquiry for the Committee on Foreign Relations.”¹⁰

It was as a writer that Kelley was most effective in spreading broadcast information as to the Oregon country and arousing interest in its immediate settlement by Americans. In 1830 he published *A Geographical Sketch Of That Part Of North America Called Oregon*.¹¹ In the preface he ascribed to Jefferson the honor of having been the first to suggest the

⁹ Kelley, *General Circular*, 8-11.

¹⁰ 22 cong. 1 sess. *Register of Debates*, VIII, 1433; *Niles' Register*, XLI, 285; *Settlement of Oregon*, 93-6.

¹¹ Kelley, *A Geographical Sketch of That Part of North America Called Oregon*: containing an account of the Indian title; the nature of a right of sovereignty; the first discoveries; climate and seasons; face of the country and mountains, natural divisions, physical appearance and soil of each; forests and vegetable productions; rivers, bays, &c.; islands, &c.; animals; the disposition of the Indians, and the number and station of their tribes; together with an essay on the advantages resulting from a settlement of the territory. To which is attached a new map of the country. Boston, 1830. 80 pp.



Map of Oregon, 1830. Copy from Geographical Sketch

colonization of the Oregon country. The time had arrived, he believed, for the carrying out of that suggestion, notwithstanding the opposition which had already attended his efforts. He boasted that he had "a mind invulnerable to the attacks of calumny," and declared "It is needful, that the friends of the Colony should possess a little of the active and vital principle of enthusiasm, that shields against disappointments, and against the presumptive opinions and insults of others;" but it is evident from these very words that despite his enthusiasm, he was not the man to receive abuse without wincing, or to meet opposition or doubt without questioning the motives or the intelligence of those who would not be convinced.

The nature of the contents of this pamphlet is sufficiently indicated by its sub-title. The geographical detail need not concern us, but there are two points which merit attention. As to the question of title, Kelley asserted "The rights, which England set up to this country, are predicated on idle and arrogant pretentions; nor is the claim made by America, to a right of soil founded on better tenure." With the exception of the land bought in 1791 by Captain John Kendrick, the title to all lands was in the hands of the Indians, whose rights to own lands were the same as those of the whites. Therefore, adequate compensation must be tendered before the Indian title could be extinguished.¹² The advantages to result from settlement were presented under seven heads.

"*First.* The occupancy of it, by three thousand of the active sons of American freedom, would secure it from the possession of another nation, and from augmenting the power and physical resources of an enemy. . . .

"It is not a doubtful hypothesis, that unless our legitimate rights on the waters and in the territory of Oregon, are protected by planting a colony in it, or by other means no less effectual; they will in a few years more, become entirely lost to our merchants, or to the benefits of our country.

¹² Pp. 7-9.

“England is desirous of possessing the whole country, with all its invaluable privileges. She has evinced this, by that bold and lawless spirit of enterprise, by which she has acquired so great a monopoly in the Indian trade; by which, in the year 1812, she took from American citizens, the town of Astoria (now called Fort George), and still retains it. . . . In this presumptuous way; in defiance to treaties and obligations, to the paramount claims of this country, and by alliances with the Indians, she hopes to secure a hold upon it, which the physical power of the American Republic, exerted in the plenitude of its energies, cannot break. . . .

“*Second.* A free and exclusive trade with the Indians, and with a colony in Oregon, would very considerably increase the resources, and promote the commercial and manufacturing interests of our country.

“The fur trade has been and still is found vastly lucrative to those who pursue it. The contemplated colony would find it productive of great pecuniary advantage, and a fruitful source of their prosperity. . . . English traders, at the present time possess the country. The *will* of the Hudson Bay Company, is the supreme law of the land. The natives are subservient to it, and American traders dare not resist it. Hence, the inland trade is fast on the wane, and has become disastrous, if not in most cases, ruinous. While it is so constantly exposed to the rapacity of treacherous Indians, and to the avarice of the English, it must remain utterly valueless. It might, however, be reclaimed, and forever protected by a colony occupying the shores of the Columbia. . . .

“*Third.* The fisheries might be more extensively and profitably pursued. . . .

“*Fourth.* A port of entry, and a naval station at the mouth of the Columbia, or in DeFuca straits, would be of immense importance to a protection of the whale and other fisheries, and of the fur trade; and to a general control over the Pacific ocean, where millions of our property, are constantly afloat. . . .

"Fifth. It is an object, worthy the attention of government, to secure the friendship of the Indians, and prevent alliances between them and other nations. . . .

"Sixth. The settlement of the Oregon country, would conduce to a freer intercourse, and a more extensive and remunerative trade with the East Indies. . . . Such an extension and enjoyment of the East India Trade, would provoke the spirit of American enterprise, to open communications from the Mississippi valley, and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific ocean, and thus open *new channels*, through which the products of America and the Eastern world, will pass in mutual exchange, saving in every voyage, a distance of ten thousand miles; *new channels*, which opening across the bosom of a widespread ocean; and intersecting islands, where health fills the breeze and comforts spread the shores, would conduct the full tide of a golden traffic into the reservoir of our national finance.

"Seventh. Many of our seaports would be considerably benefitted by taking emigrants from their redundant population. It is said, and truly so, that business of all kinds is overdone; that the whole population cannot derive a comfortable support from it; hence the times are called hard; which generally press the hardest upon those, who pursue the useful occupations of laborious industry. . . .

"The learned profession might spare some of their wise and erudite votaries who, in Oregon, could find meeds of immortal honours. Many of industrious habits and honest lives, whose reputations have been blasted by the foul breath of calumny; these, with the unfortunate and oppressed, but virtuous of all orders, could there find an asylum, and succeed to a better condition.

"These hastily written observations must be concluded by the remark, that all nations, who have planted colonies, have been enriched by them."¹³

The first date set for the starting of an expedition to the

13 Pp. 75-80.

Oregon country does not appear in any of Kelley's writings that have been preserved. For a long time his plans were contingent upon the action of congress. Had success followed the presentation of his memorial to congress in 1828, it is likely that he would have lost no time in declaring himself. This much is certain; two land expeditions were originally contemplated, one of men only and a later one to be made up of families. The time of departure of the first expedition was finally set for January 1, 1832.¹⁴

Kelley's plans were formally presented in the Manual Of The Oregon Expedition, or General Circular,¹⁵ which begins with the announcement "OREGON SETTLEMENT, *to be commenced in the Spring of 1832, on the delightful and fertile banks of the Columbia River.*" In this pamphlet he again considered the Indian title, and declared that since the British claim to jurisdiction over the territory south of the forty-ninth parallel was without foundation, and in view of the failure of congress to take positive action, there was no justly constituted jurisdiction in that country. Therefore, he argued, the emigrants would violate no law or right of the United States by settling there. He laid particular emphasis upon the economic superiority of the Columbia valley over the Middle West.

"The natural advantages of the country, for trade and commerce, foreign, internal and coastwise, are paramount to those found in other parts of America. The confluence of the many navigable rivers, opening into, and beautifying every section of the country, forms the grand river Columbia, whose waters may be traversed by large vessels, two hundred miles from the sea; whose either bank affords inlets safe and commodious for harbors. Nature furnishes many clear indications that the mouth of this far spreading and noble river is soon to become the commercial port of that hemisphere, the great business

¹⁴ Young, *Correspondence and Journals of Nathaniel J. Wyeth*, 43; McMaster, *United States*, VI, 110, citing *Boston Patriot*, May 28, 1831, and *United States Gazette*, October 22, 1831.

¹⁵ Kelley, *Manual of the Oregon Expedition*. A general circular to all persons of good character, who wish to emigrate to the Oregon territory, embracing some account of the character and advantages of the country; the right and the means and operations by which it is to be settled, and all necessary directions for becoming an emigrant. Charlestown, 1831. 28 pp.

place of nations, interchanging the commodities and productions of western America and the East Indies.

“Much of the country within two hundred miles of the Ocean, is favorable to cultivation. The valley of the Multnomah is particularly so, being extremely fertile. The advantages, generally, for acquiring property are paramount to those on the prairies of the West, or in any other part of the world. . . . The Oregon is covered with heavy forests of timber. . . . The production of vegetables, grain, and cattle will require comparatively but little labor; these articles, together with the spontaneous growth of the soil, and the fruits of laborious industry, in general, will find a market, *at home*, and thereby comfort and enrich the settlers. Surplus staple articles may be shipped from their doors to distant ports, and return a vast profit in trade. Lumber, ship timber, &c. may be sent to the western coast of South America, the islands in the Pacific; bread stuffs, furs, salmon, and many other articles of domestic manufactures, to the East Indies.

“It is the circumstance of a *good home market*, that gives any country its greatest value, and must give the Oregon country *immense advantages* for settlement; advantages unknown in the Western States, whose markets are as remote as the shores of the Atlantic. . . .

“The want of value to the farmer’s surplus produce, is his poverty; and has made shipwreck of the fortunes of thousands, who have settled in Ohio, Indiana, &c.”¹⁶

Having thus described the resources of the country, he proceeded to unfold his plans more in detail, taking up in order the survey and division of lands, the civil government, and provisions for the organization of churches and schools. Then came the direct appeal to emigrants and the terms on which they might be enrolled, the route to be taken, the expedition itself, and finally the question of funds. The order of presentation is significant; first a general picture of the economic advantages, then a more detailed description designed to appeal to those who would shrink from the idea of “roughing it,”

¹⁶ Pp. 6-7.

next an appeal to the Puritan type of emigrants, and finally the practical questions of emigration and funds. Those who are interested in the psychology of prospectus literature will find the pamphlet worth reading.

Two towns were contemplated; a seaport town on Gray's Bay, eleven miles north of the mouth of the Columbia, and a trading town on the peninsula at the confluence of the Columbia and the Willamette. A five-mile square of territory was to be laid out as a site for the seaport town, according to the following plan:

"Of the streets, one, 200 feet wide, will run from the water, in a N. W. direction, bisecting at the distance of six squares, an area of ten acres of parade or pleasure ground, which area is forever to remain open and unoccupied with buildings. The centre of this street, for the width of 100 feet, will be devoted to the purposes of a market. Streets crossing this, at right angles, are intended to be 100 feet wide; those parallel to it, 50 feet. The squares are to be 400 feet on a side, each including 18 [16] lots, 50 by 100 feet each. From the 100 ft. streets and the public lands, no plant or tree is to be removed or destroyed without consent of the municipal authority."¹⁷

Similarly, the trading town was to be two miles square. A tract of land near this town was to be divided into parcels 40 by 160 rods or forty acres each, and the number of lots was to equal the number of emigrants over fourteen years of age, not including married women. Next to these lots would be others of 160 acres, making up the complement of two hundred acres to each emigrant.¹⁸

¹⁷ P. 12.

¹⁸ P. 13. "Possibly our real estate men, who are now so vigorously advertising 'peninsula' additions, will take note of the fact that Kelley was ahead of them with a map and plat and advertizement of that same ground by sixty-one years."—Harvey W. Scott, Address, Oregon Pioneer Association, *Transactions*, 1890: 34. "One is reminded of Kelley's instrumentality in the settlement of Oregon by the improvements at present being made on 'the peninsula,' where stands the mill town of Saint John, the terminus of the Oregon Railroad and Navigation Company's road, and the Portland (Catholic) University, as well as by the long line of warehouses between Saint John and East Portland proper. Kelley particularly honored the peninsula by adding to his writings a line plan of the town which he designed for that point. As a site for a city it has some excellent features, one of which is space to grow. Ultimately it will become a part of Greater Portland, but before it becomes absorbed in Portland, it would be a gracious suggestion to let it come in under the name of its intending colonizer, Hall J. Kelley."—Frances F. Victor, Hall J. Kelley, One of the fathers of Oregon, *Oregon Historical Society, Quarterly*, II, 398 (1901).

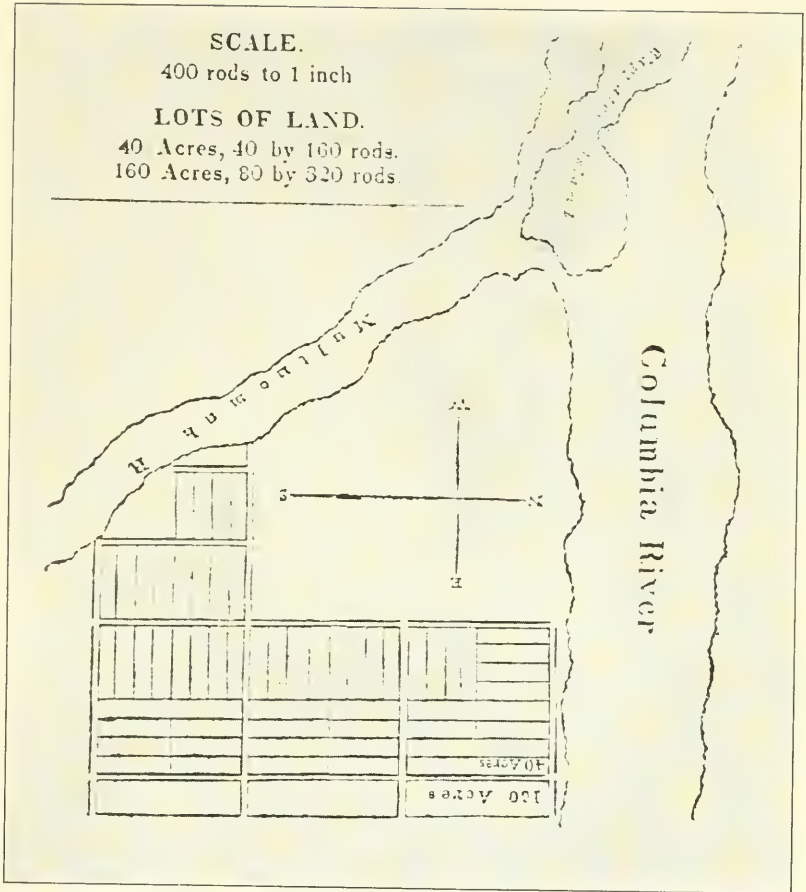
SCALE.

400 rods to 1 inch

LOTS OF LAND.

40 Acres, 40 by 160 rods.

160 Acres, 80 by 320 rods.



Plan of Trading Town.

In discussing the question of civil government Kelley knew that he was on uncertain ground. As the Oregon country lay beyond the jurisdiction of the United States, the relation which the settlers would bear to that government involved perplexing questions. The form of government was also recognized as a matter worthy of serious thought. He looked to congress for action which would solve these problems, but in default of such action he was prepared to set up a provisional government. On this point he said:

“Whatever may be the *frame* of government, it should be built upon the most finished improvements of others. Whether the settlers are to be considered children of mature age, made free, and setting up for themselves, constituting in some degree, an independent Province, the friend and ally of the mother country; sharing in her generous and maternal solicitude; or whether they are to be a Colony, planted, cherished, and protected by her, depends entirely on Congress. That the latter should be the case, is the prayer of a memorial, at the present time, before that august assemblage of talents, virtue and wisdom.

“Should the emigrants fail of that *Charter*, which reason and justice dictate, and humanity calls for, they will attempt to make for themselves, just and equal laws, under the provisions of a form of government, so far made a free democratic representative, as will be consistent with an unequivocal recognition of the sovereignty of the American Republic. It will be in most respects, a transcript of the government of the Michigan Territory. The Governor, Secretary, Treasurer, and Board of Land Commissioners, being the Appointments of the Society. It will continue two years, unless Congress, before the expiration of this time prescribes a substitute. . . .”¹⁹

Religious himself, he took care to emphasize the religious aspects of his plan. “The settlers will lose none of their religious privileges and comforts,” he promised. “Churches of different denominations will be organized before emigration.”

¹⁹ P. 14.

He also sought to encourage "pious and well educated young men . . . to engage in the great work of imparting moral and religious instruction to the Indians." Upon the subject of education Kelley's plans were broad in scope but limited as to details. "Some efficient and appropriate system" was to be adopted, and in it would be included "whatever will best civilize the manners, reform the morals, enlighten, and free it from the grasp of superstition;" certainly an ambitious program. Schools of every grade were to be opened. "Agricultural and classical institutions, and colleges succeeding common and primary schools . . . will be established; and in them, *red* as well as *white* children taught the rudiments of learning." A special appeal was made to persons of good education to emigrate in order that there might be properly qualified candidates for positions in the schools and in the offices of government.²⁰

As emigrants Kelley wanted only "men of steady habits," and it was provided that all who proposed to emigrate should be required to give satisfactory evidence as to their "good moral character and industrious habits." He wanted particularly "properly educated persons, to fill the civil, military and literary roles," clergymen and physicians, men "possessing a scientific knowledge of the different branches of mathematics and natural philosophy, to constitute corps on engineering, surveying, astronomy, geology and botany," farmers, and mechanics. His appeal was also directed to capitalists who would take with them vessels suitable for the lumber trade and the whale and salmon fisheries, and the iron parts of grist mills, saw mills, and nail-making machinery, and establish a paper mill, a printing press, a window-glass factory, and an iron foundry.

To such men his inducement was "most of the expenses of emigration and a landed estate, valued from \$2,000 to 10,000, situated, where the healthfulness of climate, the good market for every product of the earth or of labor, and the enjoyment

²⁰ Pp. 15-6.

of a free and liberal government will conspire to make life easy." More concretely, "each emigrant, over fourteen years of age, not including married women; and each child that is an orphan, or without parent in *that* country, will receive a lot of seaport land . . . or two farming lots in the valley." Poor children and children in charitable institutions were eligible.

On the other hand the requirements were not burdensome. Each prospective emigrant was to pay twenty dollars as a pledge of faithful performance of obligations to be stipulated by covenant between him and the Society; namely, to give oath to obey the laws of the Society and to be a peaceable and worthy member, and to agree that all common property should be liable for debts on account of the settlement; the Society in turn to agree to defray all expenses of the first expedition from St. Louis except for clothing, guns, and knapsacks, to give each settler a parcel of seaport land or two hundred acres of farm land chosen by lot, title to pass after two years' occupation, and to guarantee religious and civil freedom.²¹

At this point Kelley interpolated answers to objections which had been made to his project, reaffirming the healthfulness of the Oregon country, and declaring that there was no ground for fear of violence from the Indians. "The Agent of the Society has given these subjects many years of patient investigation," said he, "and does not hesitate to avow a greater confidence in the faith and friendship of those *red men*, than of the *white savages* who infest our communities;" confidence which subsequent events in the Northwest showed to have been unwarranted. Nor did he anticipate trouble with the Indians along the proposed route, which was from St. Louis up the Platte, through the South Pass and down the Willamette. That the South Pass was feasible he affirmed upon the authority of Major Joshua Pilcher, Indian agent of the war department.²²

²¹ Pp. 16-9.

²² Pp. 19-22. It is significant that he made no reference to the statements of Brackenridge and Benton on this point.

Kelley looked to congress to pay a part or the whole of the expenses of the expedition in view of the national benefits to accrue from the settlement ; but he declared "it will not concern the settlers, whence comes protection, or the means of accomplishing the objects of the enterprise, whether from congress or private munificence." As to the detailed preparations for the expedition, he said :

"Emigrants are required to defray their own expenses to St. Louis; and after that, to provide with all necessary arms, knapsacks, blankets, and private carriages. Females and children must be provided, at the time of starting, with covered horse wagons, containing each a bed and two or more blankets. From St. Louis they will be subject to no other expense than the above named, and in Oregon will receive gratuitously, a landed estate of great value.

"Orders will be given in due time for assembling in Portland, Me. ; Portsmouth, and Concord, N. H. ; Boston, Worcester, and Springfield, Mass. ; Bennington, Vt. ; Albany, Buffalo, Detroit [!] and New York, N. Y. ; Philadelphia, Pa. ; Baltimore, Md. ; Washington City, &c. . . . At these, and other places, companies will be formed; Captains being appointed to the command of every fifty male adult persons, the emigration will then commence, by the most practicable route to the aforesaid place of general rendezvous. . . . The cost, from Boston . . . will, probably, not exceed fifteen dollars."

Captains and other officers were to be chosen by elections to be held after general orders had been given for assembling. Shareholders of merit and of good education only were to be eligible to offices of rank. At St. Louis a drove of cattle was to be purchased, and fly tents each large enough to cover six wagons were to be provided. No private property other than wearing apparel, military equipment, and provisions was to be taken in the public baggage wagons. All merchandise, machinery, and other property was to go by sea. From St. Louis the expedition was to be under a military form of government.²³

²³ Pp. 22-4. The sea expedition was also "for persons who might be unwilling or unable to sustain the fatigue of the land."—*Colonization of Oregon*, 20.

As to the financial arrangements, the Circular set forth that the funds of the Society should be made up of \$200,000 of stock and certificate money and all such donations as benevolent and public spirited individuals might make. It presented an extract from the report of a committee charged with devising a plan of financing the enterprise, which contained the following suggestions:

“Let a portion of the funds of the society constitute a capital stock of *Two Hundred Thousand Dollars*, to be divided into shares of \$100 each, and to be raised by loans. Each share entitling the owner thereof to 160 acres of land, as set forth in the certificate of stock,—the lots are to be numbered and determined according to the rules and plan of division expressed by the By-Laws of the Society. This stock shall be secured on the pledge of all the public and common property and revenues of the settlement—the emigrants covenanting with the Society before embarkation, that all debts incurred directly or indirectly, for the benefit of the settlement, to the full amount of said stock, shall be paid in the manner aforesaid.

“Your Committee would also suggest the propriety of raising funds by donations and subscriptions, to meet more specific purposes in the Oregon Country. Let one be called the *Education or Indian Fund*; and another called the *Religious Fund*. . . .

“[The] par value [of the stock] cannot be depreciated by the contingency of ill success of the enterprise; for, in that possible event, every dollar of the stock will be refunded, the same being on hand either in money, or in public property. . . .”²⁴

The details of the financial plan were also presented in another pamphlet which was also issued in 1831. This was a stock book which bore the legend “This book of stock, subscriptions, &c., in which shall be enrolled, the names of all persons contributing to the success of founding a settlement in Oregon, either by subscriptions, donations or investments in the Society’s stock, shall be preserved, in perpetuum, by the

²⁴ Pp. 25-6.

settlement; and a true copy of the same shall be deposited in the archives of the government of the United States of America." In the four pages of this pamphlet there is nothing of interest that was not included in the General Circular except a facsimile of a share of "Oregon Settlement Stock." This "stock" was really a short term bond, secured by a pledge of the common property of the Society. It was to bear interest at the rate of six per cent after May 1, 1832, and the principal was to be payable in either five or ten years, at the option of the holder. The right to 160 acres of farming land on the Columbia was to be given to the holder of each "share," or bond, as a bonus.

Kelley took care that his pamphlets should be put into the hands of men of influence at Washington. He sent copies of both the Geographical Sketch and the General Circular to the heads of departments and to members of congress. A second edition of the Geographical Sketch appeared in 1831, with the General Circular as an appendix. Scattered about the country were agents of the Society, thirty-seven in number, whose duty it was to distribute literature, give information, and enroll members. Some of these agents were booksellers, however, who obviously had only a qualified interest in the proposed expedition. Two names are significant. One is James M. Bradford of St. Francisville, Louisiana, leader of the proposed New Orleans company of 1828; the other is Nathaniel Jarvis Wyeth of Cambridge, Massachusetts, of whom more will be said in the chapters that follow.²⁵

²⁵ *Settlement of Oregon*, 77-8.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY—DELAY AND FAILURE

As stated on the first page of the General Circular, the expedition was to start in the spring of 1832, or three months after the time originally set. Furthermore it appears that Kelley's original plans had undergone a change,¹ for he now proposed to take women and children on the first land expedition. There is no evidence in the General Circular that more than a single expedition had ever been contemplated.

Kelley spent the winters of 1830 and 1831 in Washington attempting to influence congress to take positive action,² and his necessary absence from his headquarters at Boston and the tendency of congress to delay easily accounts for the postponement of the date set for departure.

The number of persons enrolled upon the books of the Society is nowhere stated except in general terms. It is certain, however, that the statement of Kelley in his first memorial to congress in 1828 that three thousand men stood willing to emigrate was based largely on anticipations. His highest claim was to the effect that he had "enlisted four or five hundred emigrants" by 1832.³ Speaking of the prospective emigrants he said:

"Many were those in all parts of the Union, and in some parts of Europe, who would engage in it. Companies were formed, in different parts of the States, and many men of distinction and of high standing in society, all desiring their names to be enrolled in the expedition. The Hon. Samuel Houston, in conversation said: 'I have almost made up my mind to go with you to Oregon, and engage in the East India trade.' A company in Paris was formed, and another, a more numer-

¹ Young, *Correspondence and Journals of Nathaniel J. Wyeth*, 2-3, 8-9.

² Kelley, *Petition*, 1866: 3.

³ Kelley, *Hist. of the Settlement of Oregon*, 80.

ous one, in Germany. The former corresponded with me through Mr. Everett; the latter through a German gentleman in the government service at Washington."⁴

From the point of view of results, Nathaniel J. Wyeth was the most important person who came under Kelley's influence. Of him Kelley said: "Some time in the year 1829, he came to me for the loan of my books, and documents concerning the far west, and the programme of the expedition in which he would enlist, and he enrolled his name among the names of several hundred others in the emigrants' book."⁵ Wyeth, who was engaged in the ice business on Fresh Pond near Charlestown, was "surrounded with apparent advantages, and even enviable circumstances," according to the statement of his cousin; yet "Mr. Hall J. Kelly's writings operated like a match applied to the combustible matter accumulated in the mind of the energetic Nathaniel J. Wyeth, which reflected and multiplied the flattering glass held up to view by the ingenious and well-disposed school master. Mr. Nathaniel J. Wyeth had listened with peculiar delight to all the flattering accounts from the Western regions."⁶ But while Kelley was actuated by motives of patriotism and philanthropy, the practical-minded Wyeth was moved by considerations of personal gain. According to his own statement, he "had no view farther than trade at any time."⁷ To his mind the settlement of the Oregon country was a matter that could be left to follow its natural course.

From contemporary accounts we may learn something as

⁴ *Ibid.*, 112-3. "Nathaniel Wyeth, of Cambridge, and Captain Bonneville, of the U. S. Army, were both, I believe, enrolled in the emigration books, and were both to have command in the expedition."—Affidavit of Washington P. Gregg (1843) in *Ibid.*, 116. Thornton (*Oregon and California*, II, 16.) also declared that Captain Bonneville was among those enrolled. Lyman (*Hist. of Oregon*, III, 73) said that Bonneville's expedition was "perhaps but remotely connected with Kelley's effort"; but it does not appear that Kelley made any such claim. He did claim that Thomas Shaw, supercargo on the ship *Lagoda* of Boston, met Captain John A. Sutter in San Francisco and told him of his exploration of the interior of California and of his plan to extend his colonizing activities into that region, and that it was upon Shaw's advice that Sutter settled at Sacramento.—*Settlement of Oregon*, 53, 60; *Petition*, 1866: 7.

⁵ *Settlement of Oregon*, 64.

⁶ John B. Wyeth, *Oregon*, 4-5.

⁷ Young, 90.

to the effect of Kelley's writings upon the popular mind. John B. Wyeth said that "there were circles of people, chiefly among young farmers and journeymen mechanics, who were so thoroughly imbued with these extravagant notions of making a fortune by only going over land to the other side of the globe, to the Pacific Ocean, that a person who expressed a doubt of it was in danger of being either affronted, or, at least, accused of being moved by envious feelings. After a score of people had been enlisted in this Oregon expedition, they met together to feed and to magnify each other's hopes and visionary notions, which were brought up to a high degree of extravagance, so that it was hardly safe to advise or give an opinion adverse to the scheme."⁸ And Mr. John Bach McMaster tells us that in the debate in the Massachusetts legislature in 1830 on the question of building a railroad from Boston to Albany, "a member declared that the road ought to be constructed in order to keep the people from going to Oregon; that an association of active, enterprising men had been formed to colonize that country, and that four thousand [!] families had engaged to go."⁹ Nevertheless, he expresses the belief that "the circulars and notices of Kelley and the overland journey of Wyeth aroused but little public interest in the Oregon country."¹⁰

As already stated, Kelley's plans, as set forth in the General Circular, included provisions for schools to which Indian children would be admitted, and for an "education or Indian fund" and a "religious fund." In 1831 he published in *Zion's Herald*, "a series of letters addressed to a member of congress," presenting his plans for the settlement of Oregon. These were followed by other articles in 1832 calling for missionaries to accompany the expedition. The New England Conference of the Methodist Episcopal church thereupon appointed "two pious men," Spalding and Wilson, as missionaries to the

⁸ Wyeth, 58.

⁹ McMaster, *United States*, VI, 109.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 112. See *Niles' Register*, XL, 407 (1831), quoting from the *St. Louis Republican* as to the proposed expedition.

Indians of Oregon.¹¹ It is possible, however, that Lyman was right when he said of Kelley :

“He expressed himself in a manner not easily understood by the religious people of America. His colony schemes and bills for appropriations of land, and numerous secular arrangements; and his incessant political agitations struck the churches as the main object held in his view, and that his call upon the churches was rather a second thought. The religion of that period was intensely unworldly and sought a most conventional, or traditional, expression. Reformation, with demands for which the country was being belabored, was not recognized as of a religious nature.”¹²

To Kelley there was little difference between honest doubt and active opposition, and the stupendous nature of his plans and his earnest manner of presenting them alike put obstacles in his way. The very nature of the man aroused antagonism on the part of the indifferent, and led those who would have listened to a less vehement prophet to withhold their confidence. Platform presentation by a man of convincing manner is an effective sort of propaganda. But Kelley was not the man for such a task, for he was temperamentally incapable of describing his plans without vigorous and general denunciation of all who disagreed with him. At times his manner became hysterical, and in after years he admitted that his mental condition had been a “near approximation to insanity.”¹³ Of his experiences while on lecture tour, he said: “My adversaries were everywhere on the alert. They watched every movement of mine, pursuing me from city to city, laying every plan to vex and worry me, to alienate friends and turn them from and against me, and to discourage those who had enlisted for Oregon . . . and to turn them from their purpose.”¹⁴

Why was the enterprise opposed, and who opposed it?

¹¹ Affidavit of William C. Brown, former editor of *Zion's Herald* (1843), in Kelley, *Memorial*, 1848: 8; *Settlement of Oregon*, 63-4.

¹² Lyman, III, 132.

¹³ *Settlement of Oregon*, 15.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

Kelley supplied the answer, which to his mind at least was convincing. "Its interest conflicted with those of certain fur companies, British and American, and of persons concerned in the commerce of the N. Pacific."¹⁵ Then there was "the hireling press."

"It was represented in the leading newspapers and periodicals that Kelley was deceiving the people—his plans were chimerical—was an idle schemer—a mad man; that hardship and privations would attend at every step the expedition; and that perpetual suffering would be the lot of young and old through the first generation. By such falsehoods and calumnies as these, I was made the object of scorn and contempt of persons of every age and rank—the derision of youth whose fathers I would have 'disdained to have sit with the dogs of my flocks.'"¹⁶

This abuse was not confined to the ephemeral newspapers. It extended even to the dignified *New England Magazine*, which in February and April, 1832, published two articles¹⁷ from the pen of a writer who chose to hide behind the initials "W. J. S." To find the equal of this writer in bitter denunciation coupled with smug confidence in his own point of view, we must go back to Jeffrey and the *Edinburgh Review*. In one particular, however, the caustic Scot differed from his Yankee contemporary; he had vision. To the mind of our new-world tory, civilization had arrived at its apogee about 1832. It remained for all comfortable New Englanders to be content with their lot, and for all others to rest assured that whatever they might lack at home among their own people, they were unlikely to find elsewhere. There have been such

¹⁵ *Petition*, 1866: 2. "The literary bureau of the Hudson's Bay Company, moreover, took especial pains to collect and republish everything derogatory to Oregon which was said on either side of the Atlantic, but particularly on the American side. From 1800 to 1846 it pursued the same policy in Oregon which it had practiced in Canada for two centuries. For the protection of the beaver it used all its power to keep settlers out."—Harvey, *On the Road to Oregon*, *Atlantic Monthly*, C V, 634.

¹⁶ Kelley, *Hist. of the Colonization of Oregon*, 20; Wyeth, 12.

¹⁷ Kelley also referred to an article published in February, 1831.—*Settlement of Oregon*, 24. But the first number of the magazine was not issued until July, 1831.

preachers since the beginning of time, and yet man has continued to migrate and to benefit thereby.

In the first of these articles, it was questioned whether the Oregon emigrants would ever get as far as St. Louis; for they must first pass through a much finer country than Oregon, where they could buy two hundred acres of fertile land and establish themselves among a kindred people for less than the further expenses of their journey. From St. Louis to the Columbia the proposed route was traced in detail, and if anything was omitted from the list of horrible contingencies, it has escaped notice. Starvation, torrential rivers, hostile Indians, wild animals, and winter in the mountains were to contribute to the hazards and hardships of the expedition. Doubt was expressed as to the existence of the South Pass as stated upon the authority of Major Pilcher. Should any of the emigrants finally reach their destination, how were they to dispossess the Indians, how would they be governed, how would they sustain themselves until the harvest of their first crop? Should they succeed in raising a surplus of grain, where would they find a market? In Japan? "Japan, quotha." Did they not know that there was only one Japanese port open, and that to the Dutch? In India? No; in India the lower classes lived on about a penny a day, and the soil was unexcelled. As to the market for lumber in the Spanish-American countries, was there not lumber in Peru and Chili? On the other hand there was New England. Said the oracle:

"We had thought that in New England, especially, sickness and unavoidable accidents were the only causes for fear. Here education is more encouraged than anywhere else. The helpless poor, even those whom vice has rendered so, are not suffered to starve. All this is well; very well; but it seems we can do better. At least, so say, and perhaps think, the projectors of the intended expedition to the mouth of the Columbia river.

"A gentleman, for whose talents and ambition his native land does not afford sufficient scope, has been employing his

leisure in devising schemes to better the condition of his fellow countrymen. His studies have not been in vain; if his plans should prove practicable, nations yet to be will bless him as their father and benefactor. . . .

“We can see no advantage in Oregon which the emigrant may not secure in the state of Maine. The sea washes the shore of both. The soil is good in both. There are fisheries pertaining to both. If the climate of Oregon is milder, it is not proved that it is better. There is waste land in both. There is plenty of timber in both. Maine has these advantages. Her inhabitants are under the protection of the laws. They are numerous enough to protect each other. They have free communication with every part of the world. There is no art or science of which she does not possess at least the rudiments. All that can be done in Oregon, within a hundred years, is already done in Maine. . . .¹⁸ We do not know that the prime mover of this folly is actuated by any evil motive; we do not believe it. We look upon him as an unfortunate man, who, deluded himself, is deluding others, and conceive it our duty to warn those who are about to follow him on the road to ruin.”

Nor was logic the only means adopted to convince the prospective emigrant of his folly. There was the appeal to authority, so convincing to those who are already convinced. “The project of a settlement on the Columbia river has been repeatedly before Congress, and has been pronounced visionary by the wisdom of the nation. At this present session, such an opinion has been expressed by one of the best and greatest men in the country.”¹⁹

In the second article the critic devoted his attention to the Geographical Sketch and the General Circular, which it would

¹⁸—Twelve years after this was written, two New Englanders, one from Boston and the other from Portland, Maine, established themselves on the west bank of the Willamette. Each wanted to name the new town after his old home, and the dispute was settled by flipping a coin. One can only wonder if “W. J. S.” lived long enough to learn of this fact.

¹⁹ W. I. S., Oregon Territory, *New England Magazine*, 123-32; *Settlement of Oregon*, 103-6.

seem he had not read before writing the first one. There is a running comment on the text, with sweeping denials of statements of fact and sarcastic flings at Kelley as one whose hallucination was "so strong as totally to obnubiate his faculties."

"Mr. Kelley assures us that he is not mad, as has generally been supposed, and that he speaks what he believes to be the truth. Our opinion is hereby improved in two particulars, though we can only reconcile them by two suppositions,—that a man may repeat a tale of his own invention till he believes it to be true,—and that what is not truth to one man, may be truth to another. . . .

"We suppose that Mr. Kelley is to be governor of the new territory, or one of the head chiefs and beloved men, or at least, that he will be allowed to pocket as much of the before-mentioned stock as will remunerate him for his disinterested efforts in favor of the good people of New England, and natives of Oregon. . . . 'Falsehood flies half round the globe, while Truth is putting on her sandals.' The fallacies of Mr. Kelley have been received as truth, by the whole country, and there is reason to fear that interference may come too late."²⁰

The interference not only did not come too late; it was not even necessary, for Kelley's project never had in it the germ of life. The date of departure was again postponed; this time to June 1, for congress still deferred action. Hostile criticism in the press continued and increased in bitterness.

"Such vile sayings as these, and the reports of my wicked adversaries in high places, whose influence in the way of whisper spread like contagion over the length and breadth of the land, panic-struck my followers and turned them back, every one of them, and turned the few who had promised

²⁰ W. J. S., *Geographical Sketch of Oregon*, *New England Magazine*, II, 320-6. Cf. memoirs of Wyeth and Kelley and the report of Slacum, all based upon personal observation, in Committee on Foreign Affairs, supplemental report, 6-22, 29-61, 25 cong. 3 sess. H. rep. 101.

contributions to my funds, from their benevolent purpose; but not the projector of the Oregon enterprise from his."²¹

The underlying cause for the failure has been well stated by Mr. Frederic G. Young, who says "Kelley . . . wished to transplant a Massachusetts town to Oregon and make it the nucleus of a new state. He hoped to repeat with appropriate variations the history of the Puritan colony of Massachusetts Bay. The New Englander of the nineteenth century, however, was not so ready to sacrifice himself for an idea as had been his progenitors of the seventeenth. Unless Kelley could organize conditions so that success seemed certain, he could not expect the enthusiasm of his followers to bear them on. Such conditions he could not organize."²²

As early as November 12, 1831, Wyeth began to doubt the success of the expedition, for in a letter to his brother he said, "In case the contemplated colonization project should fail it is still our intention to go to the new country, in which case we shall form ourselves into a Trading Company in furs."²³ Again on December 5, 1831, he declared that the plan to join the two expeditions was ill-advised, for with women and children in the party, progress would be slower, and winter would come on before the mountains could be crossed. He accordingly decided to cut loose from Kelley and with a party of fifty men leave St. Louis in the spring. By December 19, he had enrolled thirty-one men for his expedition. In a letter of February 10, 1832, to John Ball, he declared, "I see no probability that Mr. Kelley's party will move at present. They have made no preparation as yet, nor do I believe they can ever make provision for moving such a mass as they propose."²⁴ In the meantime Kelley, under date of February 7, had written telling

²¹ *Settlement of Oregon*, 106. "The benevolent purposes of the munificent were changed. The persons enlisted and most of my friends and patrons were panic-struck, and deserted the cause."—*Colonization of Oregon*, 20. Kelley had already invested \$300 in the brig *John Q. Adams* in connection with the sea expedition, an amount which he never recovered.—*Ibid.*, 21; *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 7; *Petition*, 1866: 3.

²² Young, xvii-xviii.

²³ *Ibid.* 5.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 8-9, 12, 36.

him of his hopes of congressional action. Wyeth's reply, dated February 13, was:

"However well affairs are going at Washington matters little to me. Anything they can do will come too late for my purposes. My arrangements are made to leave here 1st March and I shall not alter them, neither can I delay on my route.

"I wish you well in your undertaking but regret that you could not have moved at the time and in the manner first proposed. When you adopted the plan of taking across the continent in the 1st expedition women and children I gave up all hope that you would go at all and all intention of going with you if you did. The delays inseparable from a convoy of this kind are so great that you could not keep the mass together and if you could the delay would ruin my projects."²⁵

To this Kelley responded on February 24, and Wyeth replied under date of March 3:

"I am perfectly well aware of the importance of cooperation of all the Americans who may go to that country but I am well convinced that this thing has been delayed too long already and that further delay will defeat my enterprise besides not being in the habit of setting two times to do one thing. I am quite willing to join your emigration but will not delay here or at St. Louis. You very much mistake if you think I wish to desert your party, but you must recollect that last 1st Jany was set at first as the time of starting."²⁶

Here was a man of decision and force of character; one who had the qualities of leadership which Kelley lacked. Had Kelley possessed flexibility enough and judgment enough to put Wyeth at the head of his expedition and to follow his advice, the result would not have been different as far as the settlement of Oregon was concerned, but it would have been far different as to Kelley's acknowledged place in that movement. On March 29 Kelley wrote to ask Wyeth to take with

²⁵ Ibid., 39.

²⁶ Ibid., 43.

him some of the men enrolled on the books of the Society. To this Wyeth answered on April 8:

"I will in conformity with my first assurance given in my letter of the 23rd ulto. take charge of ten of your emigrants. Any further arrangement must be with the persons who are disposed to go out. My reason for this is that I am bound by my engagements to my Company and must consult them in regard to any arrangements on the subject but you need not by this understand me positively to refuse it as I do not know how the Co. will be disposed to act.

"I shall at all times be disposed to further an emigration to the Columbia as far as I deem, in actual knowledge of the country, that it will be for the advantage of the emigrants, but before I am better acquainted with the facts I will not lend my aid in inducing ignorant persons to render their situation worse rather than better."²⁷

Wyeth set out for Oregon in the spring of 1832. With him went his brother Dr. Jacob Wyeth, of Howell Furnace, New Jersey; John Ball, a native of New Hampshire and a practicing lawyer of New York; Calvin Tibbetts, a native of Maine and a stone-cutter, and J. Sinclair, of New York, all of whom had planned to go with Kelley. Sinclair left the party at Independence, Missouri, and Dr. Wyeth turned back at Pierre's Hole.²⁸ Wyeth returned late in 1833, and led a second expedition to Oregon in 1834. With him went a party of missionaries led by Rev. Jason Lee and his nephew, Rev. Daniel Lee, who had been induced by the principal of Wesleyan academy, at Wilbraham, Massachusetts, to respond to the call made by the Methodists for missionaries to the Indians in

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 51. It would seem that Kelley did not acknowledge failure until the very last; for while this correspondence was going on, he continued to advertise. As late as March 19 he announced in the *National Intelligencer*: "Those persons desirous of emigrating to Oregon in the first expedition, are notified that the committee appointed for the purpose of making arrangements, have determined upon leaving on Monday, 2nd of April, for St. Louis. The expedition will leave St. Louis on the 10th of May."

²⁸ Wyeth, 51, 57; *Settlement of Oregon*, 64-5; *Colonization of Oregon*, 6-7. Upon their arrival at Fort Vancouver, Ball opened the first school in that country. Later he and Tibbetts engaged in farming on a tract above the falls of the Willamette, but gave up the attempt after the first year. Ball then returned to the East, but Tibbetts remained and taught school in the Canadian settlement.

Oregon.²⁹ This was the whole measurable result of Kelley's efforts through the American Society for Encouraging a Settlement of the Oregon Territory.

²⁹ Thornton, II, 21-2. The immediate cause of this call was the report, widely circulated in the religious press, of the Nez Perce and Flathead Indians who visited St. Louis in 1831, ostensibly to learn of the white men's religion.—McMaster, VI, 112-3. Kelley's version of this incident was: "The late Major Pilcher, an Indian agent in the Platte country, gave, while at Washington, in 1839, the following version of the story of the Nez Perce Indian delegation. Four thoughtless and sottish Indians, accompanied Capt. Sublette's party of hunters to his (Pilcher's) agency. They seemed to have no particular object in traveling. Sublette refused to let them proceed further in his company unless they would there obtain a passport, showing a *good reason for a visit into the States*. Such a passport would be of prevailing advantage to him. Mr. Pilcher, wishing to favor the Captain's interest, furnished the Indians with a reason and excuse for their visit to St. Louis."—*Settlement of Oregon*, 63; *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, sup. appx. A. But whether true or false, this story had in it the element of dramatic appeal that was necessary to make effective the movement started by Kelley for the betterment and Christianizing of the Indians of the Northwest. The two missionaries who had been chosen to accompany Kelley went instead to Liberia.—*Settlement of Oregon*, 112. See also Marshall, *Acquisition of Oregon*, II, 8-10.

CHAPTER FIVE

EN ROUTE—BOSTON TO VERA CRUZ

Failure only seemed to strengthen Kelley's determination to effect his purpose. "I planned anew, enlisting a small party, chiefly with a view of having travelling companions. I now lay my route through Mexico, via Acapulco and the Sandwich Islands."¹

"That circuitous route, instead of a direct one across the Rocky Mountains, was wholly induced by a desire of effecting some arrangements with officers of the Mexican government and distinguished individuals in that country, relative to the lumber and fish trade between the Columbia River and the Mexican western ports, and for extending, in proper time, my *colonizing operations into High California*; and, also, by a desire of turning the attention of the people in the cities of Mexico to some better system of education than had ever been adopted by them; and generally, to such internal improvements, moral and physical, as would most likely lay a better foundation for freedom, and multiply in their land the conveniences and comforts of life."²

His troubles continued, and there were further delays. This part of the narrative can be best stated in his own words:

"Late in the spring [of 1832] I left [Washington] for N. E. to complete arrangements for my final departure for the other side of the continent.

"On my arrival at Palmer, and within sight of home, where my loved family dwelt, I was arrested by an officer, who served upon me a precept which had no foundation in justice.

¹ Kelley, *Hist. of the Colonization of Oregon*, 20-1.

² Kelley, *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 69-70. *Hist. of the Settlement of Oregon*, 42. As early as February 12, 1832, however, Kelley, wrote to Edward Livingston, secretary of state, setting forth the impracticability of conducting an expedition including women and children overland via St. Louis later than the month of June, and inquiring as to a feasible route across Mexico.

and was only designed to detain my person and plunder my property. I was manacled, and taken to the village, to the door next to my home, where my companion and children came to greet me; yet did they grieve at my afflictions, and their hearts were sorrowful at what was being done unto me. This attack was from an unscrupulous hireling, in the shape of a lawyer, living in a dark alley in the city of Boston. . . . Unwilling to tarry, to contend in law, and delay the enterprise, I answered the demand, unjust as it was, and so freed myself from the clutches of my cruel pursuers.

“A few days later I was threatened with another suit, which had the same design.

“To avoid the delays and vexations which these proceedings would necessarily cause me, I left the place for Boston, from whence I sent for my family and effects. Before the latter could be removed, they were plundered to the amount of several hundred dollars.

“These brutal acts were not instigated by my townsmen, but by brutish men from Boston whose object was to prevent progress in my undertaking. In view of a contemplated long absence, I did not forget to provide sufficiently for the support of the dear ones of my household, making arrangements with friends who had this ‘world’s goods’ in abundance, and who were accustomed to show kindness and to give good cheer.

“The time for my departure drawing near, I went to Bradford, where my family resided, to take the painful leave. The moment of parting arrived. My companion looked sober; and probably felt sad, though her affectionate regards had been somewhat alienated by deceiving monsters, who had ill advised her. My children, young, unconscious of the nature of the parting, were cheerful about the room. My heart was burdened, and I could scarcely speak a sorrowing good-by. Taking my valise, I left; and, when beyond hearing, grief burst forth, and I wept aloud.³ I proceeded to Boston.

³ According to Temple (*Hist. of the Town of Palmer*, 266), Mrs. Kelley went to Gilmanton with her children to live with Dr. Kelley.

"The journey was a lonely one, and tiresome. My days now were all eventful, and every moment seemed to bring increased cares and anxieties. Just before my final departure for Oregon, I took a few days to go about Boston, and solicit from the munificent contributions to my funds, which I feared would be inadequate for my purposes, since my enemies, by their cunning and cruelty, had made so frequent drafts upon them. I called upon a wealthy merchant in Beacon street. It was in the afternoon of Thanksgiving day, when I hoped to find him in good spirits, and disposed to make me a donation. But I was disappointed. He replied to me as follows: 'I am interested in the commerce of the Pacific, being part owner in two ships now on that ocean. The merchants have had a meeting, and are determined to prevent your breaking up their trade about the Pacific.'

"Left Boston for Oregon the first of November, 1832. Having provided a vessel for the party and the transportation of my effects to New York. I joined the party in that city;⁴ there tarried two or three weeks, occupying what was called the parsonage house, in Stuyvesant street, with the party. After a few days a band of desperadoes at midnight, beset the house, and attempted to force an entrance; first, at the windows, and then at the door, but not succeeding, they soon *hastened* away.

"A short time after, two men came to my quarters, one calling his name Foster, the other giving his as Lovett. They said they wished to emigrate to Oregon; and would like to accompany me thither; that they were printers by trade, and had money which could be immediately collected to procure outfits, and to meet expenses; and, with a view of giving me proof of their sincerity, took me to a printing office, which they represented as their place of business. They were well dressed, and of insinuating manners. But the sequel showed them to be accomplished and adroit villains, ready to perform

⁴ Having gone by land in order that he might "secure some household effects," which he had left at Three Rivers.—*Colonization of Oregon*, 21.

any act affecting my person, plans, or property, however atrocious or hazardous. . . .

"Learning that a vessel was about to sail for the Sandwich Islands, I applied to the benevolent owner for a passage thither, for a son of mine belonging to the party. A free passage was at once generously offered him. As he was of tender years, and fearing that he would not well endure the fatigues of the land route, I was glad of the chance to provide for him a sea voyage. He was to wait at the Islands, until my arrival with the party from Acapulco.

"The party with my effects embarked for New Orleans. Myself proceeded to Washington."⁵

While in New York he obtained on credit money for expenses and presents for the Indians. Religious societies gave him Bibles and books and tracts; and individuals also contributed.⁶ Upon his arrival at Washington he communicated with the state department, asking for authority to explore Oregon and setting forth the plans of his expedition,⁷ although he had already been informed by the secretary of war that the decision in the matter lay with congress and not with the executive.⁸ From William S. Archer of Virginia, chairman of the house committee on foreign affairs, he received assurance that public protection would be given to any settlement which he might make in the Oregon territory. From the house committee on

⁵ *Settlement of Oregon*, 24-7; also *Colonization of Oregon*, 21-2; McMaster, *United States*, VI, 112, citing *United States Gazette*, January 4 and February 8, 1833. Kelley says nothing further about his son.

⁶ *Settlement of Oregon*, 113.

⁷ Letter to Secretary Livingston, February 23, 1833. In this letter Kelley said: "The prevailing motive I have for settling on the Columbia river is to aid in carrying the principles of civilization into that uncultivated part of the earth. For this object, I have shipped many enterprising persons, and my own effects—I have sent before me my own son of inexperienced and tender years. For this object I have left to the care of friends an affectionate wife and three small children. I have denied myself, for a season all social and domestic enjoyments; and am the subject of suffering privations and great hardships; and, finally, for this object, I now live, or if its accomplishment requires the sacrifice, I am ready to give myself a martyr."

Under date of February 27, he transmitted a copy of the "emigrants' covenant" to Livingston.

⁸ "The executive can give no aid to individuals in their efforts to establish a colony upon the Oregon river. Our laws make no provision for the occupation of the country, nor for any negotiations with the Indians for that purpose. Congress alone can authorize the measure proposed."—Letter of Lewis Cass to Kelley. *Niles' Register*, XLII, 388 (1832) from the *Boston Courier*.

library he obtained a set of United States statutes. Edward Everett was a member of both committees, and his coöperation was probably the cause of these favors.

Kelley also made formal application to the Mexican government through Jose M. Montoya, *chargé d'affaires* at Washington, for permission to enter the port of Vera Cruz with a vessel free from port charges, to land his effects, and to transport them across the country to Acapulco without liability of any kind to the revenue laws. Montoya agreed to forward the letter, and he also countersigned the passport which Kelley obtained from the state department. Thus equipped Kelley left Washington for New Orleans on March 1, 1833, proceeding by the Cumberland road and the Ohio and Mississippi rivers under a grant of free passage from the post office department.⁹ To continue from his narrative:

“At New Orleans I again met the party provided with good quarters at my expense. . . .

“Two of the party, who a few days before leaving New York were known to be destitute of money, and poorly clad, whose passage I had paid, were now found dressed in new and costly apparel, and had plenty of money. Without the remotest cause of action, they brought, one after another, suits at law against me, until I was harrassed with five such cases. The Foster and Lovett who joined the party in New York, resorted to acts of felony, forging several papers; one, a draft of fifteen hundred dollars in my favor on J. Ogden, a wealthy merchant of New Orleans, purporting to have been drawn by a friend of mine in Wall street, New York. . . .

“Getting access to my property in storage, they stole over a thousand dollars of it, and started with it for Texas. Fortunately, they were on the same day overtaken, brought back, examined before Judge Perval, and with the crime of larceny labeled to their character, were committed to prison, where, doubtless, it was the divine purpose they should realize a portion of the reward of evil doers. After a day and a night

⁹ *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 70; *Colonization of Oregon*, 23; *Petition*, 1866:3; *Settlement of Oregon*, 113.

imprisonment, they sent for me. My ears ever being open to the cries of distress, whether of the human or the brute race, I hastened to the window looking into the place of their 'torment.' They besought me with tears to intercede in their behalf, and obtain their release. I did so, importuning the public authority which had committed them, and they were released I . . . required from them a written confession of their guilt. They gave it, though reluctantly, solemnly pledging never again to trouble me, then left, but not to keep their pledge. Straightway, using the freedom which humanity had just given them, they proceeded to carry out new plans and plots of treachery and revenge.

"By anonymous letter and other ways I was threatened with assassination, did I not hasten from New Orleans.¹⁰

"Those two blood-thirsty pursuers finding a vessel ready to sail for Vera Cruz, in conformity, doubtless, to the counsel of others in connivance, embarked for that port; there to lie in wait, and destroy me if they could. Before sailing, having had permission to enter the store house where my effects were deposited, and receive a chest belonging to one of them, notwithstanding their solemn pledge to cease from troubling, they managed to abstract from my packages a chest similar to theirs. packed with articles designed for Indian presents, of the value of over \$200, leaving their own, which contained nothing of value, in its stead. I was present, but being near-sighted, and my mind filled with anxieties, I did not, at the hurried moment, notice the difference between them.

"I was surprised, but not frightened at this threatening aspect of the enemy's power. Finding a spirit to vex and to destroy me infected most of the party, I gladly dismissed them

¹⁰ "New Orleans, March, 27th, 1833.
"Dear Sir:—I accidentally overheard yesterday, some of your Origon company forming a conspiracy against you, and are determined to take your life either by some means or other, others thought it would be most too rash an act and had better take you up for swindling, and that they considered a very easy matter according to the lawyers account.

"I am really afraid that your life is very much at stake, and now take my advise, and leave the country as soon as possible if you want to come off with a sound head.

"I remain,
"A frnd."

all, and, having adjusted my business as best I could, I secured a passage to Vera Cruz in the schooner Gen. Lafayette, Capt. Hoyt. . . .

“The Capt. had suddenly changed the day for putting to sea, having determined to sail earlier than the time appointed for that purpose. Although my goods were brought to the levee, agreeable to a previous understanding, and the freight had already been paid, he refused to receive them. I was not to be foiled in that way. Being cramped for time, a few half dollars from my pocket, brought aid from the bystanders, and my effects were rushed on board, with the exception of about two hundred dollars’ worth, including the body and hind wheels of a wagon, which were left and lost.

“As the vessel was leaving her moorings, seizing the last opportunity, I leaped on deck, there to endure still greater indignities and sufferings than had been experienced on shore.

“I will not stop to mention all that I suffered on that passage. During most of the voyage the sea was boisterous, and the heavens were darkened with clouds and storms. Although I had purchased as good accommodations as the schooner afforded, yet was I denied a retreat to any place not open to the angry heavens. No reasoning, no appeals to justice or mercy could abate the rigor of this brutal treatment. Fourteen days and nights I lay on the quarterdeck, terribly seasick, and exposed to the worst of weather, sometimes drenched in salt water, and again in fresh. A portion of my freight remained on deck by the side of the bulwarks, exposed to the breach-making sea. This much was greatly injured, so that a part having lost its value was thrown overboard, and a part less injured was given to the poor at Vera Cruz. The language of the Capt. was uniformly abusive, and his whole conduct unfeeling towards me. . . .

“Something more should be said of the captain. He was illiterate, ill-bred, ill-tempered, and intemperate, also. . . .

“An occurrence happening on the 2d of May nearly proved fatal to the vessel and the lives of all on board. At early dawn

a Spanish gentleman coming on deck, cried out, 'Land! land!' Our frail bark was fast nearing the rocky shore, which was not more than 50 or 75 rods distant. Fortunately, the fog, which had enveloped it, was now rising. The helmsman had just time to wear ship, and save being dashed upon the rocks. A similar occurrence happened on the 10th. In the evening, returning from a trip to or near the bay of Campeche, while the captain was in one of his stupefactions, we heard the breakers roar and could see their foaming crests. They were close by on the lee bow. The mate wears about and goes to sea. The captain, who was in his berth, being informed, raised himself partly up and said, 'I can't help it.'

"On the 11th [of May] the schooner entered the bay of Vera Cruz, and anchored under the guns of Fort St. Juan de Ulloa. I now left the captain, but he was not quite ready to leave me, nor to leave the object of wasting my property. . . ."¹¹

¹¹ *Settlement of Oregon*, 27-31; *Colonization of Oregon*, 23-6.

CHAPTER SIX

EN ROUTE—ACROSS MEXICO

Even to-day a trip across Mexico is attended with delays and difficulties. The foreigner is met with suspicion, and, if he be an American, with positive dislike. Nothing but a fanatical belief in his mission could have led Kelley to disregard or at least underestimate the obstacles to be encountered in passing through that country before the day of railroads, in the midst of pestilence, brigands, and civil war. Yet this is what he undertook to do in 1833, alone, encumbered with baggage, and ignorant of the language of the people. His account of his experiences in Mexico is especially complete, and it will be given here in his own words as far as possible.

“Landing at the port of Vera Cruz, Lovett, the treacherous actor at New Orleans, called on me to offer his greetings, and to tender his services in repacking my effects, and preparing for my early departure from that place of pestilence and death. . . . His cunning and insinuating manner drew to him some friends, and there were some about him, friends to nobody. To have suggested to others my bad opinion of him would have exposed myself at that time to the assassin’s power. Indeed, being privately reminded of ingratitude at the time of embarkation at New Orleans, his jealousy was aroused, and he told me with great emphasis, if I named any circumstance exposing his character in that place, I must do all my repenting at Vera Cruz, and be prepared for the worst results. However, not intimidated, I gave him wholesome advice, forbade his taking a step with me into the interior, or traveling the same road the same day. . . . In view of this threatening aspect of things, I was not wanting in circumspection and civilities, both in regard to this villain, the captain, and their accomplices.

“Soon after my arrival, a snare was laid by him, which he and a colored man, his associate, were unable to spring upon

me; artfully attempting to draw me into a dark hole in the city, unquestionably with the design of taking my life. . . .

“The following transactions seemed to indicate that the captain and the officers of the customs were each to share in the plunder of my property. Some days after the cargo of the vessel was discharged, one of the sailors informed me that a package of my stuff was found concealed under old rigging in the hold. It consisted of such pieces and remnants of cotton and woolen fabrics as would be useful to me in Oregon, and was worth from \$100 to \$150. My anxiety was to know how to get possession of the goods without prejudice to my character. I had no disposition to smuggle, or to do a dishonorable act. To bring it publicly on shore, it was said, would endanger the vessel; or to bring it clandestinely, would afford a plausible reason for supposing it merchandise for that market, which was far from being the fact. I was told that, for a *reward*, a *custom house officer* would bring the package to me. An engagement was made. The property was brought between two suns, and left at the place appointed, and twenty silver dollars were paid for doing the business. It appeared like a fair and legal transaction, but, with the officer, it was smuggling, under revenue laws made and provided for that purpose. . . .

“On landing, having engaged boarding quarters, and got my passports endorsed by proper authorities, I turned my thoughts to my baggage, which was of much value, a portion of it needful for present use. Some of it was in loose packages. Most of it was placed in the custom house for safe keeping, until my departure thence, agreeable to the advice of the American consul. In view of my ill health, lonely condition and the distracted state of public affairs in that country, he thought it would be unsafe at the hotel. Unskilled at that time in the Spanish language, I had no direct communication with the revenue officers, but it was understood on my part, and also, I supposed, on the part of the consul, that it would be readily and freely given up when called for. . . . With the hope of obtaining some indemnity from the captain for my losses,

which he had carelessly or wantonly caused me, I delayed my departure over two weeks. . . .

"I hastened arrangements for resuming the journey, and called for the property deposited in the custom house. To my surprise, it was refused, on the ground of a requisition of custom house duties. I had never, at home or abroad, declined to render 'unto Caesar the things that were Caesar's,' but to pay a tax in Mexico on property not dutiable, I unhesitatingly declined to do. A bond would have been given, if requested, guarding against the sale of so much as a single article in that country. . . .

"After several days of entreaty, through the consul, explaining the object of my journey, giving my reasons for taking that circuitous route to Oregon, and presenting the passport from the State Department of the United States, the cupidity of the revenue officers relaxed a little, and I was permitted to select four packages from the eight. The amount of duties demanded was nearly the invoice value of the property. By what rule of calculation, or principle of right they had fixed upon any specific amount of tax, or had taxed at all, I could not understand. . . .

"In the proper construction of the passport furnished me by the State Department of the U. S. A., protection should have been given both to my person and property. But protection was given to neither."¹

On May 27, 1833, Kelley left Vera Cruz by stage and arrived the following day at Jalapa,² where he remained eighteen days, familiarizing himself with the country round about. From Jalapa he wrote to Anthony Butler, the American *chargé d'affaires* at the city of Mexico, complaining of the detention of his property at Vera Cruz. He proceeded on foot to Puebla, and after three days left by stage for the City of Mexico.

Almost the first man he met upon his arrival was Foster,

¹ Kelley, *Hist. of the Settlement of Oregon*, 31-6.

² Lovett, the "monster villain," remained at Vera Cruz, where he soon died of yellow fever.—*Ibid.*, 32.

who was boarding at his expense, having some of his papers upon which an arrangement to that effect had been made with the proprietor of the stage house. This charge was paid upon threat of seizure of baggage; but Kelley refused to pay for Foster's passage from Vera Cruz or for his lodgings. His baggage was attached, and the irrepressible Foster laid claim to some of it, but the magistrate decided the matter in Kelley's favor.

Kelley then transferred his quarters from the stage house to the Washington hotel, which was the only other public house open to foreigners. The proprietor was an American, and "among the guests there were Col. Austin, the founder of the first settlement of the Americans in Texas, Col. Hodgkiss and Gen. Mason from Virginia, and several other distinguished Americans. Their purpose in that country was to bring about the annexation of Texas to the United States." Upon invitation of the American consul, James S. Wilcox, Kelley spent several weeks as his guest at his residence on Lake Chalco, a short distance from the city.³

At the American legation Kelley renewed his appeal for the release of his goods, but was told that there was little likelihood of favorable action by the Mexican government, a prediction which was in accord with the fact.⁴

Unlike most zealots, Kelley seems to have been incapable of giving his whole attention to his main project. When he left New England the enthusiasm for railroads was at its height.

³ *Settlement of Oregon*, 36-9.

⁴ Letter of Anthony Butler to Carlos Garcia, secretary of state, July 11, 1833, and reply of Garcia, September 17, 1833, in 25 cong. 2 sess. H. ex. doc. 351:481-2, 487. Butler declared that the action of the customs officers was not only in violation of the laws and usages of nations, but also in contravention of positive treaty stipulations. "I use the expression of being contrary to treaty stipulations, because, even admitting that the articles detained were intended for commercial purposes, instead of being designed solely for the personal use of the individuals forming the expedition, yet, in such event, the object being merely to land the goods at one port, and, passing through the country, to transship them at another, the treaty provides that such merchandise would be entitled to drawback; that is to say, that the bond given for duties, if the goods were sold within the republic, shall be cancelled and delivered up to the owner, upon the reshipment of the merchandise. If, however, the articles landed by Mr. Kelly be examined, they will be found to consist of implements of agriculture, tools for different branches of the mechanical profession, and remnants of coarse goods, such as are indispensably necessary for persons forming a new settlement in a wilderness entirely removed beyond the limits of civilization." According to Kelley, his loss at Vera Cruz amounted to \$1150.—Kelley, *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 7.

If railroads were good for New England, why not for Mexico also?

"While exploring the country between Vera Cruz and the City of Mexico, I became satisfied of the feasibility of a railroad route between one and the other of those places. Desirous of seeing Mexico benefited with the same kind of institutions and improvements as those effecting such great things for my native New England, I planned and advised that improvement—especially would I have internal improvements commenced without the least possible delay, in a country, where the common people were but little in advance of the heathen; where most of the roads were in a state of nature, and the earth bore but few marks and evidence of civilization dwelling there.

"The improvement suggested by me was a topic of frequent conversation with Wilcox . . . and with other enterprising foreigners. It was one of the subjects of a communication to President Santa Anna, describing, according to my apprehension, what would be the utility of railroads."⁵

In the midst of all his troubles, this strangest of mortals was open-eyed and active in studying the natural phenomena about him. The plants, animals and minerals received his careful attention, and his curiosity as to the heights of mountains must be served. He also interested himself in the welfare of the natives, and vaccinated some of them. "I lost no time, neglected no opportunity, relaxed no effort to do the good I had proposed to do in that country." He even indulged in recreational activities, a fact for which he half apologized.

"I engaged in no idle amusements, expended not so much as a dollar 'for that which is naught,' yet occasionally I took a game at checkers with my distinguished fellow-boarders at the hotel, and once did I attend the theatre to witness a bull-fight, and learn concerning that ancient, barbarous custom.

⁵ Kelley, *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 74-5, 89-92. "Shortly after my return to Massachusetts [in 1836], I had the satisfaction to learn, that the road had been commenced. It does not follow, as a thing in course, that the undertaking originated from anything I had said; but, there is a possibility; yes, a probability, and some strong indications of such being the fact."—*Ibid.*, 76.

Neither the games nor the visit to the theatre were without some benefit to me.”⁶

His more important business, however, was not forgotten. With singular lack of understanding of the attitude of the Mexican government toward the intrusion of Americans upon its domain, “While in the City of Mexico he made arrangements to become an empresarias for settling the interior of Alta California with emigrants from his own and other civilized lands, intending to commence the work, when the tide of emigration to those western shores should set high, and it should be practicable to take that position.”⁷ These arrangements, he admitted, were made only “in part,” and while they were made with “public authority,” we are not told as to the officer who was approached or his reply.⁸ His health having become impaired, he made no attempt to enter into any arrangement with the Mexican government to encourage trading relations with the settlers on the Columbia.⁹

His observations on the instability of the government and needs of the people are quite as applicable to the conditions of to-day. In a letter written on August 24, 1833, to J. B. Thornton, he said, “The civil outbreaks and commotions constantly occurring in Mexico are not likely to result in any beneficial effects to the people. The fundamental principles of government must be different, more in harmony with the principles of Christianity. The policy of the governing power must be changed. Under present circumstances, while the whole nation is living in sottish ignorance, without schools for the youth, and without a heaven-taught ministry, unenlightened and inexperienced, as to practical freedom and the blessings of Christian civilization, that policy should be more arbitrary, and the government less republican. . . .

“Mexico should have more light, and the sympathy of neighbors. Other nations should help her. It would be right,

6 *Settlement of Oregon*, 36, 39, 41.

7 Kelley, *Petition*, 1854:3; *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, Appx. A, 80-92.

8 *Settlement of Oregon*, 66; *Petition*, 1866:4.

9 *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 70.

that her elder sister republic, the powerful and opulent United States, should help her, and make her a loan of a few millions of money, to be applied exclusively in laying the foundations of freedom just described. Unless such a foundation is laid, and the monsters, ignorance and superstition, are driven from the land, political delusions, clandestine disorders, war and bloodshed and human sufferings will continue."¹⁰

Unforeseen delays having made it impossible for him to be at Acapulco at the appointed time, he now decided to go instead to San Blas via Gaudalajara.

"Just before leaving the city, and proceeding onward, Col. Hodgkiss, a countryman distinguished in the war of 1812, presented me with an elegant sword, a testimonial of his respect for me; and perhaps partly in view of the perilous journey to be pursued along the roads at that time known to be infested with banditti. . . . The consul presented me with two noble mules, and a theodolite. . . .

"My personal arms were a light gun, a brace of pistols, and the sword just presented me. In the baggage were three guns and other weapons such as are usually used in human slaughter. Thus was I accoutred in complete Cossack panoply. . . .

"Just before resuming the journey, two strangers, a French gentleman and a countryman from Philadelphia, Giredot and Keyser, came and proposed to accompany me to Gaudalajara. Their company was very acceptable, and proved to be of much benefit to me. I was now ready to go forward.

"Just as I was leaving, when outside the gate, Foster introduced to me a savage looking man whom he called Frederick, and who was going, he said, to San Blas, and desired to travel with me; said he would assist in driving the burthened animals. I consented, believing a refusal would be of no avail; that Foster had picked him up for an accomplice in carrying out his bloody purpose. I learned afterwards by the French gentleman that he was a foot-pad, and associate with the highwaymen in that portion of the country.

¹⁰ *Settlement of Oregon*, 40-1.

“My servant engaged in the city to take charge of the mules, and to serve as a guide, at the end of two days refused to go farther. I settled with him, paid him his price, and for a further compensation he plundered my baggage of some small articles, not, however, of much value. After four days, Giredot and Keyser, finding it too tiresome to travel in a slow walk, and impatient to go forward, left me. They had travelled with me two or three hours in the morning, and then hastened to their night quarters. Foster and Frederick were now my only servants and guide. At eight o'clock in the evening, after a hard day's journey, having missed the road, I stopped, pitched my tent by the side of the path and unburdened the mules. Early the next morning I started in search of some populated place for food and provender for the beasts, and also for information as to the right road. After traveling nearly a league I entered a village, went from house to house, but the doors were kept closed; none cared to give me answer—not so much as a cup of water. Returning to the encampment, I ordered the animals to be got ready to leave. While in the tent making ready the baggage, Foster, outside, called out, ‘Robbers are coming.’ Looking out, I saw ten or fifteen men, variously armed, near approaching. To show non-resistance, I grounded my gun at the tent door. The supposed robbers came up in front, their captain advanced, and with trembling hands stooped down and picked up the gun. Then, full of courage, called out *Bamos, bamos*. On my coming out, he demanded my side-arms. They were now silent for a while, as though waiting for a reinforcement. Soon I saw, under a cloud of dust, a crowd of women and children. They came and seated themselves in a line on the ground. All fears of their having bad intentions were now dispelled. They were silent. Four men, on horseback arrived; one was the Elcelde of the village where I had just been so unsuccessful in finding friends. He addressed to me a few words, all of which I did not understand. I then exhibited the traveling passport given me by the chief executive of the United States, and a letter from a dis-

tinguished countryman, stating the objects of my sojourn in Mexico. These papers were translated into his own language. He read them and bowed. I bowed also, and we shook hands. Among the women was a fair and thoughtful looking old lady, who had come prepared with tortillis and fruit to relieve our hunger. She uncovered a basket, and, looking kindly at me, said, 'Senora, toma.' We partook of her bounty; though I had fasted twenty-four hours, was not hungry, but Foster ate much, and ate like a dog on the point of starvation. This lady I supposed to be the mother of the Elceldè. . . . I thought I could see an excellent spirit in her. . . . After opening a package of Indian presents, I addressed her, 'Senora, toma (take),' and gave her in return, lace and ribbons, with which she seemed pleased, ten times the value of what had been received. The Elcelde and his suite having conducted me to the right road, bade me good-by, and returned to their village, and I proceeded on my route.

"After two days reached Yula, where I found my two fellow travelers awaiting my arrival. Here I passed two or three days in exploring the region about the city, most of the time in the market place, studying human nature, observing the manners and customs of the people, and seeking knowledge, and picking up memorials of antiquity. History informs us that the Annuhac tribe, the earliest aborigines of Mexico, in their migration southward from the place of their landing on the American shores, made Yula their first stopping place. After two or three days, with my companions in company, I again moved forward. . . .

"In Curetero I delayed one day, bought a horse, and there were stolen from my effects articles of six or eight dollars value. The baser sort of the natives are much given to thieving, and practice with wonderful skill the sleight of hand, and can steal before the eyes of another without his knowledge. Though I kept a constant watch over my property, yet I was constantly losing. My fellow travelers have again left me and gone ahead to hunt rabbits, I passed through Salais, and put up

for the night in a puebla, three leagues beyond that place. The hunters were with me, and we made a good supper on rabbits.

“About the middle of the next day reached Salamanca. Outside of the town a man on horseback met me and said he would conduct me to a mason [*mason*] and to the Custom House. At the latter place my passports and papers were examined. The custom house officer said I was unlawfully carrying four guns. I replied that the passports gave me a right to carry them. He said, however, I might sell one of them to his son, then standing at the door, and proceed on with the three. Accordingly, one was offered to the lad at half its value. But this was not the thing; the gun he wanted without price. I took back the passport and walked out, returned to the inn and ordered the servant to make ready to leave. The marshal now brought forward a large horse, which he offered to exchange for a gun. The animal, on examination, was discovered to be blind in one eye and to be badly foundered. It was more than two hours before I could get rid of these insolent officers of the government. I finally got out of the city, but had not proceeded half a league when a man came in great speed, offering to sell his horse for a gun. I assured him I had no wish to buy, and desired him to leave. At length, with much difficulty, I induced him to wheel about and leave me. He hastened back to report, no doubt, to the officer of the customs. I began to think I had now escaped the heathen city; but alas! in less than an hour afterwards, whom should I see following but him who was a few hours before so courteous and attentive to me in the city. He comes to renew his attempt to rob me of the gun. He first said he must have the gun and \$4.00 for the horse offered me. He demanded it—demanded me to stop and turn back; seized hold of my bridle, flourished his sword and discharged his pistol, crossing the path ahead of my horse, and again, the third time, discharged the pistol.

“To get rid of his troubling, I proposed to submit the matter to the Elcelde of the next village. It was nearly dark before we reached one. Providentially, I met there my two friends.

Giredot, conversant in the Spanish language, and serving me as an interpreter, stated the case to the magistrate, and the robber was ordered to turn back and pursue me no further. In the morning the Padre, whom I believed to be an honest man and disposed to deal justly with me, proposed to buy the gun, offering me for it a large and powerful looking horse, apparently without a blemish. His price was fifty dollars; mine the same. An exchange was at once made, and I proceeded on my way.

“The new steed proved to be but partly domesticated—wild and difficult to manage. About noon, meeting three armed men on horseback, whom I supposed to be robbers, I dismounted, holding my gun in the right hand and the bridle reins in the left. They passed on the off side, and pricked the animal with a sword, causing him to jump; and he escaped, leaving me with a dislocated little finger. Making a circuit of a few rods, he set his head towards the place of his former master, taking along with him a valise mailed back of the saddle, containing a small amount of money, some jewelry and valuable papers. I was now in trouble, and feared I should not easily get out of it. I was alone—my two friends had gone ahead, and neither Foster nor Frederick, having charge of the mules, and unacquainted with the roads, were suitable persons to hunt for the horse. Looking about, I saw at no great distance an Indian standing in front of his habitation. I called to him and offered him a dollar (three or four were in my pocket) to find and bring back the runaway animal. He was at once upon the track, and in two hours returned with the horse, but without the valuables. He reported that the valise was hanging on one side of the animal with one end cut open, emptied of its contents. I proceeded on several leagues to a large town, where I stopped for a day to give rest to the lame and wearied animals. My friends, G. and K., were overtaken at this place, and rode in company with me, as they had previously done, one or two hours in the morning, and then took their final leave of me. I again, however, met them on my

arrival at Gaudalajara. Foster and Frederick, while ascending a hill, cut each of them a stick and hastened forward with one of the mules and a horse, laden with my tent, a gun and some other light articles, leaving me to drive the other, which was lame, and traveled slow. Having passed the summit of the hill, and out of sight, they also took their final leave. They probably believed they had already betrayed me into the merciless hands of robbers in the mountains just ahead, who would make an end of me. Frederick doubtless had so planned, being acquainted, as I had been given to understand, with the banditti infesting that portion of the country, and having had in the cities through which we passed communication with some of the highwaymen, looking after such wayfaring travelers as they would like to make their victims. I was now alone, unacquainted with the road, and it seemed almost impossible for me to go forward. I proceeded on a mile or more, hoping to find some habitation. Leaving the packed animals, I rode to the summit of a swell of land. I saw in the distance a cabin, and approached near it. A man came out, seized a stone and advanced towards me. I made enquiries of him concerning the way to Gaudalajara and for some person to guide me thither. He pointed out the right road, but thought it unsafe for me to travel. It led over a mountain, the same in which I had been told were a band of robbers. I left him, and on my way to the mules, another man was seen coming from the direction of the mountain. He rode up to me, and inquired as to my condition, spoke kindly, as though he would have me believe him a friend; had a crucifix in his bosom as though a Christian man. I asked him if he would conduct me to Gaudalajara; said he would for two dollars a day. I consented to give it. Taking charge of the mules, he led on the way. . . . On the summit, at the distance of a few rods, were seen five armed men on horses, looking steadfastly at me. The guide said, 'Lahombres malos.' Among their weapons was the lasso, the most effectual one used in their line of business. I raised my gun as though about to make demonstration. They seemed as motionless as

though they had no power of action. A gun in the hands of a foreigner appears terrible to Mexican robbers, and they may have been intimidated by mine, and have thought it a less risk of life to capture me in some other place. I was not much frightened, but, thinking myself in an unsafe place, hastened to get out of it. I soon reached the foot of the mountain and a cluster of cabins (three I recollect), and there saw the five identical men whom I had just passed, still on their horses. I was ordered to dismount. The animals were stripped of their burdens and led to some place where I supposed they were supplied with provender. There were four women, but no children or young persons. With a good deal of presence of mind I made my conversation agreeable to them, spoke of my lonely travels, of robberies and of the loss of my money; and made them presents, hair combs and scissors, which they seemed to think of great value. In return they gave me food—a bountiful supply of tortilles. Early in the evening they conducted me to the place of my lodging. . . . I was comfortable, and slept quietly and *safely* through the night. The women had doubtless induced the men to change their programme of proceedings from a merciless to a more humane one—to go on with me, and on the way, at some place of ambush, take possession of the mules and their cargoes, and let me go. In the morning I saw the men again on their horses leave the place. Soon after, the treacherous guide brought forward and made ready the animals and left with me. At the end of three or four leagues, in a lonely place, the conductor, who had appeared so honest and so much a friend, stopped the largest of the mules, the leading one of them, the one laden with the most valuable and bulky portion of the property, under pretense of adjusting the fastenings of the load, and said to me, 'Go on.' I did so, driving the other mule, then before me. After proceeding a few rods, and looking back, lo, both the mule and driver were missing. They had gone back behind some clumps of bushes near the roadside. Moving on some hundred or more rods, and leaving the mule near a lonely

house, I turned about with the determination to rescue the captured mule, even at the peril of life, if so it needs be. On the way I met the same five men in whose hands and power I had been the previous day and night. When opposite the homes where the mule driven forward was left, they discharged a pistol, which was a signal for the conductor to bring forward the mule and again join me. In a few minutes he was on the road hastening towards me, and now, with both mules, we proceeded on the way, and at the distance of a league, reaching a fording place at the head waters of the Rio Grande, emptying into the ocean near San Blas. It was a dark and solitary place, and near nightfall; the path was narrow, flanked with thick bushes leading oblique to the river, and the men proposing to take my life lay concealed among them. No one could be seen crossing until quite on the hither bank of the stream. When the mules had come to the water's edge, the conductor, back of them, wheeled about and said, with an air of triumph, and, to me, a ghastly smile, 'I am going no further; are you going on?' Instantly two men were seen on horseback, close at hand. One of them said, 'Turn, and go with us,' and commanded the conductor (speaking with authority) to drive along the animals. They had been apprised of the movements of the robbers, and had come to my help. . . . They belonged to the village called Argua Caliente, situate near the house where the mule had been left. It was not seen by me at the time of passing, owing to a swell of land which intervened, or I should there have stopped and freed myself from the company of my bloody pursuers. One of them was the Elcelde of the village. On the way I spoke of my enterprise—the reason of the sojourn in that country and the cause of my loneliness. I tarried in that village two days, at the house of the Elcelde, by whom I was made the participant of the most generous hospitality. I have not time to speak of the respect there paid me, or of the dance (Fandango) given in honor to the stranger so providentially in the village. Leaving the mules, fatigued and worn down by hardships, to rest, I proceeded on

to Gaudalajara, accompanied by one of the sons of my hospitable friend, where, after giving myself and horse a few days' rest, returned for them.

"The first thing after my arrival at Gaudalajara was to find my two runaway companions, and make search for the two villains who had robbed me of the horse and his valuable burden. Among the foreigners residing and doing business in that city were Terry and Sullivan, two of my countrymen. My first call was upon them. . . . Mr. Terry . . . said that a foreigner but a few days in the place had sold him a gun. He brought it forward, and it was the identical gun stolen. 'We will go,' said he, 'and see the man; I know where he quarters.' Foster, at the first sight of me, seemed agitated and turned pale. Terry demanded of him the return of the twenty dollars paid for the gun. Foster replied, 'It is mostly gone to meet expenses.' He was told if he did not return it, he should be put where the dogs would not bite him. He handed Terry twelve dollars, saying, 'This is all I have.' I then said to Foster, 'You must immediately leave the place, and leave me forever, or I will commit you to the hands of the public authority as being a felon, a robber and the chief of rascals.' 'I will leave,' replied he, 'for San Blas, and there go on board the first vessel for the Sandwich Islands.' And he did leave, and so also did Frederick, but not until he had taken the tongue from the mouth of my best mule and ruined that noble and valuable animal. The gun and tent were restored to me; but a cane, a present by Mr. Jewett, a countryman and friend residing at Jalapa, was lost." From Gaudalajara Kelley went to San Blas on the Pacific coast.¹¹

Before leaving Gaudalajara, however, he called upon Richard M. Jones, a son-in-law of Joseph Lancaster, who was principal of the state institute in which the instruction was conducted according to the Lancasterian method. Having observed the workings of this system in Philadelphia, Kelley

¹¹ *Settlement of Oregon*, 42-50. Foster went on to the Sandwich Islands and thence to Monterey, where he was drowned. "Here was an end of another of my mad pursuers," observed Kelley.—*Ibid.*, 52-3. Kelley's "Yula" was Tula; his "Curetaro," Querétaro; and his "Salais," Celaya.

urged upon Jones the adoption of the Philadelphia plan. He had already communicated with President Santa Anna upon the subject while at the capital. But while we are told that Jones promised to exert his influence in favor of the plan in operation at the Manual Labor Academy of Pennsylvania, and while we know that the Lancasterian system was received with considerable favor in Mexico, there is no evidence that Kelley's influence counted for anything more than encouragement.¹²

¹² *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 75, Appx. A, 87-9; *Petition*, 1856:4; *Settlement of Oregon*, 52. The system was established by law in the Philadelphia public schools in 1818 but abandoned in 1836.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EN ROUTE—SAN BLAS TO FORT VANCOUVER.

From San Blas Kelley continued his journey by water to La Paz on the gulf coast of Lower California and thence to Loreto. His course then lay northward by land to San Diego, where he arrived with a single guide on April 14, 1834.¹ Of his experiences on this part of the journey, much of it through a country that to-day is wild and forbidding, there is unfortunately little in the writings of Kelley to inform us.² That he collected "specimens of some of the precious metals of Lower California, which he put into the hands of that eminent geologist, Dr. [Charles T.] Jackson, of Boston," he declared in one of his petitions to congress.³

While at La Paz he shipped his theodolite and some of his baggage to the Sandwich Islands. He also seems to have lost his "elegant sword." While in the wilderness of Lower California, he devised "an instrument for making astronomical observations," notwithstanding the imperative need of directing his attention to matters terrestrial in a country whose thieving natives almost aroused his admiration. "About the same time," he continued, "the breech of my gun was broken short off near the lock, and stolen by an Indian for its silver ornaments. A new one was soon provided, by substituting, in part, a section of a wild bull's horn. It is a curious repair, and an obvious improvement in the gun stock—it has better shape and is more convenient for use."⁴

At Pueblo, near San Diego, Kelley met the man whose name was to be associated with his own in the history of the settle-

¹ Kelley, *Hist. of the Settlement of Oregon*, 53-4.

² "That portion of the narrative, from the time of leaving Gaudlaxara to that of arriving at San Diego, owing either to mistake or inadvertence, or loss of manuscript . . . is wanting."—*Ibid.*, xi n.

³ Kelley, *Petition*, 1866:4. "I found gold, silver and copper and other of the precious metals, in Lower California."—*Settlement of Oregon*, 118.

⁴ Kelley, *Memorial*, 1848:14. This gun he presented to the Amherst college museum a few years before his death.

ment of Oregon. This was Ewing Young, "a native of Tennessee, a man remarkable for sagacity, enterprise, and courage," according to Kelley. Young "had been twelve years a hunter about the wilds of Oregon, California and New Mexico; and had lost, perhaps, some of the refinements of manners once possessed; and had missed some of those moral improvements peculiar to Christian civilization." With him was a small party of hunters. "This was the man to accompany me; because, like myself, he had an iron constitution, and was inured to hardships. He was almost persuaded."⁵

From San Diego Kelley took passage to San Pedro on the ship *Lagoda* out of Boston, and continued by land to Monterey, the seat of government.⁶ His chief aim was to get someone to accompany him. "The country between the 38th and 44th parallels appeared dark and threatening, no civilized men save hunters, as I could learn, had roamed there. To penetrate that trackless region alone seemed too hazardous. In hopes, therefore, of collecting a party of emigrants to travel with me, in whatever place countrymen could be found for hearers, I preached Oregon." His appeal was soon to be answered, for Young was then on his way to join him. "The last of June, 1834, he arrived at my encampment on the prairie, five miles eastward of Monterey, and consented to go and settle in Oregon, with, however, this express understanding—that if I had deceived him, woe be to me."⁷

There was much to be done, however, before the journey could be resumed. The matter of trading relations demanded attention, and arrangements had to be made for supplies both for the long trip northward and for the settlers after their arrival on the *Columbia*. It was also necessary to obtain all available information as to the country yet to be traversed. As was his custom, Kelley sought out the leading men and laid his plans before them. "The Catholic priests in California

⁵ *Memorial*, 1848: 13; *Hist. of the Colonization of Oregon*, 7; *Settlement of Oregon*, 56-9.

⁶ *Settlement of Oregon*, 54.

⁷ *Memorial*, 1848:13; *Settlement of Oregon*, 59.

were a learned and hospitable class of men. I received from them not only facilities for traveling, but much valuable information concerning that country and its aboriginal inhabitants. I held a correspondence with the Rev. Fr. Felipe Ayroyo de la Cuesta of St. Miguel; and Don Matias Montañer of Ogedo; and with Gen. Jose Figueroa, the political governor.”⁸ Both by letter and in person he sought to obtain Figueroa’s patronage and coöperation. He informed him of his ultimate purpose of founding a colony in the northern part of California, and asked that he might explore that country and prepare a map for the guidance of those who would wish to settle there. But the governor, while professing to be favorable to the proposal, declared that he was without authority to grant a license to prepare a map or funds for the proposed undertaking, and offered to send Kelley’s letter with his endorsement to the Mexican government.⁹ There had been delays enough already, however, and Kelley determined to push on.

“With a party of nine men, I set off on the 8th of July for the land of my hopes. Young had fifty horses, each of his men had one or more, and myself had six, with a mule. My personal arms were a light gun, which was always in my hands, and always ready for action; a brace of pistols, and a Spanish dirk. . . . Included in the mules’ cargo were articles for Indian presents, such as cotton cloth, scarlet velvet sashes, beads, etc., stationery, my journals and papers, a Nautical Almanac, thermometer, a compass, and an instrument . . . for making astronomical observations. . . .¹⁰ In a trunk made of a wild bull’s hide were deeds, charts, historical accounts and other papers, showing myself to be in possession of a good title, which certain Americans, myself among them, had to the largest and fairest portions of Quadra’s [Vancouver] Island, and also showing myself to be the attorney and advocate of the claimants.”¹¹

⁸ *Memorial*, 1848: 13.

⁹ *Petition*, 1866: 4-5; *Settlement of Oregon*, 67-8.

¹⁰ *Memorial*, 1848: 13-4.

¹¹ *Settlement of Oregon*, 20.

The number of men in the party is variously stated in the different accounts of this part of the journey. The same is true of the number of horses. This is not at all strange, for the numbers varied at different stages. It would seem also that the word "party" as used by Kelley included both himself and Young, while Young used it to define those who were subordinate to him. Young's account, as quoted by Kelley, follows:

"We set out from Monterey with seven men and forty or fifty horses, and on our way through the settlements¹² bought some more. When we arrived at the last settlement, St. Joseph, we encamped there five days to get some supplies of provisions. I left the camp and went to the bay of San Francisco, to receive some horses that I had bought before leaving Monterey. . . . When we set out from the last settlement, I had seventy-seven horses and mules. Kelley and the other five men had twenty-one, which made ninety-eight animals which I knew were fairly bought. The last nine men that joined the party had fifty-six horses. Whether they bought them, or stole them, I do not know."¹³

On the second day out from San Jose, a small band of men overtook the party. These were the men referred to in Young's statement. They were unwelcome, but there was no way to get rid of them. Kelley declared, "I neither gave consent or dissent to their traveling with the party; for I could not prevent it; and Capt. Young did not object." Both Kelley and Young gave the number of newcomers as nine, but four evidently dropped out, for Kelley's later references to them give the number as five. These men Kelley characterized as "marauders," and the term was aptly chosen, as is evident from his account of what followed.

"After a few days, those men, finding that I was not dis-

¹² Santa Cruz was one of the settlements visited.—Kelley, *Memoir*, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Territory of Oregon*, supplementary report, 50, 25 cong. 3 sess. H. rep. 101.

¹³ *Settlement of Oregon*, 56-7; also Bancroft, *Hist. of the Northwest Coast*, II, 548 n. The latter is probably based upon Kelley's account. Kelley said that there were "120 valuable horses and mules which mostly belonged to Young."—*Colonization of Oregon*, 7. But he failed to say when they had that number.

posed to connive at their villainy, sought an opportunity to destroy me. One of them discharged his rifle at me, and very nearly hit the mark; and at a subsequent time the rifle was again leveled at me, but at the moment a word from Young staid the death-charged bullet. . . .¹⁴

“Two of them had belonged to the party of twenty-five, under [Joseph] Walker [of the American Fur company], of whom Capt. Bonneville speaks in his ‘Adventures Beyond the Rocky Mountains.’ Walker’s chief object had been, for more than a year, to hunt and destroy Indians. Those two persons themselves informed me about it, and spoke often of the *black flag*, and the *rifle*, and the *arsenic*. The other three were runaway sailors—may have been pirates; they were now marauders and Indian assassins. I will illustrate. Some days after, crossing the [San] J[o]aquin river towards evening, we passed an Indian village; three of the monster men, finding the males absent, entered their dwellings, ravished the women, and took away some of their most valuable effects, and overtook the party at the place of encampment. I saw in their possession some of the articles of their plunder. The next day, after proceeding two or three miles over the prairie, one of the party cried out, ‘Indians are coming,’ and there were fifty or more Indians advancing towards us. I turned and advanced towards them; the men in the rear of the animals were with me. The Indians halted and I halted, at the distance of perhaps two rods from the chief. He was tall, good-looking, stood firm and seemed undaunted before us. A red card was pendant from his plumed cap, he held in the right hand his bow, and in the left a quiver. He addressed me as though he would explain what brought him and his men to that place. He spoke in the language of nature, and I thought I understood what he said. I addressed him, also, in the language of nature, by gestures and significant motions; tried to induce a retreat, and save the lives of his young warriors; pointed to our rifles and to their bows, and to the ground; and I tried to

¹⁴ *Settlement of Oregon*, 57.

have him understand that I was his friend and the friend of his people; and that my men had given him occasion to pursue us, and provocation for revenge. My party seemed fierce for fight; but were persuaded to let the pursuers retreat unharmed. The chief gave a word of command, and they turned about and hastened from us; and he himself stood awhile, looking toward us as though he feared not death. Turning slowly upon his heel, he walked away. Two of the party started to follow, I begged they would not; they persisted, saying they would do him no harm. In fifteen or twenty minutes after this, I heard the reports of their rifles. On their return I inquired if they had shot the chief. The reply was, 'No, we fired a salute'; but, alas! I saw among their effects the identical card, the bow, and the quiver, and I wept. After a few days I saw, on the opposite side of the Sacramento, ten or a dozen Indians. Young said 'they were hostile Indians.' They were the same Indians that had just escaped the bloody hands of the party, and were pursuing us to avenge the wrongs done them. Some days after this we crossed the river called American, and encamped on its banks, and the animals put to feed near by.

"Nearly opposite the encampment was an Indian village, and till late in the evening was heard a doleful noise, and beating on hollow logs. In the morning it was found that seven of our animals had been killed, doubtless by those provoked to pursue us. When the party were about to leave, seven Indians crossed the river twenty or thirty rods from us. Five of them ventured to come up to the camp; the other two stood upon the bank, as though they were afraid to come. They were as naked as when born, and bore with them presents—a bag of pinions, and salmon, just caught and nicely dressed. Standing in a semi-circle not more than ten feet distant from me, their orator began to speak and explain as to their innocence; and probably as to those who had killed the animals. Immediately one of the party (of the five marauders) said, 'These are the damned villains, and they ought to be shot.' 'Yes,' said Young. No sooner said than they seized their rifles and shot down those

five innocent, and to all appearances, upright and manly men, and perforated their bodies with balls, while weltering in their blood. I heard but a single groan. Two or three of the party, mounting their horses, hastened to murder in like manner the other two, and they were shot while fording the stream.

"Now my conductor, looking sharply at me, said, 'Mr. Kelley, what do you think of this?' I felt it my duty to give an evasive answer: 'We must protect ourselves in the wilderness among hostile Indians.' Doubtless, if my answer had not been that way, I should have been also shot."¹⁵

Although Kelley had failed to obtain official permission to survey the country through which he passed, he made as thorough an examination as possible and recorded the results of his observations. Upon the basis of these notes and of the information subsequently obtained in Oregon, he prepared a "Map of Upper California and Oregon," which in 1839 he put into the hands of Caleb Cushing of Massachusetts, chairman of the house committee on foreign affairs. According to his statement, this map "was examined by Col. Fremont, who explored the same country in 1837 or '40 [1843-4], and was pronounced remarkably correct. It was the first ever made by an American of the valley of the Sacramento."¹⁶ From the confusion of dates and from the fact that Fremont did not refer to this map in any of his reports, it may be inferred that the examination of the map was made after Fremont's return and not before.

This map, together with a reproduction on a smaller scale, is now in the bureau of indexes and archives of the department of state, having been recovered by Kelley and transmitted to Joel R. Poinsett, secretary of war, under date of June 12, 1839. It is a rough draft, but as Kelley said in his letter, "It is the *knowledge* imparted by the map that gives it value, and not the mere *mechanical execution* of it." Upon it a dotted line indicates Kelley's route through California and Oregon.

In California as in Mexico, the possibilities of development

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 108-10; see also Clarke, *Pioneer Days of Oregon*, I, 296-7.
¹⁶ *Settlement of Oregon*, 78.

through the construction of railroads engaged Kelley's attention, if we are to credit a statement first made eighteen or twenty years afterwards:

"While in California, in 1834, exploring the valley of the Sacramento, where, at that time, none, but wild men dwelt; and none but savage hunters roamed; cogitating upon internal improvements, I planned a branch to extend from some point in the route, after the transit of the Rocky Mountains, to the Bay of San Francisco."¹⁷

Meanwhile the "iron constitution" of Kelley, which had sustained him through pestilence-ridden Mexico and borne up under innumerable hardships, had become weakened, and he fell a victim to malaria.

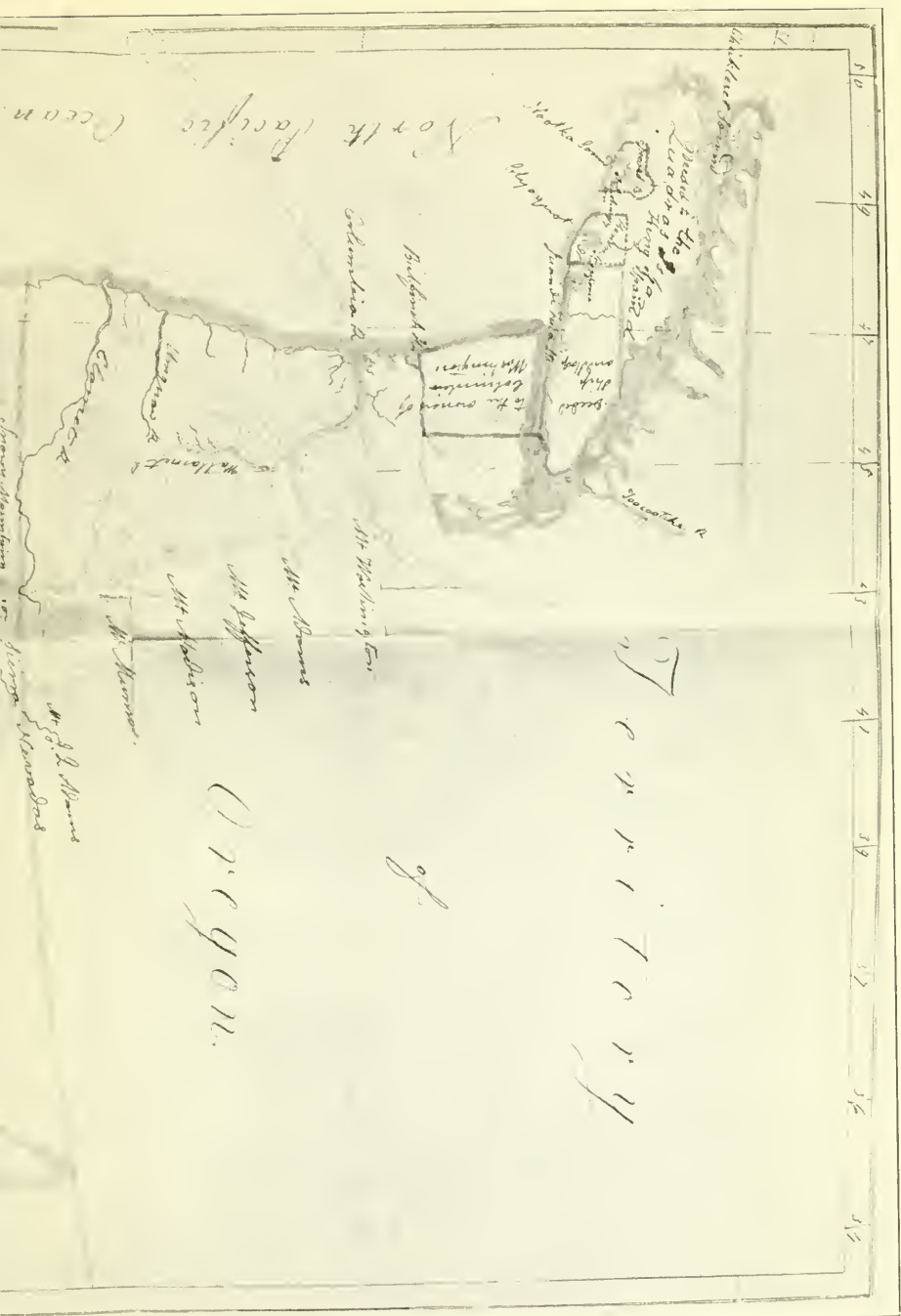
"When exploring the low and pestilential tracts in the Southern region of the Sacramento valley,¹⁸ I contracted the fever and ague. It rapidly increased and soon became terrible. Just after . . . entering Oregon . . . my party was providentially made to halt at the very moment when the endemic was having its worst effects upon me, and when I could no longer be borne on horseback. My strength had rapidly wasted, and at times I fainted and fell from the saddle.

"While in a thickly wooded mountain, it suddenly came on dark, and we were obliged to stop for the night in the midst of woods and thick darkness. Lowering partly down from the animal, I fell, the stones and leaves on which I fell composed my bed. In the morning it was found that some of the horses and pack mules had strayed away. We, however, proceeded on two or three miles, and encamped on an open stretch of ground. Capt. Young, my conductor, and the men who had been of his hunting party, returned to the mountains to search after the lost animals. This caused a delay. The five marauders, who had attached themselves to my party, two days after leaving

¹⁷ *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 71-2; *Settlement of Oregon*, 8. "This," he continued, "coincides with the views of the Hon. T. H. Benton, expressed in a speech made by him in Congress, upon the subject of a railroad to the Pacific."

¹⁸ "I crossed the rapids of the Sacramento at what was said to be its lowest ford, in latitude 39 deg. 35 min. Several of our horses were borne away by the torrent."—*Memoir*, 51. Kelley's map would seem to indicate that this river was the Feather, not the Sacramento.



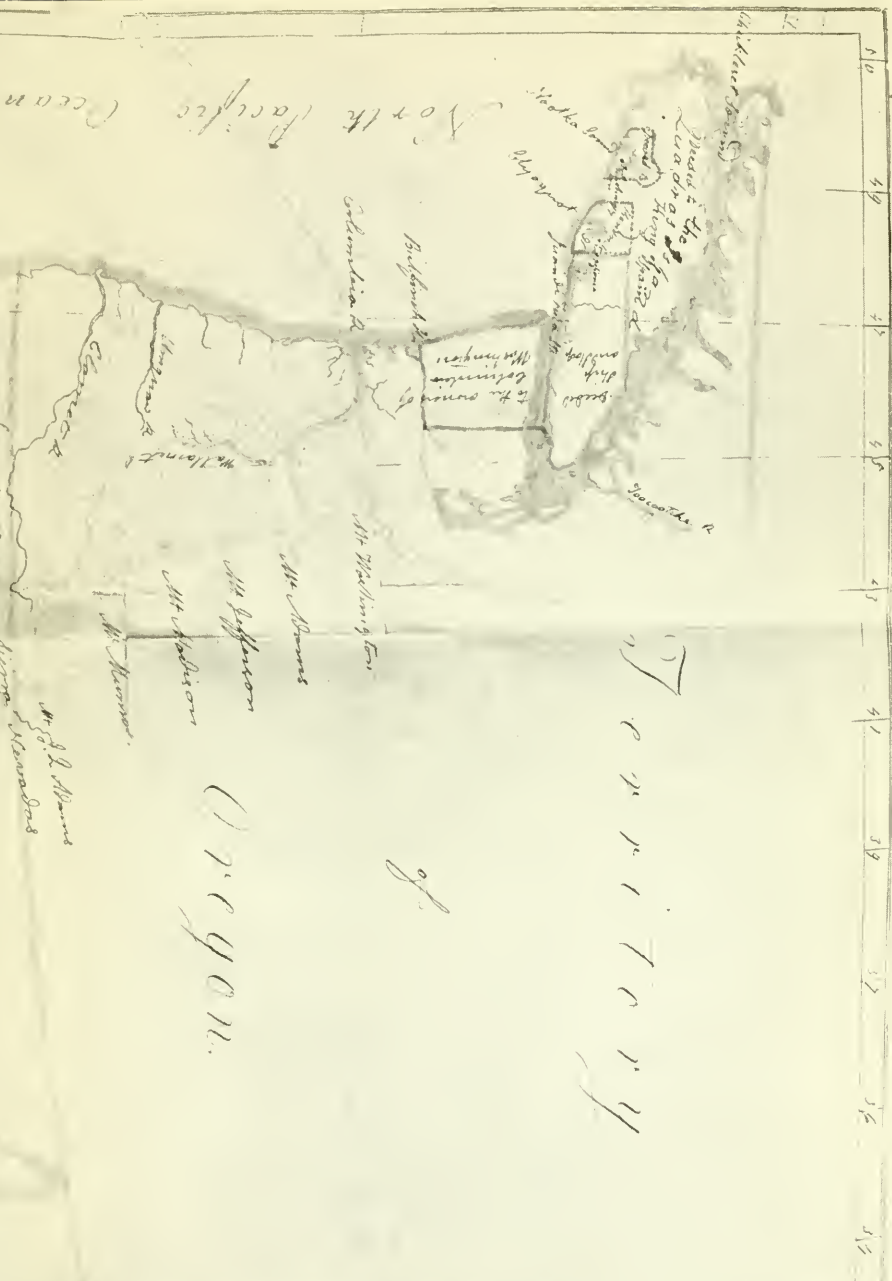


North Pacific Ocean

Oregon

Oregon

- Mr. Adams
- Mr. Jefferson
- Mr. Robinson
- Mr. Turner
- Mr. Washington
- Mr. Adams
- Mr. Adams
- Mr. Adams



the Bay of San Francisco, remained in camp, and were jocose and profane about the fire. I was now shaking like an aspen leaf, prostrate and helpless in my tent.

“The place of this encampment was upon the high land near the sources of the principal rivers watering the two countries, to settle which I had spent my best days, my fortune, and all my earthly comforts. Death appeared inevitable; earth seemed at an end, and the portal of glory to be opening. Conversation in the camp paused. . . . Then, suddenly, another voice was heard. A stranger coming into the camp inquired, ‘Where is Capt. Kelley?’ He came to my tent and said he was Capt. La Flambois [Michel La Framboise], from the Columbia River; and had been with his trappers to the Bay of San Francisco, where he had heard of me; and that he had *hastened* to overtake my party, having had nothing more for his guide than the traces of our encampments. He kindly took charge of my effects, and removed me to his camp. This good Samaritan first administered a dish of venison broth; and then, in proper time, a portion [sic] of quinine. The third portion, taken on the second day, dismissed the endemic monster. After two days at that place I was able to stand upon my legs, but unable to walk. Before leaving . . . the Captain engaged an Indian chief to take me in a canoe forty or fifty miles down the Umpqua. At first the chief declined, saying, that the upper part of the river was not navigable. Finally, in view of a bountiful reward, he consented to try. In the morning I was placed on my mule, and borne six miles to the place of embarkation. The chief at one end, his son at the other, and myself sitting upright in the centre of the boat, we floated swiftly along the current. The hoary-headed chief, with wonderful skill, descended the rapids. Often was he in the foaming stream, holding on to the bow to save the boat from pitching or sinking into the angry flood. The voyage was made in a day and a half, and there was much, in that time, to cheer my spirits, and give me strength. The heavens were serene, the air salubrious, and the country on both sides was charming.

At the landing, the faithful Indian received of my property a fine horse, saddle and bridle, a salmon knife and a scarlet velvet sash, and was satisfied.¹⁹ Rondeau, whom the Captain had appointed to be my attendant and guide, was ready at the bank to conduct me, a few miles distant, to the camp of my new party. I mounted with a little help, and rode off, feeling like a new man.

“My journeying in that wilderness was full of interesting incidents and things terrible.”²⁰

“On the 27th of October, I reached the end of a perilous journey of over 6000 miles—most of the distance without traveling companions; and more than half, in wilderness or savage countries. Hardships had almost worn me out. Landed in front of Fort Vancouver. Capt. La Framboise assisted me out of the boat. With the help of his arm, I walked slowly and feebly to the fort, and entered a room at one end of the mansion-house, opening from the court. After a few minutes, the chief factor, Mr. McLaughlin, came in—made a few inquiries about my health and business, and, ordering some refreshments, retired. None of his household, none of his American guests called, nor had any of them been seen at the river, or on the way to the fort. No countryman, though many were in the house, came to sympathize in my afflictions or to greet my coming.

“After I had taken an hour of repose on a bed which was in the room, the Captain entered with compliments of Mr. McLaughlin, saying it would be inconvenient to accommodate with a room inside the fort, as they were all occupied, but I could have a room outside, and a man to attend upon me. Again, sustained by the arm of my friend, I was led to the place assigned me outside the stockade; and so was cast out from the fort, as though unworthy to breathe the same air, or to tread the same ground with its proud and cowardly inmates. The house had one room, with a shed adjoining. The

¹⁹ “Which shows that he did not know how to trade with the Indians.”—Bancroft, *Northwest Coast*, II, 549 n.

²⁰ *Settlement of Oregon*, 17-9; *Memorial*, 1848:14-5.

latter having been long occupied for dressing fish and wild game, was extremely filthy. The black mud about the door was abundantly mixed with animal putrescence. It was not a place that would conduce much to the recovery of health. It was, however, the habitation of a Canadian, a respectable and intelligent man, a tinner by trade."²¹

The immediate reason for this inhospitable reception at the fort where all comers had been made welcome, at least ostensibly, may be best stated in the words of Dr. McLoughlin :

"As Gen. Figueroa [sic], Governor of California, had written me that Ewing Young and Kelley had stolen horses from the settlers of that place, I would have no dealings with them, and told them my reasons. Young maintained he stole no horses, but admitted the others had. I told him that might be the case, but as the charge was made I could have no dealings with him till he cleared it up. But he maintained to his countrymen, and they believed it, that as he was a leader among them, I acted as I did from a desire to oppose American interests. I treated all of the party in the same manner as Young, except Kelley, who was very sick. Out of humanity I placed him in a house, attended on him and had his victuals sent him at every meal."²²

Figueroa's letter had been brought from Monterey on the company's schooner *Cadboro*, which had made better time than Kelley's party, and so enabled McLoughlin to take the necessary steps to protect the interests of his company and of those dependent upon it. Warning notices were posted, and the Canadians were forbidden to trade with the members of the party.²³ But Kelley declared that the accusing letter did not implicate him with the unwelcome marauders, and he maintained that McLoughlin's action was based wholly upon the

²¹ *Memorial*, 1848:15-6. "I arrived at Vancouver unwell, and was hospitably welcomed by Mr. McLaughlin, the chief factor. Medical aid was rendered me; a house in the village was furnished for my use, and all my physical wants were supplied; but I was forbidden to enter the fort!"—*Memoir*, 60.

²² McLoughlin, *Defence*, addressed to parties in London, *Oregon Historical Society Quarterly*, I, 195; also Bancroft, *Northwest Coast*, II, 550.

²³ Bancroft, *Northwest Coast*, II, 552; *Hist. of Oregon*, I, 91-2. Young demanded and received a retraction from Figueroa.—Walker, *Sketch of Ewing Young*, *Oregon Pioneer Association, Transactions*, 1880:57.

desire to prevent the settlement of Americans on the Columbia. He claimed that Captain Dominis of the brig *Owyhee* of Boston, who was in the Columbia in 1829, had communicated to McLoughlin information as to Kelley's purpose to colonize Oregon, and that the chief factor at once prepared to protect the monopoly of his company by discouraging trade with Americans and by preëmpting the most desirable sites.²⁴

Again it is necessary to record the defeat of Kelley; but again it must be said that while the result of his efforts was personal failure, the actual result was success. Through the American Society he had started the movement which led to the coming of Wyeth and demonstrated the practicability of the overland route; he had aroused the churches to the opportunity for work among the Indians, which led to the coming of the Lees and other missionaries. Now he had brought into the Oregon country nine men, most of them American citizens, who with Calvin Tibbetts were to remain as settlers, thus establishing American occupation and ultimate domination in that territory.²⁵ All this was not apparent at the time; least of all to Kelley. To those at Fort Vancouver he appeared as a strange, almost pathetic figure; the wreck of a man in his prime, whose race was about run. In his *Recollections of the Hudson's Bay Company*, George B. Roberts said: "I remember the visit of Mr. Hall J. Kelley—he was penniless and ill clad—and considered rather too rough for close companionship and not invited to mess—he may have thought this hard—our

²⁴ *Settlement of Oregon*, 86-7; *Colonization of Oregon*, 6. He also said that Dominis gave McLoughlin a copy of the General Circular; but that pamphlet was not issued until 1831. We may well believe, however, that the Hudson's Bay authorities were informed of the movement for Oregon settlement in congress in 1828, for they were men of sagacity, and it is unlikely that they failed to keep in touch with the British legation at Washington. It is possible also that Dr. McLoughlin may have learned of the movement for emigration from the American trapper and fur trader, Jedediah Smith, who was at Fort Vancouver from August, 1828 to March 1829.—Elliott, *Dr. John McLoughlin and his guests*, Washington Historical Society, *Quarterly*, III, 67-8.

²⁵ The members of the party, in addition to Kelley and Young, were: Brandywine, Lawrence Carmichael, Elisha Ezekiel, Joseph Gale, Webley John Hawkhurst, John Howard, Kilhorn, John McCarty, and George Winslow. Ezekiel was a wheelwright; Hawkhurst, a native of Long Island, was a carpenter; Gale was a native of the District of Columbia; Winslow was colored. The names are given in Bancroft, *Oregon*, I, 76-7n, upon the authority of Gray, *Oregon*, 191, supplemented by Lee and Frost, *Ten Years in Oregon*, 129. Gray made no mention of Kelley.

people didn't know or care for the equality he had perhaps been accustomed to—It should be borne in mind that discipline in those days was rather severe and a general commingling would not do." Again, "Hall J. Kelly was about 5 feet 9 inches, wore a white slouched hat Blanket Capot, Leather pants with a red stripe down the seam—rather outré for even Vancouver. We little understood such chaps as he and his, and our notions of equality were different—for Kelly to have been treated otherwise than he was would have been detrimental to the discipline of the plan by admitting him as an equal—dignity had to be preserved in those days—how much depended on it. The doctor could not afford it as we say to get down to Kelley's standing."²⁶ To such straits had our dreamer come! But his "vision" had at last become a reality, and the lordly chief factor himself was soon to face it and to be overcome by it.²⁷ Somewhere it is written, "Sometimes we are inclined to class those who are once-and-a-half witted with the half-witted, because we appreciate only a third part of their wit."

²⁶ Roberts, Recollections, Ms. 12, 30 (1878).

²⁷ "I early foresaw that the march of civilization and progress of peopling the American Territories, was westward and onward, and that but a few years would pass away before the whole valuable country between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific, then used as hunting and trapping grounds, and as the resting place of native tribes, must become the abode of another race—American. This could neither be successfully resisted, nor did I deem it politic or desirable to attempt it. In this spirit I prepared myself to encourage, hasten, and further what I thought would be not only attended with good, but inevitable.

"From 1824 to the present hour, I have spared neither time nor means, but liberally used both, to facilitate the settling of Oregon by whites; and that it has been my good fortune to do much in years gone by to relieve distress and promote the comfort and happiness of immigrants, I may fearlessly assert, and for proof need only to refer to the candid and just Americans who first came to the country."—McLoughlin, letter to *Oregon Statesman*, June 8, 1852, *Oregon Historical Society, Quarterly*, VIII, 295-9.

CHAPTER EIGHT

IN OREGON—AN UNWELCOME GUEST

It is difficult to account for Kelley's surprise at finding himself unwelcome at Fort Vancouver. For ten years he had lost no opportunity to assail the Hudson's Bay company, and he had every reason to believe that Dr. McLoughlin was fully informed as to his past activities and his plans for the future. The success of those plans would work irreparable loss to the company and the nation for which it exercised civil jurisdiction over the Northwest Coast. Yet he seems to have expected the chief factor to treat all differences between them in a lofty and impersonal manner, and to accord to him all the courtesies due to an accredited diplomatic agent. Indeed he was not without credentials of a kind. In his baggage were papers showing him to be the attorney of the claimants to the lands on Vancouver Island bought of the Indians by Captain John Kendrick in 1791, but his immediate plan was to form a settlement on the Columbia. These papers were not presented to Dr. McLoughlin, but Kelley believed that they were examined and the rest of his baggage overhauled during his illness.¹ At the worst he fared better than any of the others of his party, for while he was given food and shelter, such as it was, his followers received no favors whatever.

His resentment at the attitude of his countrymen is more easily understood. At the time of his arrival, there were at Fort Vancouver seven men who had accompanied Wyeth on his second expedition, and their presence in that country was the result, direct or indirect, of his efforts. These men were the Lees and their three lay associates, Thomas Nuttall, the celebrated botanist who had served as lecturer and curator at Harvard, and John K. Townsend, a young naturalist. Jason Lee was born in Canada of American parentage, and Nuttall

¹ Kelley, *Hist. of the Settlement of Oregon*, 20; *Petition*, 1866:6; Bulfinch, *Memorial*, 9-11, 26 cong. 1 sess. H. doc. 43.

was an Englishman, but their associations had been with American interests. Like Kelley, Nuttall held the degree of A. M. from Harvard. Of these men Kelley said, "There were some of my countrymen at that time at Vancouver, the recipients of the generous hospitality and favors of Mr. McLaughlin. Though for several months within five or six minutes of my sick room, yet none of them had the humanity *to visit me*."²

The first person who visited him was Young, but "his call was not so much to sympathize as to speak of the personal abuse just received from Dr. McLaughlin." To Kelley the absence of active sympathy in Young was the result of the misrepresentations of slanderous tongues, but Young may have had in mind the difference between the real Oregon and the place so glowingly pictured to him by Kelley at Pueblo and Monterey.³ That the man was not taken at his own rating is undoubtedly true, for who could understand him, least of all those who were his adversaries? "Before I had been long in the country," he declared, "I learned that the factor and his agents were preparing in every artful way to render my abode there uncomfortable and unsafe. The most preposterous calumnies and slanders were set on foot in regard to my character, conduct and designs.⁴ . . . Seeing that falsehood was making such sad work with my character, and that calumny and mockery were the order of the day, I addressed to John McLaughlin, Esq., a manifesto, prepared, of course, with a feeble hand, declaring myself not to be a public agent acting by authority from the United States, as represented at Vancouver; but to be a private and humble citizen of a great nation—moved by a spirit of freedom, and animated with the hope of being useful among my fellow men." Just how this communication was calculated to effect a reconciliation does not appear. That it did not soften the heart of the chief factor is certain; for when in the latter part of November Kelley requested a

² Kelley, *Memorial*, 1848:16.

³ *Settlement of Oregon*, 58-9.

⁴ Kelley, *Memoir*, Committee on Foreign Affairs, supplemental report. *Territory of Oregon*, 60, 25 cong. 3 sess. H. rep. 101.

passage to the Sandwich Islands in one of the company's vessels, he met with a refusal, although he was willing to pay whatever might be reasonably required. Nor would Dr. McLoughlin have any business transactions with him. When a silver dollar was sent to the company storehouse for certain necessary articles desired by Kelley, the articles were not forthcoming under the pretense that the money was not genuine. "The dollar was current, and the metal pure," naively remarked Kelley.⁵

When he was able to get about, some of his party visited him and asked him to plat out the land on the site which he had chosen for a settlement. "A day for that service, two or three weeks off, was appointed; but, prior to its coming, other visits were made of an unfriendly nature. . . . Also two letters were received from the party, threatening my life, if seen on the Wallamet. All things considered, I thought it prudent to keep from that quarter."⁶ One of these letters was from Young.⁷

Yet there were those whose attitude was not unfriendly. "Those who treated me with respect were the Indians and the common people. The Rev. Jason Lee privily called, at times, and talked freely of obligations of himself and the public to me, always expressing his haste. Mr. Stuart, now in the British Parliament, whose mind differed from other minds at Vancouver, something as light differs from darkness, honored me with his society and expressions of his kind regards—not fearing the displeasure of Mr. McLaughlin."⁸

About the first of February, his health being improved, Kelley began to make exploring excursions about the Columbia and to collect all available information as to the geography and economic characteristics of the country, with particular reference to the activities of the Hudson's Bay company and to the possibilities of blocking those efforts through an influx

⁵ Kelley, *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 57-8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁷ *Settlement of Oregon*, 58.

⁸ *Memorial* 1848:116.

of American settlers and traders. He later made a survey of the Columbia river from Fort Vancouver to its mouth and recorded the results upon his map of Upper California and Oregon, to which reference has been made in the preceding chapter.⁹ This was not an instrumental survey, however, for his theodolite was then at the Sandwich Islands. The results of his observations were later presented to congress in a memoir, which will receive attention in later chapters.¹⁰

Dr. McLoughlin naturally kept himself informed as to all of Kelley's movements, for here was a man who openly challenged his authority. Said Kelley: "All my movements were watched. . . . Had I been willing to place myself under the control and direction of the Company, all would have been peace; but so long as I was disposed to act independently, as an American on American soil, seeking authentic information, for general diffusion, and pursuing the avowed purpose of opening the trade of the territory to general competition, and the wealth of the country to general participation and enjoyment, so long was I an object of dread and dislike to the grasping monopolists of the Hudson's Bay Company. My abode in Oregon was thus rendered very disagreeable."¹¹

It is interesting at this point to note the interpretation of Dr. McLoughlin's attitude as given by Mrs. Frances Fuller Victor:

"It was not altogether Kelley's Mexican costume that excluded Kelley from Vancouver society. Other travelers who had arrived in unpresentable apparel had been made presentable by the loan of articles from the wardrobes of the factors and partisans resident there at the time. It could not be said either that Kelley was uninteresting or uneducated. Quite the contrary, indeed. What he had to tell of his adventures in Mexico and California must have been just the sort of tales to while away winter evenings in Bachelors' Hall.

"I fancy the situation was about this: McLoughlin was pre-

⁹ Memoir, 55; *Memorial*, 1848:16; *Petition*, 1866:5.

¹⁰ See Appendix.

¹¹ *Memoir*, 60.

pared to dislike Kelley even without Governor Figueroa's condemnation, on account of his published denunciation of the Hudson's Bay Company. He was under no obligation to admit him to the society of the fort, although he would not have him suffer sickness and hunger under the shadow of its walls. The fact that he was an American while giving him a patriotic excuse, if not motive, for ignoring claims on his compassion, also, on the other hand, furnished a politic motive for indulging his natural humanity. For at that time there were several Americans being entertained at Vancouver. . . . The treaty rights of Wyeth were not disputed, nor were the scientific observations of the scholars opposed. It was Kelley, as colonizer and defamer of the company, who was unwelcome, even after it was evident that there was no stain upon his character.

"This was perfectly understood by Kelley, and it was not McLoughlin's disapproval of him which wounded his sensitive pride. It was the conduct of his own countrymen, . . . Nuttall, who was a Cambridge man, was well acquainted with Kelley's writings, owing to them, Kelley believed, his idea of studying the botany of Oregon. But Nuttall, as well as the Lees, thought too highly of his privileges at Vancouver to risk them by acknowledging this fact. And Wyeth, who was not like himself, an educated man, never having learned to spell correctly, or to introduce in his writings capitals and punctuation points where they belonged, and who had led as far as Vancouver as many free Americans as had Young and himself—Wyeth, who when in Massachusetts was one of his prospective colonists—was on the Columbia River utterly indifferent to him.

"This treatment of Kelley by his countrymen must have been construed at Vancouver as condemnatory, although its shrewd and magnanimous chief may have guessed a little at its meaning and sought to make amends by unremitting care of the sick and neglected man."¹²

This statement may be somewhat unfair as to Nuttall, whose

¹² Victor, Hall J. Kelley, one of the fathers of Oregon, Oregon Historical Society, *Quarterly*, II., 393-6.

interest in his surroundings were wholly scientific, and whose shyness was proverbial. As to the Lees, Daniel, the younger, seems to have occupied a secondary position, while the abler Jason was wrapt up in plans of a singularly material nature for one whose sole errand in that country was the Christianizing of the natives. Certainly he does not appear to have had that disinterestedness which should distinguish those who would assume to lead others to a higher spiritual level. As far as the available records show, Wyeth, who had first arrived at Fort Vancouver on September 23, 1834, did not come into contact with Kelley until several months later. The circumstances of their meeting are thus set forth by Kelley:

"About the middle of February, I went into the fort to inquire after an acquaintance who had just come from the upper parts of the Columbia; and was met by McLaughlin himself, and told that the person whom I wished to see was engaged. The door was then insultingly closed upon me. The next day, the acquaintance with a countenance sadly changed from former days, came into my cabin and strode across the floor. Sternly looking towards me, he uttered these words, viz., 'Well, Kelley, how did you get here?' After making some abusive remarks, he walked out. His only object seemed to be to afflict, and to fill my soul with sorrow.¹³

Social ostracism, embargo, and espionage at length turned Kelley's thoughts toward departure, and when he had remained long enough to collect sufficient information he decided to return home. "The loss of my property on the route had obliged me to vary my original plans, and limit my enterprise to such an examination of the country as would enable me to enlighten the American public on my return to the United States. I remained, therefore, in Oregon no longer than was

¹³ *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 58. "One man, however, called to abuse me—to say that he was against me—I should find no friends in that country, and I had better hasten out of it."—*Memorial*, 1848:16. Wyeth's sole reference to Kelley, in his journal, reads under date of February 12, 1835: "12th. In the morning made to Vancouver and found there a polite reception and to my great astonishment Mr. Hall J. Kelly. He came in co. with Mr. Young from Monte El Rey and it is said stole between them a bunch of horses. Kelly is not received at the Fort on this account as a gentleman a house is given him and food sent him from the Gov. tabl but he is not suffered to mess here."—Young, *Correspondence and Journals of Nathaniel J. Wyeth*, 250.

needful to satisfy myself on the desired points of inquiry; and so long as I did remain, I was treated very much like a prisoner of war, although not subject to actual confinement. . . . I ought, in justice to myself, to state that it was not disappointment, in regard to the natural advantages of Oregon, which prevented my forming a permanent connexion with that region; but I was impelled by a determination to do all in my power, by constant effort in the United States, to lead our Government to extend over Oregon that paternal care which alone is needed to render it the very nucleus of emigration, and the most attractive portion of our national domain.

”¹⁴

“While yet in Oregon, about the time of embarkation for home, I planned to return to that country, and form a settlement at New Dergeness [Dungeness] . . . on the south side of De Fuca’s Sea, and on the westerly side of Port Discovery.”¹⁵

Arrangements were finally made, how is nowhere stated, that Kelley should be given a passage on the Hudson’s Bay brig *Dryade*, Captain Keplin, to the Sandwich Islands. This was not the only favor that was received. “The chief factor of the company presented me with a draft of seven pounds sterling, payable at the Sandwich Islands. A part, however was paid at Vancouver, in articles of comfort.” Thus the embargo had been removed. “This was kind, and I felt grateful for it.”¹⁶

Fortunately it is possible to reproduce here a fragment from Kelley’s journal, in which he recorded in characteristic fashion his experiences at the outset of the voyage:

“March 15, went on board the *Dryade*, about to sail for the Sandwich Islands, was promised a berth in the cabin, but received one in the steerage—thankful to receive one anywhere.

“The cabin boy informed me that breakfast was ready in the

¹⁴ *Memoir*, 60-1.

¹⁵ *Settlement of Oregon*, 124.

¹⁶ *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 59; also *Memoir*, 60.

steerage. I went down. One of the sailors filled a tea kettle with boiling water, into which he put some tea, and offered me the use of a tin pot which was really too dirty for any animal but a pig to eat from. The tea being sweetened with molasses, was too unpalatable for my drinking. Some coarse ship bread, and cold boiled beef served in a small wooden tub, was all I saw, and more than I tasted of.

“Dinner—the cold beef and coarse bread returned, and a pudding composed of flour and mashed potatoes, half baked, clammy and heavy, without plate, knife or fork. . . . Had a wakeful night—suffered much—attributable to the miserable accommodations and grub.

“Breakfast—Tea sweetened with molasses, and cold salt beef without vegetables.

“Went on shore, built a fire, and sat down by it—reflected on past adventures and present ills of life. I do not despair. The rectitude of my conduct, and an ever approving conscience sustains the heart and keeps the courage up. How disagreeable it is to be made the companions of ignorant and sordid-minded men! To me it is misery indeed; but I must suffer their insolence, and accommodate myself to circumstances.”¹⁷

In one of his petitions to congress, additional details were given:

“Head wind retarded, for several days, the descent of the vessel to the ocean; which circumstances gave him an opportunity to make particular examinations of the river, and collect materials for a correct map of the same. He had previously made examinations. . . . He was terribly seasick through the voyage. The food furnished him was scant, and unsavory. The sailors at times spat upon his bed and wearing apparel, and in diverse ways injured, or destroyed, the exposed articles of his effects. To render his situation in the highest degree distressing, after having retired to rest, the sailors in the steerage were in the practice of filling the place with tobacco smoke, raising high the wicks of the lamps, bringing

¹⁷ *Memorial*, 1848:16-7.

down the scuttle door, and keeping the room close. It was a suffocating time. The condition of him, who had never used a particle of tobacco, and was reduced to great physical debility, is hardly conceivable to any but himself. . . . Inquiries were often made of the captain. Why all this abuse? The uniform reply was, 'I must obey orders'."¹⁸

Of his experiences at the Sandwich Islands, we know but little. That he was at Towaihai, Hawaii, on June 26, 1835, is evident from an affidavit relating to Kendrick's land purchases which he obtained from John Young, an old resident, and upon which his name appears as one of the witnesses.¹⁹ Kelley's own account is confined to the following:

"At the Islands he was favored, by his noble-hearted countrymen resident there, with every facility for examining that group, and making historical and philosophical inquiries. In the month of October, he embarked on board the whale ship Canton Packet for his native land."²⁰

Little is told of the homeward voyage, but that little is enough to show that Kelley was ever alert to gain information. "During the sea voyage of six months on board the ship Canton Packet every fair day and moonlight night, my attention was turned to explorations of the starry heavens, and the abtruse regions of science; and all the while continued to study the book of nature, and that interesting little book ever in my hand, open and read with intense desire to know God and his handiworks."²¹

¹⁸ *Petition*, 1866:5-6; *Memorial*, 1848:17. We are told by competent medical authority that "there is a physical as well as intellectual memory."

¹⁹ Bulfinch, *Memorial*, 7-8.

²⁰ *Petition*, 1866:6. "I, also, cursorily, explored some of the Sandwich Islands, particularly Owyhee, of which I constructed a map."—*Settlement of Oregon*, 119.

²¹ *Settlement of Oregon*, 119.

CHAPTER NINE

FOUR YEARS OF FUTILE EFFORT

Kelley was a changed man when he arrived at Boston in 1836 after his long voyage from the Sandwich Islands. Only three years before "his physical nature was iron-like, possessing great power of endurance," but exposure and hardships had enfeebled his body and shattered his nervous system. Yet this gaunt shadow of a man had no thought of giving up his long cherished idea of awakening his countrymen to the great advantages, national and individual, which must inevitably follow the settlement of the Northwest Coast under the patronage and protection of the American government. He had already done much to spread broadcast information which he had obtained at second hand; now he could speak with authority, having seen the promised land and found it good.

But there were personal matters which required his immediate attention. His family "every soul of them turned against me," had to be reconciled to him. He went to Gilmanton and spent some time with his father and his wife and children, but his efforts to reestablish his household resulted in failure.¹

His expenses had been heavy, and most of his property had been lost or taken from him, so that now he was a poor man, worried by his debts. It was not so much the amount of his indebtedness that concerned him; it was the fact that it was a debt of honor, and that he was unable to pay the small sum of three hundred dollars on account of outstanding obligations of the American Society which he had issued as general agent. These were two shares of stock, each of one hundred dollars, and five twenty-dollar certificates. Concerning them he explained, "Immediately after the Oregon expedition was broken up, the amount received for stock and certificates was re-

¹ Temple, *Hist. of the Town of Palmer*, 266.

funded, all but the above, which circumstances rendered inconvenient and improper then to restore."²

In an attempt to raise money, therefore, he again worked as a surveyor. "In the year 1837, I surveyed three railroad routes in the State of Maine, each, however, of short extent, having the assistance, only, of two or three men unacquainted with engineering, and employed on the outdoor work. I planned, figured, drafted, and performed the office-work; besides, the entire labor with the field instruments."³ The report of one of these surveys was published;⁴ but whether the project was carried out is not stated.

In September, 1837, William A. Slacum, purser in the United States navy, went to Boston and conferred with Charles Bulfinch, who had long been interested in trading ventures on the Northwest Coast. He asked for a meeting with Kelley, and Kelley visited him at the Tremont House, where the matter of Oregon and its settlement was discussed.

Slacum had recently returned from Oregon, having been commissioned by the secretary of state, under date of November 11, 1835, "to stop at the different settlements of whites on the coast of the United States, and on the banks of the [Columbia] river, and also at the various Indian villages on the banks, or in the immediate neighborhood of that river; ascertain, as nearly as possible, the population of each; the relative number of whites (distinguishing the nation to which they belong) and aborigines; the jurisdiction the whites acknowledge; the sentiments entertained by all in respect to the United States, and to the two European powers having possessions in that region; and, generally, to obtain all such information, political, physical, statistical, and geographical, as may prove useful or interesting to this Government."

This mission had been undertaken at the suggestion of President Jackson, who may have been prompted by Kelley's activities during several winters at Washington, and by the knowl-

² Kelley, *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 7n.

³ *Ibid.*, 72-3.

⁴ Kelley, *Hist. of the Settlement of Oregon*, 8.

edge that Kelley had proceeded to Oregon with the purpose of establishing a settlement on the Columbia. The immediate suggestion, however, was due to no word or act of Kelley, who was then on the high seas en route for Boston, but to the fact that Slacum was "about to visit the Pacific ocean," thus presenting to the president an opportunity to obtain specific and authentic information upon a matter concerning which the government must soon take a definite stand.⁵

In the course of an investigation which extended from December 22, 1836, to February 10, 1837, Slacum conferred with Dr. McLoughlin, Jason Lee, Ewing Young, and others, and collected much information which he submitted upon his return. Some of this information appears in a memorial praying compensation for his services, which he presented to congress on December 18, 1837.⁶

In this memorial there is no mention of Kelley, though the names of several of the members of his party are given. The reason for this omission is unknown. Kelley believed that it was due to the desire of Robert Greenhow, librarian of the department of state, to deprive him of the credit for having induced the first American settlers to locate in Oregon. According to his statement Slacum declared that he had seen a copy of Kelley's General Circular in the hands of one of the settlers, and he "seemed satisfied" that Kelley was the founder of the first American settlement, and said that he would so report. He had brought from that settlement the copy of the General Circular and also a statement of Ewing Young declar-

⁵ "The investigations of Dr. J. R. Wilson led him to look upon this effort of President Jackson to get light on the situation in Oregon as bound up with his larger scheme of acquisition of territory in the southwest, stretching from Texas to and including the harbor of San Francisco. Doctor Wilson came to this conclusion because Jackson's interest in this direction had in the first instance been aroused by letters from Slacum. The scope and character of the report suggest that the author had a pretty clear and full appreciation of all the vital American interests in the Oregon situation in the thirties."—Young, *Introductory note to reprint of Slacum's report*. Oregon Historical Society, *Quarterly*, XIII, 175.

⁶ Slacum, *Memorial Praying Compensation for His Services in Obtaining Information in Relation to the Settlements on the Oregon River*. 25 cong. 2 sess. S. doc. 24. The material accompanying this memorial was reprinted as appendix "N" in Committee on Foreign Affairs, supplemental report, *Territory of Oregon*, 29-47. 25 cong. 3 sess. H. rep. 101.

ing that it was due to Kelley that he had settled in that territory.

While in Washington in 1838 Kelley examined the manuscript of Slacum's report, which was on file in the department of state. There he found Young's statement, which had been omitted from the printed copy. "The paper marked E in the report is that identical statement; and it was evidently, at first, intended to be *printed*, with the matters included in the report: but it was not printed, nor to be seen by members of Congress; nor was any allusion made to the petitioner [Kelley], or to any of his meritorious acts in Oregon." The facts in the case cannot be determined, and the report in question cannot now be found in the archives. It does not appear, however, how Greenhow could have had anything to do with the papers which Slacum chose to append to his memorial.

Kelley took advantage of his opportunity to copy Young's statement, in which he acknowledged his indebtedness to Kelley, but referred to him in terms which indicated that he had "mistaken views" about Kelley and "unfriendly feelings" toward him. "There never was, I affirm it, the least personal misunderstanding between me and Capt. Young," Kelley declared. "His inimical feelings were wholly owing to the lying spirit going out from Fort Vancouver, and going about to deceive those who were most likely to be friends and to stand by me."⁷

As has been said in the preceding chapter Kelley left the Northwest Coast with the idea of returning to establish a settlement at New Dungeness on the strait of Juan de Fuca, west of Port Discovery, but he was unable to arouse interest in the project. Of this movement he said:

"Soon after my return to New England, I announced to the public through the medium of the newspapers, my purpose and programme; and many enterprising and intelligent men of New England, some with families, a sufficient number for a settlement, enlisted for the expedition. But the war of perse-

⁷ *Settlement of Oregon*, 55-8, 80; *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 62-8.

cution continuing to rage, and the troops about me making daily attacks, and the hireling press again being turned against me, I was forced to abandon that enterprise. It was my intention to take my family to the place of settlement, and to be myself a settler, believing that should my abode be on that side of the continent, far away from persecuting enemies on this side, I could better, I supposed, promote the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom. But I am now [1868] satisfied that it was ordered in Divine Providence, and for my good that that settlement should not be made by me; that, although the ideal 'Puget's Sound Agricultural Association' could do nothing, yet the Hudson Bay Company could do much to break up the establishment, and drive me and my friends from the coast

"To bring me into the lowest possible disrepute, and under universal contempt, and to break up that expedition, also, the following abusive notice was taken of me and my enterprise by the publishers of the Old American Comic Almanac of 1837. On one of its queer cuts was a geographical caricature of a portion of Oregon. On the banks of the Columbia was written '*Rowed up Salt River*'; and in the country north, between the Cowlitz and the ocean, '*Kelley's Folly*.' Twenty thousand copies were said to have been sold. To apprise my cruel enemies that I was yet alive, and had yet some power left to defend my bleeding character, I published the following in the Boston Post:"⁸

The reader will be spared this communication, which was entitled "Unprovoked Cruelty." By his ill-advised outburst Kelley naturally brought a harmless bit of foolery to the attention of many who would have never known of it, and so added to his reputation as a man whose mind was singularly out of tune with his fellows. Nor did he ever fail to mention the insult when setting forth the long list of his tribulations.⁹

In 1837 he again took to writing on Oregon, but instead of

⁸ *Settlement of Oregon*, 125-8.

⁹ Kelley, *Hist. of the Colonization of Oregon*, appx. G: *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, appx. I.

presenting the results of his observations he chose to waste his efforts on the question of the American title, concerning which he had little if any information that was not already available to the authorities at Washington. Thus, in the year mentioned, he published a series of articles in the Bunker Hill Aurora, giving an account of the discoveries and examinations made on the Northwest Coast by the early Spanish, American, and British navigators. These articles, together with documents relating to the claims of Bulfinch and other Americans to the land on Vancouver Island purchased by Captain Kendrick, he presented in 1838 to Lewis F. Linn, senator from Missouri. Linn was chairman of a "select committee to which was referred a bill to authorize the President of the United States to occupy the Oregon Territory." In his report he quoted at length from Slacum's memorial, and used some of Kelley's data on the discovery and occupation of the Columbia, but he does not appear to have set a high value upon this material, for he failed to mention Kelley's name.¹⁰

During 1838 and 1839 Kelley contributed another series of articles to the American Traveller of Boston, dealing with the question of title. In 1839 came an opportunity for service of a more practical nature. Caleb Cushing, chairman of the house committee on foreign affairs, asked him to contribute a memoir on Oregon and California, based on personal observations. To this request he gladly responded. The result appears in the appendix to Cushing's supplemental report on the "Territory of Oregon."¹¹

In 1839 also, Kelley presented through John Davis, senator from Massachusetts, a memorial to congress "praying a grant of land in the Oregon Territory for the purpose of establishing a colony thereon," which was referred to a select committee. In this document, he made a clear statement of his efforts to promote the settlement of Oregon, and declared that since "many of the individuals whose attention had been directed by his exertions towards Oregon, and who originally enlisted

¹⁰ 25 cong. 2 sess. S. doc. 470; *Settlement of Oregon*, 77.

¹¹ 25 cong. 3 sess. H. rep. 101: 47-61. See appendix.

in his scheme of emigration, have subsequently settled in that Territory . . . your petitioner has thus been the author of the first permanent American settlements west of the Rocky Mountains." He also called attention to his services after his return in communicating the results of his journey to the public. Upon these grounds he based his claim,¹² which he summarized in the following terms:

"Having thus sacrificed his time, property, and health, being now reduced to poverty, and yet remaining desirous of carrying the institutions of his country to the Oregon, he most earnestly and respectfully prays of this honorable body, the grant of so much land in that Territory as may enable him at once to establish a prosperous colony, and regain some portion of the property which he expended as before described."¹³

That this memorial was based on little more than a forlorn hope is probable; for Kelley had already turned his attention to the opening of a direct means of communication with the Pacific Coast. For information as to his activities in this direction we are compelled to rely upon the unsupported statements in his own writings, which are themselves contradictory and in some particulars clearly erroneous. In after years he declared that after the failure of his second attempt to found a settlement, and after a physical breakdown following his surveying work in Maine,

"I, therefore, determined to continue in some field of useful enterprise; and turned to a project then on foot, from another quarter; that of a canal or railroad across the Isthmus of Panama. That choice was made, partly to prepare for memori-

¹² "While in the prosecution of the enterprise, it did not so much as enter my mind ever to apply to Congress for relief, or a reward for any services or sacrifices which I might render the country; but, after its achievement, and my return home, in 1836,—finding my health greatly impaired, my property, and the very means of acquiring property, gone; and considering the nature of the circumstances which prevented the selection and occupancy of a lot of land in the Valley of the Wallamet, and also the circumstances which deprived me of a participation in the abundant harvest of the fields I had sown, I thought it my duty to apply for help; and accordingly in 1839, did apply."—*Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, postscript.

¹³ 26 cong. 1 sess. S. doc. 20; S. jour. 45, 76. According to Kelley a petition in support of his memorial was presented to congress by a number of citizens of Boston, among whom was the historian, George Bancroft, but no reference to such a document has been found in the official records.—Kelley, *Memorial*, 1848: 11; *Colonization of Oregon*, appx. F; *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, appx. F; *Settlement of Oregon*, 118.

alizing Congress on the subjects of the railroad, and the civilization of the Indians in the United States' territories. It was thought, that working in the conspicuous position of a chief engineer, two or three years, in a southern climate, would limber the limbs for operations in a northern; and the work itself would render honorable testimony to my capabilities; and be commendatory letters to men in the council of our nation.

"Accordingly I went to Washington, in the close of 1838, hoping, under the government auspices, to make myself useful, in opening to the world a railroad thoroughfare between the two great oceans. I conferred with Mr. [Charles F.] Mercer [of Virginia], Chairman of the Committee of the Senate [house of representatives] on Roads and Canals, who said, a report would be made favorable to the enterprise. Such a report was submitted and accepted; but no appropriation was made, and nothing further done by Congress upon the subject."¹⁴

The matter of a transcontinental railroad also engaged his attention.

"Reference to that project is made in my Geographical Sketch of Oregon, printed [written] in 1829;¹⁵ and in the Memoir to Congress, in 1839, relative to the statistics and topography of that territory.¹⁶ It has often been mentioned to

¹⁴ *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 74; *Settlement of Oregon*, 8. No record of such a report has been found. As to Kelley's qualifications as an engineer, we have the following testimonial of George B. Emerson of Boston, whose judgment was endorsed by Edward Everett: "From natural taste and adaptation; from the most extraordinary experience of the work, in every form and variety; from practical skill and acquaintance of all kinds of ground and all modes of operation, Mr. Kelley is singularly well qualified to understand, superintend, and execute the work of a survey for any railroad or other improvement, public or private."—*Ibid.*, 75. See also Kelley, "Beloved Brethren, Jan. 14, 1870. Ms.

¹⁵ "The settlement of the Oregon country, would conduce to a freer intercourse, and a more extensive and remunerative trade with the East Indies. . . . Such an extension and enjoyment of the East India trade, would provoke the spirit of American enterprise, to open communications from the Mississippi valley, and from the gulf of Mexico to the Pacific ocean, and thus open *new channels*, through which the products of America and the Eastern world, will pass in mutual exchange, saving in every voyage, a distance of ten thousand miles: *new channels*, which opening across the bosom of a wide spread ocean; and intersecting islands, where health fills the breeze and comforts spread the shores would conduct the full tide of a golden traffic, into the reservoir of our national finance."—Pp. 79-80. In "Beloved Brethren," Dec. 4, 1869, Kelley said that he projected such a railroad in 1831, and that in 1836 he and P. P. F. DeGrand were associated in the movement.

¹⁶ "These were the objects to whose accomplishment I looked forward, and from which I confidently anticipated many benefits: . . . a certain and speedy line of communication overland from the Mississippi to the Oregon, by means of which the Eastern and Western worlds should be united, and their wealth interchanged and increased."—P. 48.

scientific and enterprising men, and described in my journals and papers

“The route begins on the bank of the Missouri near the mouth of the Kansas, crosses the back-bone of the continent through a depression near the 43d parallel, lays along the valley of the Snake River, and crosses the Columbia at Wallawalla; and, again, it makes a mountainous transit on the westerly side of the valley of Clark’s River, where, intelligent hunters suppose no formidable difficulties exist to be encountered; and terminates in a delightful and fertile tract of country near the southern extremity of Puget’s Sound, there to connect with the interminable tracks of the ships of the great deep. The eligibility of that place, for a terminus, and for an entreport and depot, can be fully conceived of, only by those who understand the natural advantages of that portion of Oregon for commerce and agriculture; and know the chart and all about De Fuca’s Straits

“My plans differ in some respects, from those by Mr. Whitney, now before the public. His, I think, are well devised and matured. His ideas, as, in 1848 I understood them from the projector himself, in regard to the routes, to the execution of the work, and to the benefits to accrue to the world, especially, to our nation, seem consistent and sound; in my apprehension, there can be none better.

“He would have one-half of a strip of territory sixty miles in breadth. The United States to retain the other half,—every alternate section. Mine propose just half of that breadth; and looking to a portion of the lands for a possession, and appropriate a portion for their Christianization, and for improvements in their affairs and fortune.”¹⁷

The evidence presented by Kelley is not sufficient to give him a distinguished rank among the many men whose activities brought about the construction of a transcontinental railroad. In neither of the passages to which he referred is there any specific mention of a railroad, and we know that in the ten

¹⁷ *Narrative of Events and Difficulties, 70-1; Settlement of Oregon, 123.*

years from 1829 to 1839 the railroad was a subject of great popular interest and general discussion. Moreover, it was Kelley's habit to be specific in his prophecies; it was only in the matter of practical detail that he made use of general phrases. Asa Whitney's agitation began in 1844, and his first petition was presented to congress in 1845. At the earliest, Kelley's claim was not advanced until 1852, the year in which Whitney's plan was definitely abandoned by congress. By that time the movement for a railroad to the Pacific had become national, and Kelley's suggestion as to possible route and method of financing was only one of many, and contributed little if anything to the final result.¹⁸

¹⁸ Cleveland and Powell, *Railroad Promotion*, 259-78.

CHAPTER TEN

THE HERMIT OF THREE RIVERS

In 1839 Kelley reestablished himself at Three Rivers. He had acted for many years as agent for Octavius Pickering of Boston, who owned land in the village and also the unoccupied mill privilege which had once been the property of the Three Rivers Manufacturing company.¹ He was not yet fifty years old, but his active life was already done; and broken in body and in spirit, he passed the remaining thirty-five years of his life in poverty and isolation.

His house was at the edge of a grove on the side of a hill overlooking the village which he had come to regard with singular affection. The site was well chosen, but the house was hardly a fit abode for a man whose ideas were all in the superlative. It was a composite structure of a story and a half, built of odds and ends of lumber with regard rather to the limitations of the material than to any architectural design. The rooms were of unequal height, and the stairs approached the vertical. In the upper story there were three floor levels, two in a single room. There were half a dozen sizes of windows. By the door stood a clump of lilacs, and a large wild cherry tree shaded the yard. Below the house was a small orchard of apple trees, many of which defy identification. Protruding glacial boulders and tangled poison ivy gave evidence that the occupant of the place was concerned with other matters than appearances.

Here his wife and children visited him occasionally down to 1843, but he was never able to effect a complete reconciliation. Of his domestic troubles he said "My bosom friend with whom I never had a moment of misunderstanding was enticed from me; and my beloved sons were carried away captive by

¹ Kelley, *Hist. of the Settlement of Oregon*, 21-2. Pickering was reporter of the Massachusetts supreme judicial court, 1822-40. He was a son of the famous Colonel Timothy Pickering of Salem, who was quartermaster-general in the Revolution, postmaster-general, secretary of war, and secretary of state under Washington, and senator from Massachusetts.

the enemy." The enemy, it appears, was Mrs. Bradlee, Mrs. Kelley's aunt and foster mother. "That woman," said Kelley, "exerted, terribly against me, the influence which a kindred relation to an adopted daughter, and an annual income of \$12,000, gave her." He attempted, however, to win his wife back to him through correspondence which he published in 1851 under the title *Letters From An Afflicted Husband To An Astranged Wife*.²

One of the matters which engaged his attention was his claim against the Mexican government for indemnity for the seizure of his property at Vera Cruz in 1833. "My claim for indemnity was preferred against Mexico in 1840; and a more just claim could not be. I think it probable, the minds of the American and Mexican commissioners were so darkened by my enemies, about them, as to see no merits in the claimant, and not to care to open his case."³ This statement he made in obvious disregard of the strained relations then existing between the two nations over the matter of Texas.

His interest in the Kendrick lands continued; and he prepared for Charles Bulfinch and other claimants, a "memorial praying that their title to certain lands in the Territory of Oregon may be confirmed." This memorial which was presented in 1840 by Abbott Lawrence, congressman from Massachusetts, was referred to the committee on foreign affairs.⁴ It was followed in 1843 by a similar memorial which was presented by Robert C. Winthrop, congressman from Massachusetts, in the name of Kelley as agent of Charles Bulfinch and others, "praying that their purchases of Indian lands in Oregon Territory be recognized." This also was referred to the committee on foreign affairs.⁵

He also made a serious effort to put into shape for publication his narrative on Oregon and the Sandwich Islands and

² Kelley, *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 2, 14; Temple, *Hist. of the Town of Palmer*, 266, 269. An appendix appeared the same year under the title "Hard Usage in Three Rivers." Both pamphlets are said to have been printed in Palmer.—*Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 76.

³ *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 73.

⁴ 26 cong. 1 sess. H. doc. 43; H. jour., 202; *Settlement of Oregon*, 79.

⁵ 27 cong. 3 sess. H. jour., 350.

on the Indians. In 1840 he issued a prospectus of a book, then "in near readiness for the press" to be called "Travels And Voyages Through Many Of The Indian And Unexplored Countries of North America; And Over The Atlantic And Pacific Oceans Made In The Years 1832, '33, '34 and '35." The book was never published, however; for "a nervous affection in the head deranged the thoughts and enfeebling the pen, disenabled him for the task." What became of this unfinished manuscript is unknown. But his literary efforts were not at an end. "He planned, however, for a less difficult work; a book which would be a *printed record* of his manner of life; of the part he had acted in making Oregon and one of the Californias the possession of the United States; of the facts relative to his *claim on Mexico* for indemnification on account of the plunder of his property while passing through that country; and relative to a *claim of certain of his countrymen* to lands on Quadra's [Vancouver] Island, in which he was so largely interested, and which has been so very obnoxious to the powerful men of the Hudson's Bay Company; and of the interesting things concerning the ancients, and the geography and statistics of the countries examined by him."⁶ This, too, he abandoned.

In 1843 he made another attempt to obtain action of congress in favor of his colonization project. Having failed to receive a grant of land as requested in 1839, he now presented through Rufus Choate, senator from Massachusetts, a "petition praying permission to purchase from the Indians in the Oregon Territory a tract of land for the purpose of forming a permanent settlement thereon." This petition was referred to the committee on private land claims.⁷ It was followed in 1844 by a petition "praying for a grant of land in the Territory of Oregon," which was presented through Robert C. Winthrop and referred to the committee on foreign affairs.⁸

The grant sought in 1844 was desired not as an aid to settle-

⁶ *Settlement of Oregon*, iv n; *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, preface.

⁷ 27 cong. 3 sess. S. jour., 192; *Cong. Globe*, XI, 311.

⁸ 28 cong. 1 sess. H. jour., 237-8. This memorial appeared in the *Palmer Sentinel* of December 10, 1846.

ment, but as compensation for services. The year in which Kelley finally abandoned his colonization scheme, therefore, can be stated definitely as 1844. With but unimportant exceptions, his published writings thereafter were confined to memorials and petitions to congress and pamphlets designed to support his claim for compensation or reward for his services in bringing about the settlement of Oregon by American citizens, thus preparing the way for the assertion of jurisdiction over that territory by the national government.⁹

After an interval of four years he presented through John A. Dix, senator from New York, a memorial "praying a grant of land in the Territory of Oregon, in consideration of important services rendered by him in exploring and developing the resources of that country," which was referred to the committee on public lands.¹⁰ This memorial was privately printed as an eighteen-page pamphlet entitled Memorial Of Hall J. Kelley; Praying For A Donation Of Land, And Testimonials Concerning The Colonization Of The Oregon Territory. The memorial itself occupied but four pages, and six pages were given over to notes from Kelley's journal covering that part of his journey from Monterey to the Columbia. Some of the testimonials were written in 1843 to accompany the memorial of 1844; the others were obtained in 1847. Among those who contributed testimonials were: John P. Bigelow, secretary of the commonwealth of Massachusetts, who was soon to become mayor of Boston; William Wheildon, friend of Edward Everett and editor of the Bunker Hill Aurora, whose name had appeared on the list of agents of the American Society for Encouraging the Settlement of the Oregon Territory; Washington P. Gregg, secretary of the common council of Boston and former treasurer of the American Society; William G. Brown, former editor of Zion's Herald; John McNeil, surveyor of the port of Boston and former president of the American Society; Isaac O. Barnes, United States marshal at Boston;

⁹ In 1846 and 1847 he published two series of articles in the *Palmer Sentinel*, one on "Oregon;" the other on "Colonization Of The Oregon Territory."
¹⁰ 30 cong. 1 sess. S. jour., 245; *Cong. Globe*, XVIII, 567.

P. P. F. Degrand, well known for his public activities, particularly in connection with the movement for a transcontinental railroad; and David F. Green, secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.¹¹

A similar memorial was presented the following year, 1849, through Senator John Davis of Massachusetts, "praying to be allowed a grant of land in the Territory of Oregon, in consideration of his services and sacrifices in aiding in the exploration and settlement of that country." This also was referred to the committee on public lands.¹² The report of this committee, as submitted on February 5, 1850 by Alpheus Felch of Michigan, was as follows:

"The petitioner asks a grant of land from the government, in consideration of his services and sacrifices in the exploration of the Oregon Territory. That Mr. Kelley is one among the many enterprising citizens who, within the last thirty years, have directed their attention to the exploration and efforts to settle our possessions on the Pacific, and has, in common with others, suffered loss from the failure of his efforts, the committee have no doubt. They are, however, of opinion, from an examination of the whole case, that the prayer of the petitioner cannot, under just and safe principles, be granted. The case does not, in their opinion, present those distinctive features which ought to single it out from others, and make it the subject of special legislative action.

"They therefore recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That the prayer of the petitioner be not granted."¹³

With the adoption of this report by the senate on February 21, Kelley's claim was formally disallowed.¹⁴ It would seem

¹¹ This memorial in abridged form appears in the *Hist. of the Settlement of Oregon*, 91-2. The testimonials were also reprinted in that pamphlet.

¹² 31 cong. 1 sess. S. jour., 38, 51; *Cong. Globe*, XXI, 92, 99; This memorial, most of it from the forms used in printing that of 1848, was reprinted in the *Hist. of the Colonization of Oregon*, 1-3 [9-16], 17-18.

¹³ 31 cong. 1 sess. S. rep. 42; S. jour., 131; *Cong. Globe*, XXI, 292-3. It is perhaps significant that only one of the members of this committee was from New England.

¹⁴ 31 cong. 1 sess. S. rep. 42; S. jour., 172-3; *Cong. Globe*, XXI, pt. I, 411.

that Senator Davis had been negligent, for under date of July 25, 1850, he wrote to Kelley:

"I now enclose the report which you ask for. It had somehow escaped my attention that such a report had been made. It can however do you little harm. I had conferred with Judge Underwood, who formerly had charge of the business, and he promised me to give every attention to it; but it seems without my knowledge, Gov. Felch took charge of it."

The failure to obtain either recognition or reward was a crushing blow to Kelley, who said: "That report went to confirm the false perceptions of me of not a few public men, and to strengthen the prejudices of friends and to give general currency to the vile reports of adversaries: that he is 'stupid and crazy,' and to the sayings every where rife, 'that he came to this country without mind or means to do anything and went away' It was a strange report; though it did me monstrous injustice and tends to deepen and perpetuate my sorrows, and though all the gold ever taken from the mines of California could not sufficiently make amends for the injustice done me and my near kindred; yet I impute no wrong motive to them that made it. It denies me the merit of having taken any part as a pioneer in the colonization of Oregon, or in bringing about the events which led to the government acquisition of Alta California. It was a *great* mistake—I cannot account for it."¹⁵

To Kelley defeat was only an incentive to further effort. In 1854, therefore, he presented another petition, this time through Charles Sumner, senator from Massachusetts, "praying a donation of land, or gratuity in money, for his services and sacrifices in attempts to colonize and explore the Oregon territory, and for the public benefits that resulted from his efforts." After this petition had been referred to the committee on territories, the senate upon Sumner's motion ordered that Kelley have leave to withdraw it.¹⁶

¹⁵ *Settlement of Oregon*, 89-90.

¹⁶ 33 cong. 1 sess. S. jour., 196, 346, 391; *Cong. Globe*, XXVIII, 447, 989, 1186. This "petition asking for a grant of land or pecuniary relief" appears as an appendix to the *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, having been bound in that pamphlet two years after its original publication. It differs but little from the memorials of 1848 and 1849.

Again in 1866 the appeal was renewed. In that year Henry L. Dawes, representative from Massachusetts, presented a petition "relative to a land grant," which was referred to the committee on private land claims. This also sought pecuniary relief as an alternative, as is evident from the title of the reprint, which reads *Petition Of Hall J. Kelley, Praying For A Grant Of Land, Or A Donation Of Money.*¹⁷ The result was another failure.

With the double purpose of creating a favorable public sentiment and of supplementing his applications for congressional bounty, Kelley published several pamphlets. The first was *History Of The Colonization Of The Oregon Territory*, which was published in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1849. The edition must have been small, for but a single copy is known to be in existence. On the title page, appears Kelley's name as "the pioneer and chief projector." The "prefatory remarks" thus set forth the purpose of the pamphlet:

"The writer claims to have been the chief pioneer to plan and execute the work of colonizing the Oregon Territory; and has prepared the following pages to show the identity of his name with the history of that magnificent and meritorious achievement; and also to explain the causes and events which gave direction and impetus to public enterprise, and led to the acquisition and settlement of California."

Another pamphlet with the same title was published in Worcester in 1850. In 1852 appeared *A Narrative Of Events And Difficulties In The Colonization Of Oregon And The Settlement of California*; and also a history of the claim of American citizens to lands on Quadra's Island; together with an account of the troubles and tribulations endured between the years 1824 and 1852 by the writer. This was published in Boston, and we are told in the appendix that "but few copies of this book have been printed." A half dozen copies only have been located. While the preface declares that "The present book aims

¹⁷ 38 cong. 2 sess. H. jour., 93; *Cong. Globe*, XLVII, 181. The reprint appeared as a seven-page pamphlet, which was also incorporated in the *Hist. of the Settlement of Oregon*. It was a revised and enlarged version of the earlier memorials and petitions.

to correct the falsities in the various histories of Oregon hitherto in vogue;" liberal space is given to the "troubles and tribulations" of the writer.

Kelley's final¹⁸ word was published in 1868 in Springfield, Massachusetts, under the title, *A History Of The Settlement Of Oregon And The Interior Of Upper California*; and of persecutions and afflictions of forty years' continuance endured by the author. This is a pamphlet of 128 pages. In the preface Kelley thus set forth its purpose:

"This Book is an appeal to the justice and humanity of the Christian public for *help* to put an end to persecutions endured for more than forty years, as terrible as were ever known; and to bring back to my bleeding bosom by beloved household, which more than fifteen years ago, were torn from it and carried away from me, by the merciless hands of bloody men; and to bring back kindred and friends long ago turned from and against me.

"It has in view other objects:—to verify and illustrate the statements of the Petition now before Congress; to correct the belied histories of the American and British domains beyond the Rocky Mountains—countries, which, until after the public announcement of my Oregon enterprise, were marked on maps, *unknown*; and to remove unreasonable prejudices, and the false perception which friends everywhere have of me, and the obstacles which enemies in all places have thrown in the pathway of my usefulness."

Over two years were spent in the preparation of this pamphlet. The delay is easily accounted for when we consider that it was not written but dictated by a half-crazed man of nearly eighty, who was almost blind and suffering from malaria and the infirmities incident to age as well as hardship and privation, and suffering too from his obsession that all his troubles and all the pranks of mischievous boys in the neighborhood were

¹⁸ In 1869 and 1870 Kelley prepared a series of eight letters addressed "Beloved Brethren," and designed as the appendix to his *History of the Settlement of Oregon*. These letters were not printed, however, because the printer declared that the manuscript was "incomprehensible." Hence Kelley's statement: "The printing press everywhere in my state is turned against me."—Letter to J. Q. Thornton, Oct. 31, 1870.

due to the desire of the Hudson's Bay company to persecute him. He concluded the preface with the following paragraph, with its naive prediction of the millennial dawn certain to follow from an awakened public confidence in him :

“When the nefarious plans and plottings and murderous purpose of the conspiracy at Three Rivers—one as diabolical as was ever known in Christendom—conspiracy, I say; *diabolical*, with emphasis I repeat, have been described, and the public understand about them, then will persecutions cease, and the deep-rooted prejudices on the minds of men will be removed, public confidence in my statements and character be restored, my household and my kindred so long gone from me, will return, and all, I trust, will treat me with respect and visit me in my ‘afflictions’.”

The nature of these afflictions is set forth in detail in all of these pamphlets. The selections that follow will serve as illustrations. They do not make pleasant reading, but they are essential to an understanding of the man and his environment.

“Causes and effects alternately changing are traceable from the widely separated places, London, Vancouver and Boston, to the little village of Three Rivers; even to my humble and lonely cottage

“The Appendix shows how cruelly certain persons in the neighborhood of my desolated residence—hirelings under the powerful men above described, have used me. It particularizes many ways by which I have been made to suffer, but not all. Within the last twelve years, they have dragged me into fifteen lawsuits; and brought great pecuniary embarrassments upon me. In a single transaction* I have been defrauded of \$1,500. of property and caused a further loss of more than \$1,000,—partly expenses incurred in a suit of nine years’ pending.”¹⁹

* “A contract was made in 1842, with three certain men to cut from my forest wood and timber sufficient to pay a debt of \$1,500, which they had assumed. By the last of 1843, they had cut enough to pay the debt, and \$1,500 more. As they refused to settle or to account for any considerable part of the property; an action in Chancery, in 1845, was brought against them, a hearing was had in 1853; and an award rendered for the plaintiff. Exceptions were taken by the defendants. This is the state of the case, March, 1854.”

¹⁹ *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, preface, 2-3. See also pp. 78-9.

"The last two years, adversaries, at and about the place of my abode, have very much troubled me. The troops at this place have come daily to *vex* and to *torture*, hoping speedily to make an end of me; guerillas, headed by one of my bitterest enemies—at times, another with him—both were, as it regarded their conduct toward me, much like despots and demons. Within the last thirty years, until the two last, since beginning to write histories of countries explored by me, and to prepare accounts of my scientific researches in the far west, and of my efforts to propagate Christianity about the shores of the Pacific, and of the war of persecutions so long ago waged against me, they have often come to plunder my property—have plundered, and carried off, the value of several thousand dollars; and to devastate my estate; and have so done; and have desolated the village of Three Rivers, so that it now is, and has been for several years, a *desolation*, 'a heap'. They at times break into my house, and take away documents and manuscripts and papers of great value to me, such as furnish the best material for the book; perhaps, within this period, what of the last would make a 4to. volume of a thousand pages.²⁰

"In telling about the conspiracy, it is not my intention to designate persons, unless hard provoked to it, nor specify as to conduct, cruel as it has been, further than it shall be duty in the vindication of myself. . . ."

"To confuse my head and delay my writings, I am everywhere represented as stupid, an idler, and prodigal of my means of living. But I am certain that neither my *great* calamity, nor the persecutions and afflictions I am made to endure, have in the slightest degree impaired my understanding; it was never better than at the present day. And diligent search of the Scriptures, the last thirty years . . . has much enlarged my comprehension of things human and divine. I consider also

²⁰ *Settlement of Oregon*, iii-iv. "The author has recently lost from his house all the copies of a pamphlet called 'History of the Colonization of Oregon;' which was to comprise portions of the supplemental appendix of this book; and also, manuscripts and papers of great value to him. He has good reason to believe, it was the felonious service of some hireling or sub-agent of the friends of the H. B. Co., to vex and trouble him."—*Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, appx. insert.

that industry, frugality, temperance, benevolence, intense purpose, brotherly kindness and charity have all along marked my career. I do not thus speak of myself to glorify self; but to glorify Him whose servant I am."²¹

"The shattered and morbid-smitten nervous system is never so bad as in the hot season of the year, and has never been so terrible as in the present season. Am all the while faint, and suffering a slow fever. As I have heretofore said, am forced to live alone. I am fond of society, and delight in communion with the virtuous and intelligent. Am forced to do my indoor and outdoor work. There are none disposed to help me. Help, both male and female, are turned from me. My beloved household, and all in the circle of kindred, every soul of them deceived, have gone from me and are turned against me, and all in the circle of friends and acquaintances, deceived, have turned to treat me with contempt, some with shameful abuse. . . ."²²

There are middle-aged men to-day in Three Rivers who would be surprised to learn that their boyish practical jokes upon the strange old man were charged against the account of the Hudson's Bay company, and that when they robbed his orchard they were interfering with the preparation of works for which future historians would search in libraries and collectors would pay extravagant sums in the auction rooms. When in the thoughtless cruelty of youth they called out "Old Kelley" as he passed along the street, they did not know that they were acting as "guerillas." The boy who put pepper on the stove after offering to help Kelley about his housework could hardly have known of the Hudson's Bay company, yet he was classed as one of its "troops."

There are also men in Three Rivers who can testify that Kelley's interests were cared for by his neighbors, and that food was regularly reserved from their tables for the old man, who came daily to their door, pail in hand. Yet of these acts of kindness the pamphlets tell nothing. Nor do they tell of the efforts of his brother to induce him to leave his hermitage

²¹ *Settlement of Oregon*, v.

²² *Ibid.*, 16-7.

on the hill and to share his home in East Gilmanton. "Tenaciously he would cling to his little home," wrote a contemporary, "believing that if he stayed there his fortune would ultimately turn, and the little tract of land which his friends allowed him to remain upon and which he finally believed was his own, would become of untold value, and again he would be a wealthy man. Feeble and almost blind for a year or two, he has tottered about the village, leaning upon his cane, an object of pity, believing that in the development and building up of the village the golden time was approaching."²³

The question naturally arises as to what he would have done had his prayers to congress been granted. This question Kelley himself answered :

"He asks for a donation of land, that he may be able to repay, in lands or money, those who have contributed to the means of prosecuting his enterprise ; and to make some suitable provision for support now in the decline of life. Could he be placed in a state of freedom from nervous irritation, and have things convenient and comfortable ; and could his mind rest from anxiety and excitement caused by his persecuting enemies, and his hands be untied and his feet unfettered, he could again, he thinks be measurably useful to his country ; and with a good degree of vigor, and effect, engage in laborious and philan-

²³ *Springfield Daily Union*, January 23, 1874.

"I will now speak as to my usefulness to the people of Three Rivers; what I have done to promote the growth and good appearance of the village. . . .

"To encourage the lay of the New London and Amherst railroad, through the village and promote the interest of the company, I freely gave to the company land . . . and also took several shares of the stock at par, and also did my friend Pickering of Boston take fifteen or twenty shares, and in other ways encouraged the building of the road.

"Built three houses and parts of two others and that by my own hands. . . .

"Mr. Pickering, for whom I acted as agent, sold at a reduced price the site of the school house called Pickering Hall, and gave a bell for that spacious and beautiful building, this he freely did, though at my suggestion. . . .

"To make myself further useful to the people, I prepared a circular giving a description of the place, which was sent to the manufacturers abroad, and to such capitalists and enterprising men, as would be likely to come and contribute to its growth and prosperity. . . .

"For several years after coming into the place, I practiced hauling and tilting [sic] wood at the door of poor families and in other ways did I consider the poor. On the occasion of a Thanksgiving day I made a feast, it would well compare with any of the feasts the rich prepare for the rich and invited widows and orphans to it. My house was filled, and their hearts were made glad. The next day the fragments were distributed to the poor not present."—Kelley, "Beloved Brethren," Jan. 14, 1870. Ms.

thropic undertaking, as when he was strong 'as a lion and swift as an eagle'."²⁴

"The petitioner has objects in view. He would appropriate a part of what Congress would allow him, for educational purposes in the land of the freedmen, and a part for the founding of a benevolent institution in the manufacturing village of Three Rivers, to be called 'The Widows' and Orphans' Home'."²⁵

Thus to the last his spirit of altruism persisted, and he died as he had lived, a philanthropist at heart. One day his accustomed round of visits was not made; and he was found lying on the floor of his little house, stricken with paralysis. He soon became unconscious, and on the following evening, January 20, 1874, his troubled life came to an end.²⁶

²⁴ *Colonization of Oregon*, 4.

²⁵ *Settlement of Oregon*, 1.

²⁶ *Springfield Daily Union and Springfield Daily Republican*, January 23, 1874.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE WRITINGS OF KELLEY¹

Kelley's literary efforts began early and continued until a few years before his death. His output was therefore voluminous, though his longest single work was of but 128 pages. Of his school books enough has already been said. Had he written nothing else his name would now be known only to the antiquarian. We are here concerned with what he wrote about Oregon and about himself.

Both the Geographical Sketch and the General Circular have been denounced as grossly inaccurate and poorly written, and both have been praised as remarkably accurate and well written statements of fact. As was shown in an earlier chapter, "W. J. S." outdid himself in an attempt to convince the readers of the *New England Magazine* that Kelley had nothing but second-hand information about Oregon to present, and that his statements were unworthy of acceptance. Nor did he stop at that. "Some one ought to send Mr. Kelley a copy . . . of Guthrie's Grammar," he declared in one article;² and in another place he singled out for ridicule a sentence in which Kelley said that the proposed settlement would be effected as soon "*it* has consummated *their* title to the Indian lands."³ But no one was better aware of those defects than Kelley himself. In his *History Of The Settlement Of Oregon*, after giving a brief paraphrase of the General Circular, he continued, "Here I leave the manual. This document is not given in the exact language in which it was couched. It would be mortifying to do it. It does not furnish a fair specimen of my composition. The productions of my pen in 1829 and several after years, were abundantly marked with faults. At times of mental excitement and nervous irritation, I almost lost the

¹ See Powell, *Bibliography of Hall J. Kelley*, Oregon Historical Society, *Quarterly*, VIII, 375-86 (1907).

² W. J. S., Oregon territory, *New England Magazine*, II, 131.

³ W. J. S., Geographical sketch of Oregon territory, *New England Magazine*, II, 324.

physical ability of speech, and was scarcely able to converse or write upon any subject, however familiar. At every effort my language was broken and full of errors. One of the hireling writers of my adversaries, in a Boston periodical in 1832, says 'he murders the King's English.' It was too true."⁴

Equally severe were the criticisms in that joint product of youth and age, Wyeth's *Oregon*, where Kelley is described as a man "who had read all the books he could get on the voyages and travels in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America, until he had heated his mind to a degree little short of the valorous Knight of La Mancha, that is to say, he believed all he read."⁵ Although young Wyeth himself had turned back at a point several hundred miles east of the mouth of the Columbia, he boldly declared:

"I have since been well-informed that in the valley of Oregon, so much extolled for its fertility and pleasantness, wood to cook with is one among their scarcest and very dear articles of necessity. From all accounts, except those given to the public by Mr. Kelly, there is not a district at the mouth of any large river more unproductive than that of the *Columbia*, and it seems that this is pretty much the case from tide water of that river to where it empties into the ocean. . . . Mr. Hall J. Kelly published about two years since a most inflated and extravagant account of that western tract which extends from The Rocky Mountains to the shore of the Pacific Ocean. He says of it that no portion of the globe presents a more fruitful soil, or a milder climate, or equal facilities for carrying into effect the great purposes of a free and enlightened nation Lewis and Clarke's history of their expedition had been published and very generally read; yet this extravagant and fallacious account of the Oregon was read by some people not destitute of a general information, nor unused to reading But all the world exaggerates; not even were we of the Oregon expedition entirely free from it,

⁴ Kelley, *Hist. of the Settlement of Oregon*, 107.

⁵ J. B. Wyeth, *Oregon*, 3. The book was written by Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse "from notes and information" of Wyeth to discourage what was thought to be the wild scheme of Westward migration.

although not to be compared with Hall Jackson Kelly, who never stops short of superlatives, if we may judge by his publications."⁶

Commenting upon this attack, Reuben Gold Thwaites said "Subsequent information has justified most of Kelley's statements, here derided by Wyeth";⁷ and Mrs. Victor declared "So completely was he sustained in his general views that we feel surprised at this day to notice how closely they agree with what is now known of this region,"⁸ and again "Regarding settlement his writings contain some practical suggestions; indeed, without clear discrimination between design and necessity, and read by the light of subsequent events, some of them might be pronounced prophetic."⁹ Equally favorable was the opinion of S. A. Clarke, who said "Whatever were the sources of Kelley's facts they were wonderfully correct. His critics concede that he was a terse and vigorous writer who did much to make Oregon known; that his ideas were broad and for the nation's best interests."¹⁰ The judgment of Major Hiram H. Chittenden, however, is not without an element of truth: "He read everything that he could find relating to Oregon, believed it all, however extravagant, and retailed it to the public with whatever addition his own over-wrought imagination might suggest What he wrote was for the most part grossly inaccurate; but with a public quite as ignorant as he, this was no drawback, but rather a positive advantage. Everything came from his pen clothed with the beauty of a western sunset."¹¹

It will be observed that no one has questioned Kelley's sincerity in the presentation of information. It should be borne in mind, also, that he belonged to a generation which was accustomed to rely upon hearsay and secondary authorities to a

⁶ Ibid., 52-3, 57-8, 60.

⁷ Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, XXI, 79n.

⁸ Victor, Hall J. Kelley, one of the fathers of Oregon, Oregon Historical Society, *Quarterly*, II, 398.

⁹ Bancroft, *Hist. of Oregon*, I, 68. As to the authorship of what Mr. Charles F. Lummis has aptly characterized as "that gigantic historical haystack, the Bancroft histories," see Morris, The origin and authorship of the Bancroft Pacific states publications, Oregon Historical Society, *Quarterly*, IV, 287-364.

¹⁰ Clarke, *Pioneer Days of Oregon History*, I, 269.

¹¹ Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West*, I, 435.

degree that is intolerable to the historian trained in modern scientific methods of research. If his two early pamphlets be compared with contemporary writings on the great West, they will be found quite as reliable and quite as readable. If Kelley's early style be found defective, what is to be said of the flamboyant sentences of Benton, that other sponsor of the West? It must be confessed, however, that in his effort to be convincing, Kelley sometimes defeated his own end by references to obscure sources of information. His pamphlet, *Discoveries, Purchases Of Lands, &c. On The Northwest Coast*, published in 1839, was criticised by a friendly Boston editor, who said, "We do not altogether rely upon Mr. Kelley's account of the old Spanish voyages He tells us of 'Mss in the Marine Archives at Madrid.' We believe no such archives are in existence."¹² To this Kelley answered "that he had the authority of Mr. Slacum . . . for the quotation," and that he had "also other reasons for believing it correct,"¹³ but neither statement is particularly convincing, and it is significant that when the substance of the pamphlet was presented to congress in Bulfinch's memorial of 1840, the reference was omitted.¹⁴

However accurate or inaccurate Kelley's accounts of the early navigators may have been, it is certain that through his pamphlets and his articles in various periodicals he contributed to the general information about Oregon, and aroused popular interest in the question of the American claim to that territory. We have already seen that Senator Linn was indebted to him for materials on the subject, but it is a question how much effect the information thus presented had upon the action of congress. For the settlement of the Oregon question was not delayed so much for want of information as from political and diplomatic considerations, concerning which Kelley had little information or interest.

¹² Mr. Kelley's pamphlet, *The Oregonian and Indians' Advocate*, I, 180. "Our object the elevation of the Indian race—our means a Christian settlement in Oregon. Published under the direction of the Committee of the Oregon Provisional Emigration Society." Lack of confidence in the statements in this pamphlet is also expressed in Bancroft, *Hist. of the Northwest Coast*, I, 205n.

¹³ *Ibid.*, I, 22.

¹⁴ 26 cong. 1 sess. H. doc. 43.

The only one of his writings in which Kelley took pride was the Memoir on Oregon prepared for Caleb Cushing in 1839. Unlike his early accounts this was based upon observation, and it is marred by comparatively few of the unfortunate mannerisms that characterized so much of what he wrote. The writers of the Bancroft histories were most favorably impressed with it, "He certainly gives in his memoir to congress in 1839, a very correct account of the topography, soil, and climate of both California and Oregon He furnished information to the government that should have been of value; and which should have been more properly appreciated, had it been presented disconnected from the recital of his personal sufferings and wrongs, with which all his writings after his visit to Oregon were rendered turgid It seems the most sober and intelligent of all his writings This present paper is a temperate description of the country and what the writer saw and did there. Though not without its author's constitutional wail and his usual fling at the Hudson's Bay Company, it is a well written document."¹⁵

In this judgment Kelley would have concurred; for in defending himself against the criticisms of his writings on Oregon, he referred to the Memoir with no little satisfaction: "Nothing *very extravagant* is found in it; nothing but plain truths can be found in that document; nothing but such, in all the mass of publications from my pen, which between the years 1825 and 1832, were so freely spread over the States, to enlighten about Oregon, and to induce emigration thither; and to open that remote region to missionary enterprise."¹⁶

Of the half dozen memorials and petitions through which Kelley sought to obtain the aid of congress during the years 1839-66, something has already been said. There was in effect but a single document of this sort, which took different form as it was revised and amplified from time to time to

¹⁵ Bancroft, *Northwest Coast*, II, 556, 558n. There is no reason to question its accuracy.—Bancroft, *Hist. of California*, III, 411n. "Not very inaccurate, considering Kelley's limited opportunities of observation."—*Ibid.*, IV, 147.

¹⁶ *Settlement of Oregon*, 61.

strengthen its appeal. Some of the materials thus presented do not appear in Kelley's other writings.

It is no easy task to characterize Kelley's three formal pamphlets, the *History Of The Colonization Of Oregon*, the *Narrative Of Events And Difficulties*, and the *History Of The Settlement Of Oregon*. All were written after he had passed middle age, and after physical and mental suffering had unmanned him. They were addressed to that understanding and sympathetic public which Kelley's faith in humanity assured him would grant him the recognition and the material reward he craved. It was a generation which knew little of those early years in which he had attempted so much and accomplished so little; a generation that was witness of that great movement that so rapidly peopled the valleys of the West.

When the *History Of The Colonization Of Oregon* appeared, Oregon was a regularly constituted territory and the "gold rush" was turning the minds of the whole country toward the Pacific Coast, which was better known because of Kelley and the men whom he had influenced. When the *Narrative Of Events And Difficulties* appeared, the tide of emigration to the Northwest was at its height, Oregon was looking forward to statehood, and Washington was at the beginning of its territorial stage. Both pamphlets were exceedingly well timed. To Kelley all that was needed was to get the facts before the public. With the idea of presenting the truth as he saw it, he bared his very soul to the reader, telling of his great plans, his high hopes, and the obstacles that had been too much for his powers. In the *History Of The Settlement Of Oregon*, "he poured himself out on paper," as Bancroft has it,¹⁷ in a final attempt to convince a generation to which the settled West had become an accepted fact. "Quite half a century has elapsed since the conception of my *Oregon* enterprise"; he said in the preface, "although thirty years have rolled away since its achievement, and yet my countrymen seem to know nothing about it—and why? This question I shall shortly answer

¹⁷ Bancroft, *Northwest Coast*, II, 556n.

"I desire my countrymen should know how much I have expended in time and property; and what I have suffered to settle Oregon, and to make it an integral part of my country's domain. I have truly paid from my substance, and from the comforts and endearments of life, a great price for that land, though a goodly one it is, and have freely possessed the nation of it. Were my country duely apprised of the facts in the case, they would no longer turn a deaf ear to the wrongs I have suffered, and the rights of which I have been defrauded, as they have done for the last thirty years; but, would at once return to me all, and even more than I claim; both as a recompense for my services, and as a testimonial of their gratitude for the countless blessings those services have rendered and are rendering to the country

"With the explanations I will be able to make, the reader can more understandingly form opinions of my capabilities and usefulness, and of the *contempt* so universally cast upon me; and can better judge of the suffering condition to which persecutions and afflictions, endured for nearly half a century have reduced me—such as are, probably, without parallel in the present age of the world."¹⁸

Naturally self-centered, his style was egotistical to the extreme. "I am Hall J. Kelley; that is my name; am what education, habits, and the *grace* of God have made me."¹⁹ Did Walt Whitman ever sound his "barbaric yawp" louder than this? "I am not 'distressed'—*have never been 'distressed';*"²⁰ he protested after telling of "persecutions and afflictions" of nearly half a century, thereby unconsciously giving testimony to the fact. He wrote much of himself because he was the only human being he ever really knew. "I have said much concerning self, and now find it indispensable to say more With as little self-esteem as self-respect, I shall be able, to describe the powers and qualities of my mind; and to satisfy, that it is not strictly true that I am 'without mind to do any-

¹⁸ Pp. 1-3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

thing.' For natural endowment, I have nothing to boast of, yet, the operations of my mind, I think indicate *sanity*, and such gifts as elevate character, as high above the characters of my groveling enemies, as the clouds are above the ground."²¹

"Being an educated man and an enthusiast, writing was easy," said Bancroft; and again, "Indeed, all of Kelley's works are well written. His command of language was far above the average."²² But on these points Kelley's word is quite to the contrary and much nearer the truth. "I never had skill at composition; my thoughts being always occupied in other business. My aspiration has been, more to the attainment of preeminence as an architect than as a painter. For the business of the former, I think I have been measurably qualified with science and skill; while in that of the latter, have been an ordinary performer."²³ He introduced his Geographical Sketch with a statement that he was fully conscious of his literary limitations, and declared that he attempted only "to impress the public mind with simple and unadorned facts," since he was not "possessed of that free and imperial command of words, which is the peculiar felicity of a few."²⁴ Upon several occasions he expressed regret that he was unable to adorn his composition "with the ordinary embellishments of rhetoric." Thus in his old age, he said, "My head is confused, and that continually; and I cannot help it. Thoughts, at times, enter the mind disorderly. That which should come first comes last, and the last first; and they are a long while in coming. Utterance is stammering. Language is broken and diffuse, without imagery or beauty, or any rhetorical embellishment. It is impossible for me to condense it and render it concise and perspicuous. My compositions abound with errors. I copy and copy, again and again, and sometimes the last copy is worse than the first."

He therefore took to dictation; and his last work, *The History Of The Settlement Of Oregon*, was prepared in this

²¹ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

²² Bancroft, *Northwest Coast*, II, 556n, 558n.

²³ *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, postscript.

²⁴ Pp. 3-4.

manner. The result was hardly more satisfactory, for we are told of "the inattention and carelessness of youthful amanuenses." On account of his extreme debility and nervous irritation he was able to dictate "only in the fore part of the day, not every day, and not more than two or three hours in any day."²⁵ In the preface he attempted "to explain concerning inadvertent expressions, digressions, curtailed statements, sayings, and the abridgment of the book, and errors of composition with which it abounds. It is seldom that I can find a person able and ready to write; at times the amanuensis is turned from me. For weeks, or months, no one can be found to serve me; and I am left without help. Portions of the manuscript prepared for the press, and supposed to have been sent to it, are wanting in the book. This mistake is owing in part, I think, to the inattention of the young and inexperienced amanuenses. These things have caused *delay*,"²⁶ a delay of two years. In the body of the text is this interpellation:

"I am in haste to finish the dictation of this book, and to have it in print and before Congress the present session. . . . It was commenced more than a year and a half ago, and yet not 80 pages of it are in print. Constant vexations, 'troubles on every side' cause the delay; they enfeeble the pen and unfit my mouth for speech, of course for the dictating of the composition of the book. Persecutions and afflictions of forty years' continuance have nearly worn me out, and I may not last to see, in print, the Appendix, the most instructive as it regards my biography, and perhaps the most interesting portion of the book."²⁷

Yet he continued his labors through fifty more pages, concluding with the following paragraph:

"Here is the end of the book for the present. When it is in the hands of the Congressional Committee, to whom was referred the petition, should my life be spared, and should I

²⁵ *Settlement of Oregon*, 16.

²⁶ P. iv.

²⁷ Pp. 76-7.

remain qualified for the task of further dictation, I shall proceed to prepare the appendix, which, I think, is calculated to be as instructive and interesting to readers as the other portions of the book."²⁸

The appendix was never printed. It does not matter, particularly, for Kelley had already written himself out. The foregoing quotations show how difficult a task it was for him to prepare his manuscript, and how confused was his mind. Further evidence on this point appears in the Narrative Of Events And Difficulties. This pamphlet bears the date 1852 on the title page, yet the preface was written in March, 1854, and the memorial of 1854 appears in the appendix. In this appendix also appears all the matter originally appended to the History Of The Colonization Of Oregon, with the original pagination, and a "supplemental index" or rather table of contents containing several references to materials which do not appear in the supplemental appendix. The supplemental appendix is concluded with an unpagged postscript, and pasted on the inside of the cover is a "Notice" which reads:

"Intense anxieties about affairs at Washington, about claims on the country, and about enemies opposing these claims; and severe exercise with the pen for the last two or three months, have so amazed the brain of the author as to require immediate rest of his eyes and mind, and a suspension of the enlarging of the Supplemental Appendix of this book, until some better state of his health."

This, he went on to explain, cut off matter on the history of the Sandwich Islands, remarks on the North American Indians, and a "dissertation on Christianity," all of which, perhaps, we may well spare.

Considering the circumstances under which they were written, these pamphlets of Kelley's, while without semblance of order and of a most uneven style, are surprisingly informing and accurate. Typographically they are wretched. Thus

²⁸ P. 128.

Slacum's name usually appears as "Slocum," and McLoughlin's as "McLaughlin,"—this is the text of a man who resented reference to himself as "Kelly." Again, the date of Kelley's transcontinental railroad project appears "as early as 1849," when it is obvious that 1829 was meant. As to their authenticity, it may be said that they compare favorably with much that has been written of Oregon and the Northwest. Of one thing we may be sure, Kelley based his writings upon materials which he believed authentic, and when he relied upon his memory he said so, as he also did when his memory failed him.

Everything that he wrote, however, was encumbered with denunciations of the Hudson's Bay company and with religious phraseology *ad nauseam*. Eliminate these, and his writings have real value. But to Kelley, the infamy of the company was as real as the basis of his religious faith, and his denunciation of the one was as fervent as his worship of the other. He did not consider it necessary to apologize for either. Indeed, upon the latter point, he naively said:

"Some of my skeptical friends, who never examined my works, nor the 'fruit of the Spirit,' say to me,—'you *talk too much* in your book about religion. You will expose yourself to public ridicule.' My reply to them is, You *think too little* about religion. 'I am not ashamed to own my Lord.' 'I glory in this, that I know God,' and 'know Christ Jesus and him crucified,' and am a 'servant of Christ according to the will of God.'"²⁹

This was not the sort of statement with which to impress the authorities at Washington, but Kelley's religion was a very real thing to him, a part of his very self. His whole life was based on faith,—faith in God, faith in Oregon, and faith in his fellow men.

²⁹ *Settlement of Oregon*, 124.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE MAN KELLEY AND HIS PLACE IN HISTORY

"How inexpressibly comfortable to know our fellow-creature;" wrote Carlyle, "to see into him, understand his goings forth, decipher the whole heart of his mystery: nay, not only to see into him, but even to see out of him, to view the world altogether as he views it . . .!" If we cannot understand what manner of man Kelley was, it is through no fault of his, for in his voluminous writings his personality is reflected with all the clear outlines of reality. We see him first as a serious-minded boy of studious and pious habits of thought; then as a school teacher while still in his 'teens. The sports of boyhood were not for him; instead, he read and studied,—even by moonlight! There was so much to learn; so much good to do! To him, life was indeed earnest. We are told nothing of his father's influence; his character seems to have been built upon his mother's teachings. Oh, Polly Kelley, why did you not implant in your son a sense of humor,—a sense of relative values? One wonders if he ever laughed, or even smiled. To him the world was a formal place, peopled with good men, with a scattering few "through whom evil must come." The former were either "distinguished," "enterprising," "understanding," or "learned," while the latter were characterized in terms that were of another order. Rarely did he mention a person without employing an adjective, complimentary or otherwise. He was a master in the use of epithets.

It is not surprising that this self-centered and serious-minded man was involved in personal difficulties with his immediate associates: for he was as obstinate as George III, as ponderous and immovable as his own New Hampshire hills. In his mind there was no room for doubt as to the side upon which the right lay, or as to his position on that side. But if he was elephantine in his intellectual processes, he was

far from pachydermatous in his feelings; and his hurts were faithfully recorded, whether it was an injured little finger or a plan that was unjustly assailed. The only exception seems to be his dismissal from the Boston schools. His domestic relations were clearly reflected in the title chosen for his letters to Mrs. Kelley: "Letters From An Afflicted Husband To An Astranged Wife." He was the afflicted one, he would have us believe! But there are those who will have little difficulty in aligning themselves upon the side of that unfortunate woman. Who can read of that farewell scene at Bradford without sympathizing with her? She "looked sober," it appears, "and probably felt sad," and well she might; for her home had been broken up because of a vision.

Late in life Kelley undertook to analyze his character and his conduct, and we find in his writings many such statements as these:

"I have testified against the powerful worldlings belonging to the British and American Fur Companies, and the East India Merchants doing business on the N. W. Coast; and so testifying, have incurred the implacable hatred of those men. Their policy, then, as now, was to represent me as *stupid*, *ignorant* and *crazy*. The friends of my late bosom companion, prior to my visit to Oregon—to turn from, and against me, the loved ones of my household, called me an *idler* and a *spendthrift*; as one spending his time foolishly, and his money for that which is naught, and as having neither *mind* nor *means* to do anything.

"I do not believe these evil sayings of my enemies. I am not, nor have I ever been, an *ignorant* or *crazy* man, an *idler* or an *idle schemer*. My works, and the fruit of the spirit, testify to what I am. I do believe that I have as much as an ordinary understanding. I have at the present, now in old age, when 'waxen in decay,' as much as when fifty years ago, I conceived and planned the settlement of Oregon, as when, thirty-five or forty years ago, I planned so largely for internal improvements and the founding of benevolent institutions, and.

as when the wise and prudent about me were wont to say of me, 'He is living thirty years in advance of the times'

"Persecuting enemies take every advantage of my physical infirmities to bring me into low repute with friends and countrymen; which circumstance renders it highly needful I should explain concerning them. My infirmities are what render my external appearance unfavorable to right perceptions of me. I will now proceed to explain as to the cause and nature of the great calamity I have so long suffered

"Besides the calamity and other evils contributing to ugly external appearances, I am, as has been already explained, slow of apprehension, much slower, probably, than was Moses, who found a like difficulty with me, in expressing his thoughts, much slower than Goldsmith At times of high nervous irritation I lose the physical ability of expressing my thoughts As a legitimate result of this evil, I am also diffident. This adds very much to unfavorable outward appearances. Sad, very sad, were these appearances between the years 1829 and about 1852 I became terribly perplexed, and was driven, at times, to high mental excitement, doubtless to a near approximation to insanity. Was then more than in previous years, liable to foibles, inadvertences, and improprieties of conduct. In those years, at every attempt to perform before the public, to lead in devotional exercises at public gatherings, was a failure; diffidence at such times was more humbling and mortifying than ever. Often was I put to shame. After the last mentioned year, the outward appearances began to wear a more favorable aspect. I recovered from perplexity I think my head and heart are full of thoughts, original, great and good

"A word further as to the condition and evils to which I am now reduced. Having nearly lost my eyesight, I am unable at the present time to distinguish by the features one person from another at six feet distant from me; and am unable to read manuscript or even print, unless it be in large type, and not that without distress in the optic nerves, and a degree of

pain in the head. In every instance, if the reading is ever so short, even a dozen pages, the eyes tire, and the head becomes confused, and I am slower of speech and tongue, and utterance is more stammering.”¹

“The ways of a righteous Providence are inscrutable to mortals. In all my past career they have seemed particularly and wonderfully merciful, yet mysterious. I talk of great achievements, yet am I one of the least of the instrumentalities employed in the spreading of knowledge, and the advancing of the work of the Redeemer’s kingdom. When feeling the *strongest*, I am made sensible of *weakness*; when *proud*, am made humble. Once, I *increased in riches*, ‘grew fat and kicked against the Lord,’ and my adversaries came, and *took away my possessions*. Confident in my abilities to declaim and, otherwise, to hold forth before the public on the side of philanthropy; and, great *diffidence* came upon me. After some mortifying failures, I learned to be silent, was more wise, cared less to make an *outside show*, and more to make *faith and works* my *worth*. I began to *boast* of what my communications with intelligent and public-spirited men, and my books and tracts, spread about the land, were effecting in the field of benevolent enterprise, withholding from the mighty and Beneficent God too much of the praise due him; and I was smitten by the hand of the Lord; and came, comparatively, dumb before the people”²

“I live on, like some aged oak, lonely, on some bleak summit, withstanding storms and tempests, and smitten by thunderbolts, a branchless trunk. By the help of God I live; suffering poverty, the loss of health, and the bereavement of companion and children, and a persecution, terrible, and, in respect to duration and the number of powerful and cruel perpetrators, doubtless unparalleled in this age and country.”³

Enough, perhaps more than enough, has been presented to show Kelley’s attitude toward himself, with all its variations.

¹ Kelley, *Hist. of the Settlement of Oregon*, 4, 13, 15-6.

² Kelley, *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, postscript.

³ *Ibid.*, 86.

What of the attitude of historians? Naturally the estimates differ widely. The least sympathetic is that of Bancroft:

"The Boston school-master is a character the historian is not particularly proud of. He is neither a great hero nor a great rascal. He is great at nothing, and is remarkable rather for his lack of strength, and in staggering for fifty years under an idea too big for his brain. He was a born enthusiast and partisan, one of a class of projectors more capable of forming grand schemes than of carrying them to a successful issue. . .

"Had the school-master possessed an evenly balanced, practical mind, or had his early training been more of the counting-room, and less of the school-room, he might have made his mark, high and ineffaceable. To one who had the means, and knew how to employ them, it was then no difficult task to colonize Oregon, lay the foundations of a prosperous commonwealth, amass wealth, and convert the savages swiftly to heaven all at once. But there must be means and skill to handle them."⁴

Despite their objectionable tone these statements are worthy of attention, though one may well question whether the colonization of Oregon could have been accomplished so easily. The words of Clarke, Lyman, and Temple, as quoted below, give a much truer picture of the man:

"Let us concede in advance that the man had radical faults of character, that he was conceited as to the value of his labors and to some extent unreasonable in his pretensions, but, when this is all said, he must have been a man of force and definite purpose to expend twenty years of the prime of life in the attempt to preserve the American title to the territory of Oregon at that early day, and to entertain schemes for the settlement and development of that vast region He was both an enthusiast and a zealot, and—to his misfortune—was not a clear-sighted business man."⁵

"Kelley was undoubtedly one of those minds ideal rather than practical, who give suggestions which more executive per-

⁴ Bancroft, *Hist. of the Northwest Coast*, II, 544-5, 558n.

⁵ Clarke, *Pioneer Days of Oregon History*, I, 268-9.

sons readily pick up and carry out without even thanks to the giver All these [educational and benevolent] efforts, requiring the confidence of the public, and of educated persons, show a mind of fine order, highly progressive and probably erratic; but still neither unsound nor impractical. That he gradually withdrew his efforts from these valuable and congenial labors to take up the study of Oregon, and promulgate what proved to be the only practical way to maintain the interests of Americans here, is a work for which Oregon at this late day, and all the Union, should feel grateful, although in his actual movements he shows the more or less hesitating grasp of a man born a thinker rather than an actor.”⁶

“Of the character of Mr. Kelley it is not easy to form a satisfactory estimate. He was a many-sided man. In certain directions, he was a learned, but in whole, was not an educated man. His mind was active, but appears not to have been well balanced. His sympathies were large, but liable to be misdirected for want of cool judgment. He saw things in their individuality, not in their relations. What appeared to him to be desirable and philanthropic he pursued with enthusiasm, and without counting the cost. The goodness of his motives were never called in question, but his zeal was often ‘without knowledge.’ In a word, he was the creature, not the creator of circumstances The incidents narrated, show a natural tendency to depend on dreams and impulses, rather than on sober judgment, and calm forethought. Perhaps his main defects were lack of knowledge of men, and lack of financial ability, which two lacks account for his ill-success in life.”⁷

These appraisals of the man agree with his own statement that his head and heart were full of thoughts, great and good; but they say nothing as to his originality. From the record of his whole life, it is difficult to single out an instance in which he exhibited originality. As a school teacher he developed not

⁶ H. S. Lyman, *Hist. of Oregon*, III, 72-3.

⁷ Temple, *Hist. of the Town of Palmer*, 268-9.

his own system but Lancaster's; in proposing the settlement of Oregon, he acknowledged his indebtedness to Jefferson; in the movement for industrial education, he was an advocate, not an originator; his plan for the form of government of Oregon was based not on any ideas of his own, but on the laws establishing the territory of Michigan; as a scientist he dabbled in many fields and made shrewd and more or less accurate observations, but he originated nothing. His attempt to devise an improved system of land surveying was never carried far enough to entitle him to credit as an originator.

All agree that Kelley was a man with a distorted perspective, who was singularly out of touch with his fellows. To such men as Foster and Lovett, he was an easy victim; and to the sailors on the *Dryade* as well as the boys in *Three Rivers* he must have appeared as one who invited annoying attacks. Suffering arrest, entangled in frequent law suits, and losing property at every turn, he blundered his lonely way through life. He came into contact with many men of prominence,—Bulfinch, Everett, Webster, Linn, Cushing, Lancaster, to mention only a few; yet he seems to have had no real friends. Everywhere he seems to have been regarded as a bore, even by those who sympathized with him. Wyeth's letters show that he lost respect for Kelley upon close contact, and his attitude at Fort Vancouver can be explained only by the fact that he was entirely out of patience with the man. Indeed, it is difficult to read Kelley's narrative of his long journey to Oregon without impatience. Why did he encumber himself with so much baggage,—tracts, scarlet velvet sashes, combs, etc.? Why did he allow himself to be left alone in the wilds of Mexico on account of a lame mule and a load of worthless trinkets? His route from New Orleans to San Diego was marked with his belongings, lost, abandoned, stolen, or given away; and yet he arrived on the *Columbia* with enough baggage to worry about. Whenever he lost anything, whether it was the hind wheels of a wagon or a cane, the fact was duly set down and often with a statement of the amount in terms of money. These items he

finally consolidated in a statement of his account against the public under the head "Expenditures and Losses in Time and Property—The Public To Enterprise, Dr.," the total being \$132,250.⁸

If we attempt to state Kelley's account in terms of public service we must enter some items at merely nominal values for lack of information; but with all necessary qualifications, there would seem to be a considerable balance on the side of Kelley, whose claim to distinction may be set forth as follows:

The American Claim to Oregon.—From a wide range of sources Kelley collected materials on the question of title to the lands on the Northwest Coast and presented the facts in pamphlets, in newspaper articles, in memorials to congress, in public lectures, and in private conferences. Many of his statements of fact have been properly challenged, and his emphasis upon the matter of the Kendrick land purchase may have weakened his argument; yet his constant agitation served to keep the issue alive until the national government found it expedient to take final action. Whether Kelley's efforts directly influenced congress in any way is doubtful.

The Occupation of Oregon Proposed.—For many years Kelley claimed that he had been the first to propose the occupation of the Oregon territory by American citizens, and this claim has been generally accepted by historians, with the exception of Bourne, who said:

"Mr. Kelley's claims for himself seem greatly exaggerated,

8 Eleven years, up to 1836, at \$2,000 per year.....	\$22,000
Fifteen years, up to 1852, at \$1,500 per year.....	22,500
Publishing books and tracts	500
Travelling for the purpose of lecturing	200
Expenses at Washington	500
Two shares of the Oregon stock, and five certificates.....	300
Loss on the brig "John Q. Adams"	300
Loss at Three Rivers	300
Loss at New Orleans	300
Loss at Vera Cruz	1,150
Loss by robbers, near Salamanca	200
	\$48,250
Interest . . . to 1852, about	84,000
	Amount,
—Narrative of Events and Difficulties, 7.	\$132,250

and the dates of his published writings on the Oregon question indicate, I think, that instead of influencing Floyd to champion Oregon he himself reflected the movement initiated by Floyd To one freshly approaching the subject the work of Floyd for Oregon seems immensely more important than Hall J. Kelley's to whom more space is usually allotted in Oregon histories It is sufficiently clear, I think, that a man of such antecedents and connections was not dependent upon the Massachusetts schoolmaster either for information or stimulus."⁹

Kelley, however, did not claim that he had influenced Floyd, and he yielded to Benton the distinction of having been the first to propose the occupation of Oregon. In 1849 he said:

"I was not aware that any person in existence entertained thoughts of occupying the banks of the Columbia with an American population, till 1822 [1820?], when the subject was discussed in Congress. Afterwards, I came to the knowledge, that the Hon. T. H. Benton had previously, perhaps earlier than myself, conceived plans for that purpose; that he had written upon the subject, and conversed much upon it, and moved Governor Floyd to bring it into the National Legislature."¹⁰

The Occupation of Oregon Accomplished.—"The Oregon enterprise was one of my own getting up and carrying through. The wise confessed it to be magnificent and benevolent. The best part of my life was exclusively devoted to it; and the whole of my substance and earthly comforts were sacrificed to consummate its accomplishment; and, it resulted as at its conception I supposed it would, in making Oregon and California the abode of Civilization; and both integral parts of the United States' domain; and in extending more widely the blessings of Christianity."¹¹ This was Kelley's claim.

The reference to California was probably based upon the

⁹ Bourne, *Aspects of Oregon history before 1840*, Oregon Historical Society, *Quarterly*, VI, 260-3.

¹⁰ Kelley, *Hist. of the Colonization of Oregon*, 5. See also Thornton, *Oregon and California*, II, 14-5n.

¹¹ *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 68-9.

shadowy claim to having indirectly influenced Sutter to locate at Sacramento. As to Oregon, however, the claim is better grounded. That Wyeth went to Oregon because of Kelley's efforts is an established fact; that the Lees went as a result of his agitation is almost certain; and Kelley himself induced Ewing Young to accompany him to Oregon, where he remained as a settler. Calvin Tibbetts was the only man whose enrollment on the books of the American Society was followed by emigration and settlement; but some of the men who went out with Wyeth on his second expedition became settlers, as did those who were members of Young's party. It was Young's death in 1841 that led to the first movement for an organized government among the American settlers. The name of Webley Hauxhurst, one of Young's party, with that of Calvin Tibbetts appears on the list of those who voted in favor of organizing a provisional government in 1843; and Joseph Gale, also of Young's party, served on the first executive committee, 1843-4, which was elected to enforce the laws before the organization of the provisional government.¹²

The settlement of Oregon was not accomplished by New Englanders,¹³ as Kelley had planned, but it was accomplished as the result of the movement which he started.

The Origin Of The Word Oregon And Its Application To The Pacific Northwest.—“Who first accounted for the Indian name of the ‘Great River of the West,’ (Oregon) and applied the same to the country watered by that river? Who accounted for the *name* both of the Indian tribe and the river called *Kilmook*? Who accounted for the name of Mexico? Humboldt did not. Who accounted for the name of many of

¹² Himes, Organization of Oregon provisional government, *Oregon Blue Book*, 1915-6: 14-6.

¹³ “Mr. Himes finds that of Oregon's pioneer population, 6 per cent. came from New England, 50 per cent. from the Middle West, 33 per cent. from South of Mason's and Dixon's line and 11 per cent. from 22 foreign countries, the great majority of the latter from the British Isles, Canada and Germany.”—Woodward, The rise and history of political parties in Oregon, Oregon Historical Society, *Quarterly*, XI, 328n. “Wyeth as a New Englander is hardly to be blamed for not having foreseen the impending pioneer movement. It came from the western frontier.”—Young, *Correspondence and Journals of Nathaniel J. Wyeth*, xviii.

the places, tribes, of rivers, and animals, on the western side of North America? . . . I claim to have been him who has accounted for them. I have alone done them."¹⁴

We need not concern ourselves with the whole of this claim. Our interest is in the word Oregon, "whose origin has baffled modern investigation,"¹⁵ and upon this point neither of Kelley's statements are convincing.

In the matter of the application of the name of the river to the territory, Kelley's claim rests upon somewhat better grounds. "The country, in those days [before 1830], was known as the 'North-West Territory,' 'Columbia River,' and as the 'River Oregon.' His first step was, therefore, to enlighten the public concerning a country marked on all maps as 'unknown,' without a distinctive appellation, till the one it now wears was made familiar to the public mind by his writings and correspondence."¹⁶ Upon this point there is sufficient evidence upon which to deny Kelley's claim to priority, and also to determine beyond question the person to whom the honor belongs. Upon the evidence of Floyd's second Oregon bill, which was introduced on January 18, 1822, we must give to Floyd the distinction of having first proposed that "all that portion of the territory of the United States north of the forty-second degree of latitude, and west of the Rocky Moun-

¹⁴ *Settlement of Oregon*, 12. "Oregon, the Indian name of this river, was traced by me to a large river called *Orjon* in Chinese Tartary, whose latitude corresponds with that of Oregon, in America. The word *Killamucks*, the name of a tribe a little south of the mouth of the Oregon, was, also, traced to a people called Killmuchs, who anciently lived near the mouth of the Orjon in Asia. It is evident that the Oregon Killmucks were among the early settlers of North America, and brought with them many of the proper names used by our Indians. The word Mexico (Mecaco) is identified with the name of the ancient capital of Japan. Identifications of both proper and common names are numerous."—*Ibid.*, 88n. Another guess was: "The name of Oregon is derived from *or-gano*, the Spanish word for wild marjoram, the *oreganum vulgare* of Linnaeus, which grows abundantly in the western part of the disputed territory."—Kelley, Oregon. *Palmer Sentinel*, April 23, 1846. This subject, which lies within the held of geography rather than history, is discussed in detail in Bancroft, *Hist. of Oregon*, I, 17-25.

¹⁵ Bourne, *The travels of Jonathan Carver*, *American Historical Review*, XI, 288.

¹⁶ Kelley, *Petition*, 1866; 2.

¹⁷ 17 cong. 1 sess. H. bill 47, sec. 4.

tains, shall constitute a territory of Oregon."¹⁷ This was first emphasized by Bourne.¹⁸

But if Kelley was not the first to apply the name, he was the most active in making it known to the people, which in itself was a real public service, although not of major importance.

The Presidents' Range.—In his Memoir of 1839 Kelley said "The eastern portion of the district referred to [southwestern Oregon] is bordered by a mountain range [the Cascades], running nearly parallel to the spine of the Rocky mountains and to the coast, and which, from the number of its elevated peaks, I am inclined to call the *Presidents' range*. These isolated and remarkable cones, which are now called among the hunters of the Hudson's Bay Company by other names, I have christened after our ex-Presidents, viz.: 1. Washington [St. Helens], latitude 46 deg. 15 min.; 2. Adams [Hood], latitude 45 deg. 10 min.; 3. Jefferson, latitude 44 deg. 30 min.; 4. Madison [Three Sisters], latitude 43 deg. 50 min.; 5. Monroe [Diamond or Thielsen], latitude 43 deg. 20 min.; 6. J. Q. Adams [Pitt or McLoughlin], latitude 42 deg. 10 min.; and 7. Jackson [Shasta], latitude 41 deg. 40 min."¹⁹

Some contemporary writers, notably Farnham and Greenhow, were inclined to favor this suggestion; but Mount Jefferson alone has retained its name, and Mount Jefferson was originally named not by Kelley but by Captain William Clark. Thus it is possible to determine the source of Kelley's idea of a Presidents' range.²⁰ There is a Mount Adams in southern Washington, and its name may be the indirect result of Kel-

¹⁸ Bourne, *The travels of Jonathan Carver*, ut supra, 288n; *Aspects of Oregon history before 1840*, ut supra, 265-6. On January 13, 1823, Mallary of Vermont proposed an amendment to the Floyd bill which provided among other things that the "tracts of country, in the section described is hereby declared to be the Territory of Oregon," and on January 24 when Walker of North Carolina moved to amend Mallary's amendment by substituting Columbia for Oregon, Floyd objected and the motion was lost. Floyd then proposed and Mallary accepted a substitute which differs only in a few unimportant particulars from the original wording.—17 cong., 2 sess. *Annals of Congress*, XL, 601, 678-9. In the course of the debates on his bill Floyd used the terms "the Oregon" and "Oregon" interchangeably to describe the territory. See *Ibid.*, 408-9.

¹⁹ Pp. 53-4.

²⁰ There is a "President's range" in Kelley's native state, New Hampshire.

ley's suggestion, but Kelley's Mount Adams was south of the Columbia.

Internal Improvements Proposed.—That Kelley had little if any influence in the movement for a transcontinental railroad, is the conclusion to which one is forced after an examination of all available materials. When we consider the difficulties that attended the accomplishment of that great work, the words of Kelley, as quoted below, are interesting only as they tend to show how little he appreciated the magnitude of the task and the sort of men needed to engage in it:

"Had enemies let me alone, the road would have been graded from one end to the other before this [1854]; and Oregon before the year 1840, would have teemed with a population from our own blest country; and Alta California would have become the possession of the United States earlier than it did; and have cost less money and no blood; and that whole country, dark as it was, ere this day, would have been changed to shining fields and flowery gardens; and society there, would have been dressed in lovely attire, and robed in charms of moral beauty. . .

"My thoughts are still on the execution of these desirable and heaven-suggested improvements, and on the resources which the road would open to the people of this country for wealth and knowledge and national superiority. Should health and strength ever again be equal to so great a labor, and my enemies lessen the cords that bind me hand and foot, the two projects, Indian and railroad, remaining unaccomplished, I shall engage in them with what science and skill I possess, and with my accustomed zeal and perseverance, hoping to add them to the list of my achievements."²¹

This is Kelley at his worst. Nor was his claim on this account limited to railroads. "I planned for Internal Improvements—a canal from Charles River (Boston), to the Connecticut River, as surveyed by L. Baldwin, and a ship-canal from Barnstable to Buzzard's Bay."²² The Massachusetts canal was

²¹ *Narrative of Events and Difficulties*, 70-72.

²² *Settlement of Oregon*, 7. As to the former Kelley said that he "Made a cursory survey of eight or ten miles of the route, this . . . at my own expense," and that he presented a petition to the legislature. As to the latter he declared that "about the year 1825" he made a cursory survey of the route for the ship canal, also at his own expense.—Kelley, "Beloved Brethren," Nov. 14, 1860.

projected in 1791 by General Henry Knox, who obtained a charter in 1792. The project was revived by Governor Eustis in 1825, and a special commission was appointed to make an examination of the practicable routes through to the Hudson river at the terminus of the Erie canal. The Cape Cod canal was first proposed in colonial times, and it was everybody's project. It would seem that Kelley's contribution, such as it was, was negligible.

It remains to consider the various estimates which have been placed upon Kelley's public services by the writers of history. The laudatory accounts which appeared in the newspapers of Boston from time to time after 1839, like the testimonials which were appended to Kelley's memorials and petitions, may be safely ignored, for most of them were probably written at his solicitation. It must be borne in mind in connection with the excerpts which follow that many of them were written in the belief that to Kelley belonged the distinction of having been first in the field to suggest the settlement of Oregon—an honor which he specifically disclaimed.

"Though Mr. Kelley did not succeed in his object of the direct establishment of a colony on the Columbia, either for want of adequate personal influence and resources, or because his project was in advance of the time, or in consequence of the obstacles thrown in his way by interested individuals, still he is entitled to honorable mention for the exertions he made and long persisted in; and perhaps the American settlement, actually effected on the Wallamet, by Mr. Lee . . . may owe its conception to the publications and suggestions of Mr. Kelley These and other advantages of the settlement of Oregon were as clearly seen by Mr. Kelley then [1830], as they are now by the country at large. But he suffered the too common fate of those who conceive a great idea, and dedicate themselves to a great object, in anticipation of the progress of knowledge and opinion around them. Their discoveries or plans conflict with existing interests; their just views are met with misconstruction, and often with ridicule; their zeal is

wrecked on petty obstacles, thrown up by the ignorance or injustice of their misjudging contemporaries; and it is not until later times, or it may be another generation, that full justice can be done to the enthusiasm, and due allowance made for the exaggerated feeling, which the contemplation of an elevated purpose kindles in their breasts."²³

"And yet the occupation of Oregon was not without its knights of La Mancha, whose brains became somewhat turned, and that by difficulties more imaginary than real A fanatic in religion, he became fanatic in his scheme of settlement. All the powers of piety and avarice were employed by him in the attempted execution of plans which grew more wildly dear to him as the years went by and failure became more apparent

"If we measure his merits by his claims we must make him at once owner and king of Oregon. Nevertheless his writings did exercise influence, not as great as if they had been moderate, yet exceedingly weighty in those momentous questions so shortly to arise

"With regard to the services which Kelley rendered the United States, or Oregon, it would be difficult to estimate the value. That his published articles and public lectures were the first to call attention to the feasibility of settling the Pacific coast by an overland emigration there can be no dispute

"There are more than one in California like Vallejo and Alvarado, prominent in the affairs of the nation, who have seen cities rise from under the chaparal of sand-hills, and palpitating civilization fill the valleys where once they lassoed grizzly bears and chased wild men and women into the mission conversion pens; there are among the fur-traders those who have seen the rise of settlement and the wonders of progress in the Northwest; but there has been none like poor Kelley who laid upon the altar of his enthusiasm more than half a century of

²³ Cushing, *Discovery beyond the Rocky mountains*, *North American Review*, L. 122-3 (1840).

life, who among the first to start the cry, never ceased hallooing until his wilderness was a state

“All his influence to a very fair extent I am disposed to accord him. Had I been congress I would have given the old schoolmaster something to sweeten his second childhood’s cup withal, and I would have praised and petted him somewhat in an official way, for he did more than many a well paid officer of the government. But when a human being breaks forth in insensate twaddle like this, ‘Let me then be known by the work divinely appointed unto me to do, by the manner of life which the Lord Jesus revealed unto me in visions in my youth, by the eventful, extraordinary, and useful life, which God, according to his foreknowledge, did predestinate,’ I do not much blame the republic for giving the poor fellow the cold shoulder.”²⁴

“The history of human progress shows that great movements frequently receive their initial impulse from the most visionary and impractical of men. Perhaps the very quality of being visionary—prone to see visions—makes possible a forecast of results which lack of practical ability in the individual could never accomplish. John Brown did as much as any man to give direction to public thought in favor of the emancipation movement of the United States; but a man less qualified than he to bring that movement to a successful issue could scarcely have been found. So with the vital question of the Northwest—the long-disputed Oregon question—it was preached, published, and kept before the public for many years by a man who proved himself wholly unfit to carry out his own schemes. This was a Boston schoolmaster, Hall J. Kelley . . .

“His crusade was a successful one in helping to turn men’s minds to a subject of far-reaching importance, and in this respect the American people owe to his memory a debt of gratitude. Although he never achieved the distinction of martyrdom in the cause which he so boldly and persistently championed, he will stand in history as the John Brown of the

²⁴ Bancroft, *Northwest Coast*, II, 543, 554-5, 559n.

movement which saved to the United States a part of its rightful domain upon the Pacific.”²⁵

“Hall J. Kelley may properly be called the father of the Oregon emigration movement.”²⁶

“Sharing the fate of all idealists, he was a generation in advance of his day. All that he hoped for Oregon was destined to come to pass, and largely through his mad propaganda. His pamphlets and his newspaper [articles] generated a romantic enthusiasm for the vast realm beyond the Rockies so rapidly slipping from American control. His suggestion that every colonist should receive a grant of two hundred acres of arable land appealed with irresistible force to the homeless and unemployed of the eastern cities, and furnished the foundation for the Donation Act.”[?]²⁷

“It is impossible to show any other American at so early a period not only devoting himself to the intellectual labor of discussing the Oregon question, and to promoting colonization societies, but who undertook and overcame without support, the cost and perils of immigration with the sole object of verifying his teachings to the country It is only justice to agree with him that he set on foot by his writings the immigration movement to the shores of the Pacific in all its forms, whether missionary, commercial, or colonizing

“If we compare the unprotected services of a Kelley with the paid and protected services of Lewis and Clark, we have to acknowledge that a debt of appreciation and public recognition, at least, is due to the Yankee schoolmaster who spent the best years of his life in teaching the United States government and people the value of the Oregon territory.”²⁸

“I consider that the real contest for Oregon was between the

²⁵ Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West*, I, 434-5.

²⁶ Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, XXI, 24n.

²⁷ Coman, *Economic Beginnings of the Far West*, II, 132-3.

²⁸ Victor, Hall J. Kelley, one of the fathers of Oregon. *Oregon Historical Society Quarterly*, II, 39.

date of arrival of Hall J. Kelley, Ewing Young, and the freemen who came with them, or near their date and 1846.”²⁹

“Hall Jackson Kelley, a school teacher of Boston, began a work in behalf of Oregon that Oregon has never yet acknowledged or recognized. Kelley was an eccentric man, an enthusiast, one of those who seize a single idea and devote their lives to it He it was, beyond all question, who first urged the settlement of Oregon, insisted upon its practicability and set forth the importance and value of the Oregon country to the United States. Many with whom he came in contact regarded him merely as a bore or troublesome fellow, and this impression was deepened by a tone in his speech and writings which was regarded as a religious cant

“This strange eccentric man can almost be called the prophet of Oregon, the father of migration to Oregon, the man who hastened the fulfillment of Oregon’s destiny.”³⁰

“The largest results of Wyeth’s enterprise are rather to be looked for in the contribution he made in various ways to the furtherance of other enterprises than his own.

“Substantially the same may be said of the enterprise of Hall J. Kelley, the leading promoter of one or more of the emigration societies already mentioned. He contributed materially to the ultimate settlement of the territory by his persistent and widespread agitation in the East, and later in some measure by bringing into the Willamette Valley a small band of men, some of whose number became permanent settlers.”³¹

“We envy none who can look on the story of Hall J. Kelley with contempt. . . . Continually, as I study the features of that early time, I trace the primal influences to Hall J. Kelley as having given them birth. Oregon can afford to kindly remember him for the good he tried to do—and really

²⁹ Minto, *The young homeseker*, Oregon Historical Society, *Proceedings*, 1900: 120-1.

³⁰ Scott, Annual address, Oregon Pioneer Association, *Transactions*, 1890: 33, 35.

³¹ Wilson, *The Oregon question*, Oregon Historical Society, *Quarterly*, I, 223-4.

accomplished as results have shown. He alone was stirring the cauldron of Fate, and did and said what had momentous results. It is more kindly to place a stone upon his cairn than to throw any slur on one who suffered and lost so much.

"Hall J. Kelley had wonderful prescience and judgment in discerning facts and drawing conclusions This visionary, whose life was a disappointment, because he attempted too much, laid the foundation for all that as finally accomplished. It was surprising that he accomplished so much and was so reliable.

"Kelley's work was far reaching. His life work was as the finger of fate pointing the way, and his labors reached fruition while he was neglected and his services forgotten

"I have been struck with the fact that Kelley was the special providence inspired at the earliest time to appreciate the value of this region, when Congress ignored it and the nation was ignorant of its value. Eliminate from that period this single feature and it is doubtful when American occupancy could have been effective. The very man who discovered gold in California was one who came from Oregon, drawn there by the facts stated. Before the century shall have passed, through which he so ardently labored and so bitterly suffered, it will not be too late to accord to him the merit he deserved and plant this modest laurel on his forgotten grave."³²

"To him, more than any other one person, in my judgment, may be justly attributed the subsequent occupation of the country by emigrants from the United States—and Oregon should in some way worthy of the subject and herself yet acknowledge and commemorate that fact."³³

"To him, without doubt, is to be attributed much of the subsequent wave of interest which swept on toward American immigration. At first, a New England college man, educator, and social theorizer, and then a leader of the pioneer movement

³² Clarke, I, 274-6.

³³ Deady, Annual address, Oregon Pioneer Association, *Transactions*, 1875:24.

to Oregon, Hall J. Kelley is worthy of permanent remembrance."³⁴

"Some of the Oregon historians have been disposed to belittle Kelley's work for Oregon; but they only expose their own want of knowledge of the subject There is not a church history or a church document that has ever been printed that had the justice to give Kelley what was due to him Unappreciated and misunderstood, by some called a fanatic, by others a crank, and by the Hudson's Bay Company treated as a horse-thief, the ghost of Hall J. Kelley appears and disappears through the shifting scenery of Oregon's strenuous history with such kaleidoscopic presentment as almost baffles description Hall J. Kelley is justly entitled to have his name enrolled among those who saved Oregon to the people of the United States."³⁵

"He gained a place in history and his name is gratefully mentioned as the earliest and one of the truest friends of the 'Americanization of Oregon.' No history of Oregon can be written that does not thus record the name of Hall J. Kelley."³⁶

Kelley complained that his name had been suppressed in the books and reports on Oregon written by Lee and Frost, Greenhow, Slacum, Howison, and others. Had he lived to read the estimates here reproduced, he might have been satisfied; for it is now acknowledged that his figure bulks large among those who have lived and labored for Oregon. A number of suggestions have been made as to a proper memorial to his name. So far as is known Kelley street in Three Rivers is his sole memorial, and this is no small distinction in a village which has given to its streets such singularly unimaginative appellations as Main, Front, and High. The map of the Northwest Coast is sprinkled with the names of Lewis, Clark, Jefferson, Astor, Benton, Linn, Polk, Whitman, McLoughlin, and others who figured in the early history of the Oregon country. Oregon

³⁴ W. D. Lyman, *The Columbia River*, 161.

³⁵ Gaston, *Hist. of Oregon*, I, 115-6, 268, 272.

³⁶ H. K. Hines, *Hist. of Washington*, 105.

has recently dedicated the McLoughlin Home at Oregon City and reinterred the body of Jason Lee at Salem. The body of Kelley lies in his boyhood home in Gilmanton, and there it should remain. Above it might well be placed these words of Stevenson, which read as if they were written with Kelley in mind:

"Here lies one who meant well, tried a little, failed much:—surely that may be his epitaph, of which he need not be ashamed. Nor will he complain at the summons which calls a defeated soldier from the field; defeated, ay, if he were Paul or Marcus Aurelius:—but if there is still one inch of fight in his old spirit, undishonoured. The faith which sustained him in his life-long blindness and life-long disappointment will scarce even be required in this last formality of laying down his arms. Give him a march with his old bones; there, out of the glorious sun-colored earth, out of the day and the dust and the ecstasy—there goes another Faithful Failure!"

APPENDIX.

MR. KELLEY'S MEMOIR¹

Boston, *January 31, 1839.*

Sir: In compliance with your request, I shall willingly communicate to you a brief account of my connexion with the Oregon country, and of such facts in regard to that valuable portion of our national domain, and of adjoining regions, as have come within my observation and are of public interest.

The perusal of Lewis and Clark's journal, personal conference with intelligent navigators and hunters who had visited and explored the territory beyond the Rocky mountains, and facts derived from other sources entitled to credit, many years ago, satisfied me that this region must, at no remote period, become of vast importance to our Government, and of deep and general interest. Possessing, so far as I could learn, a salubrious climate, a productive soil, and all the other natural elements of wealth, and by its position in reference to divers most important channels of traffic, as well as its configuration of coast, and variety of native productions, being admirably adapted to become a great commercial country, I foresaw that Oregon must, eventually, become a favorite field of modern enterprise, and the abode of civilization.

With these views constantly and vividly before me, I could but desire most earnestly to communicate them to the public, and impress them upon the Government. And, to accomplish these objects, I have done and suffered much; having been particularly attentive to it for many years, and wholly devoted to it a large part of my time.

One great object of my labors has been to induce Congress, in the exercise of a sound discretion and foresight, and in

¹ Committee On Foreign Affairs, Supplemental report, *Territory of Oregon*, Appendix O: 47-61. 25 cong. 3 sess. H. rep. 101.

conformity with good faith towards Great Britain, to extend the active jurisdiction and guardianship of the General Government over this territory, so that it might be brought under the restraints and protection of political organization and of law, by the country to which it justly belongs.

Another of my objects has been to give my fellow-citizens correct information, and thus induce a full and free emigration to this territory, of temperate, orderly, and industrious men; such men as might most certainly carry thither all the advantages of civilization, and lay the foundations of a virtuous community; and thus to convert the wilderness into a [47] garden, the wild retreats of Indians and roving hunters into the smiling abodes of knowledge and Christianity.

I longed and labored, also, for the highest interests of the native owners of the great West; for their social, intellectual, and moral culture; and my objects were not less benevolent than commercial, and looked as much to the elevation and melioration of the red race as to the benefit of the white.

And, finally, I desired most earnestly that the United States should secure to their western frontier the ocean as its defense, and thus remove from one of our borders, at least, the dangers arising from the vicinity of foreign states—an object which I deemed of vast importance, and upon which I need not enlarge.

These were the objects to whose accomplishment I looked forward, and from which I confidently anticipated many benefits: such as a more friendly and profitable intercourse between our people and the various Indian tribes: the immediate occupation of the harbors and havens of the Oregon, and the use of its abundant ship timber; great profit from the whale and salmon fisheries of the northwest coast; a free and growing commerce with the islands and coasts of the Pacific, with worlds should be united, and their wealth interchanged and speedy line of communication over land from the Mississippi to the Oregon, by means of which the Eastern and Western China, and India, and the Southern America; a certain and

increased; and many other particular benefits, which I need not enumerate.

It is not necessary for me to enter, on this occasion, into a narrative of the obstacles which I encountered in the prosecution of my views, and of the many sacrifices which I incurred in order to accomplish objects which I considered as of the highest public utility. Suffice it to say here, that, induced by the considerations I have stated, in 1833 I started from New Orleans for Vera Cruz and Mexico, and after remaining some time in Mexico, I proceeded through Upper California to Oregon.

I shall confine myself, in this communication, to the results of my study and inspection within *the Oregon territory*, and *the adjoining province of High California*.

I extend my remarks to this part of California, because it has been, and may again be, made the subject of conference and negotiation between Mexico and the United States; and because its future addition to our western possessions is, most unquestionably, a matter to be desired.

HIGH CALIFORNIA.

Commencing my remarks, therefore, at Monterey, a sea-port town situated in latitude 36 deg. 37 min. north, where I spent the months of June and July, 1834, I intend to proceed with these, in the route of my travels, northward, to the Columbia river. During my route, I was accompanied by Captain Young, a veteran hunter, who had repeatedly traversed this country, and was familiar with most of its features.

Adopting such an arrangement of facts as will, I trust, prove convenient to the committee, I will now call their attention to a *brief geographical account of the northern portion of High California*.

This tract of country extends from the 37th to the 42nd parallel north latitude, and forms a portion of the Mexican territories, except some few patches on the coast; it has never

been improved by the hand of civiliza-[48]tion. A lofty range, called the Snowy mountains, divides it from Oregon. This range extends from the Pacific ocean, eastwardly, to the Rocky mountains, is broken into a great number of subordinate ranges, spurs, and detached peaks. It is bounded by the valley of the Colorado, and by rugged walls of rocky highlands on the east, and its surface is diversified by groups of wooded hills, extensive prairies and marshes, and a multitude of streams, some of which are rapid and others sluggish in their currents. The Colorado drains this district on the east, and empties its waters into the gulf of California. Several rivers on the west flow into the bay of San Francisco.

The prairies, which form perhaps one half of the surface of this region, differ widely in character, extent, in formation, and fertility; but in general they are covered with a deep and rich soil, and with an exuberant vegetation. Their uniformity is broken by numerous well-wooded hills and hillocks, and by those belts of forest which stretch along all the water-courses.

The mountainous regions are, in general, heavily timbered; but occasionally, instead of forests, we find tracts of utter barrenness, bearing the strongest marks of volcanic action, and destitute of all appearance of vegetable life.

There is one continuous line of prairie extending from the gulf of California to the 39th parallel, sometimes a hundred miles wide, and seldom less than ten, opening to the ocean only at the bay of San Francisco, its surface so diversified by fringes of trees along the borders of its streams, and by the wooded capes and peninsulas which break the uniformity of its outline, as to present the appearance of a chain of prairies of every conceivable size and form. Here, amidst the luxuriant grasses and native oats which cover its surface, immense herds of cattle, and wild game, and droves of horses, find abundant pasturage.

Although most of these prairies are very fertile, my observation led me to doubt whether they could all be readily and

profitably cultivated. The soil is in many places strongly impregnated with the muriate of soda, and in others it abounds with asphaltum, by which it is rendered too compact, especially during the excessive heats of the dry season, for tillage. The experiment has been tried on these soils, with fruit trees and esculent roots, and has repeatedly failed. Thus the apple and the potato have both been introduced, and to both the prairie has been found uncongenial, although they both flourish in the hilly region, and near the seashore. My belief is that these prairies are the results of ancient volcanic action, in which respect they do not differ from all the rest of that territory. But while the conformation of the hilly country, has aided the efforts of nature, by rains, and dews, and streams of water, to carry off these salts and other elements which are unfriendly to vegetation, and hasten the return of fertility and productiveness, the level prairie has advanced much more slowly in the same direction, retaining for ages, in defiance of the tardy process of leaching and infiltration, vast quantities of mineral substance, destructive to vegetable life. Without the aids of agricultural science, centuries more must elapse before the pure waters of the skies shall wash out from the soil of the prairie these poisonous relics of that awful convulsion of nature which, in ages far beyond human tradition, overwhelmed the western shores of our continent. Immediately along the banks of the rivers by which the prairie is intersected, as if to [49] demonstrate the correctness of my hypothesis, there is always found a strip of the choicest alluvion.

The seasons of this country are two—the wet and the dry. The wet or winter season extends from November to March, covering about five months of the year. During this period it rains without cessation for many days or weeks together; and during the rest of the year the rain seldom or never falls, and nothing but the heavy dews of the short summer nights relieves the fiery monotony of those seven long months. By the abundant waters of the rainy season, immense tracts of

low prairie land are submerged, and thus for awhile converted into lakes, which gradually subside as the summer advances, contributing by their stagnant pools and putrid exhalations to render those lowlands exceedingly unhealthy. Some travellers, misled by these temporary floods, have spoken of vast lakes and ponds in the interior of California, instead of which their astonished successors of the following summer have discovered only arid plains or sedgy pools and marshes.

I was told that about once in every ten years it happens that little or no rain falls during the winter season; and that, in consequence of this drought, the whole country is dried up, vegetable life is almost annihilated, and the beasts of the field perish of thirst and starvation.

Along the coast, where the seabreezes have easy and constant access, the climate throughout the year is salubrious and delightful, differing in temperature many degrees, during the dry season, from the prairie lands, which lie beyond the first range of hills, where the ardor of the sun is mitigated by no cooling wind. The range of hills shuts out the western breezes, and the surrounding masses of forest exclude all other winds, and render ventilation impossible on the prairies, so that, while the inhabitants of the coast are enjoying all the delights of a serene and benignant climate, the panting traveller upon these burning plains is suffering all the discomforts of the torrid zone. In crossing from the prairies in the latitude of 38 deg. 30 min., during the month of August, I found that for several successive days the mercury ranged at 110 deg. (Fahrenheit) in the shade; and sealing wax deposited in one of my boxes was converted into an almost semi-fluid state. At the same time, and in the same parallel, on the borders of the Pacific, the thermometer seldom exhibited a greater temperature than 75 deg., and in the evening a fire was frequently essential to comfort.

This difference of temperature is accompanied by a corresponding diversity of healthfulness. The coast is always healthy; but during the heat of summer the prairies of the interior are pestilential, and diseases abound.

The principal harbors which I visited on the Pacific coast of this province (and I speak only of what I actually saw) are Santa Cruz and San Francisco. The former, about lat. 37 deg. north, is open to the sea, and exposed at times to a tremendous surf. On the northern side of the harbor lies the small town of Santa Cruz.

San Francisco bay or harbor is very spacious, and furnishes several safe and convenient havens and roadsteads. It lies some forty miles north of Santa Cruz. Its entrance, latitude 37 deg. 49 min., is two miles wide, and admits ships of the largest draught and burden. From its entrance it stretches twenty miles towards the north, and thirty miles [50] south-easterly, the southern branch of the bay being sheltered by a range of high hills. Throughout the bay the anchorage is safe, so that a more commodious harbor could not be desired. Excepting one in De Fuca straits, it is considered the best in Northwestern America. A number of important streams find an outlet in the harbors above named. Of these, the St. Joaquin may be particularized. It rises in a large lake near the 36th deg. north, moves with a deep, slow, and tranquil current through several hundred miles of prairie, receiving the tribute of many lesser streams from the mountains on the east, and at last discharges its transparent waters into the northerly part of the bay of San Francisco. This tranquil river must eventually become productive of vast benefit to California, not merely as a convenient and ready inlet for commercial purpose, but as a great outlet through which shall be drained those superfluous waters by which so much of the prairie is converted into a marsh, and rendered fruitful only of disease and death. It is indeed a vast canal, constructed by an Almighty Architect, and destined, I doubt not, in future ages, to transport the countless products of a mighty empire.

Another river of note is called the Sacramento. Next to the Columbia it is the largest stream on the western side of the continent. Its head waters are in the Snowy mountains (of which I have already spoken), and almost mingle with those

of three other mighty rivers—the Colorado, the Rio Del Norte, and the Columbia. Its tributaries flow also from the range of mountains which flank the valley of the Colorado. It empties into the bay of San Francisco, and is navigable for vessels of small burden to its first fork, about eighty miles from its mouth. The branches which unite at that point are both rapid mountain streams; too rapid for easy navigation, but admirably adapted to float down to the waters of the Pacific the valuable timber which covers the mountains where they rise. The Sacramento, in the rainy season, rises fifteen or twenty feet, overflows its banks, assumes the appearance of a succession of lakes, and fertilizes with its alluvion immense tracts of champagne country. Of its numerous branches, and their countless tributary rivers and rivulets, I need not here make mention.

I crossed the rapids of the Sacramento at what was said to be its lowest ford, in latitude 39 deg. 35 min. Several of our horses were borne away by the torrent. The width of the river at that point exceeded 100 yards, and its depth varied from two to four feet. The streams west of this crossing place are said to be full of rapids. The western branch of the river is nearly equal in size to the eastern; but its tributaries are, however, less copious.

It may be advisable to say something more of the aspect of this territory.

The Snowy mountains (Sierras Nevadas, as Vasquez named them in 1540), extending from the Rocky mountains to the Pacific, are drained by the largest rivers of North America. From these mountains a spur of rugged hills extends southwardly, between the principal branches of the Sacramento, to that fork of the river of which I have spoken. These hills are manifestly of volcanic origin, and they might well be named the "Volcanic ridge." They abound in basaltic and vitrified stones, scoria, and many other products of volcanic action. Along their base stretches [51] a beautiful chain of prairies, for 70 or 80 miles, watered by numerous streams and rivulets.

North of the 39th deg. of latitude, the whole character and aspect of the country changes suddenly, and decidedly for the better. At this latitude commences the southerly slope of the Snowy mountains. The soil upon most of the hills seems admirably adapted to the growth of forest trees, and the prairies and pleasant valleys which there abound furnish the best possible land for farming purposes. Now and then, however, occurs a hill destitute of vegetation, scattered over which are to be found dark-colored iron stones, of all shapes, with sharp edges, resembling clinkers in the arches of a brick kiln; and reddish clay and gravel, like pulverized brick.

In this volcanic ridge I found a stratum of earth which the Mexicans called *tepetate*, and which forms a sort of cement. When covered by water, or buried so far below the earth as to retain moisture, it is so soft as to be easily penetrated by an iron bar, but it becomes as solid and impenetrable as a rock on being exposed to the sun or wind.

The prairies in this hilly region are narrow vales, which stretch like beautiful ribbons along the basis of the highlands and the margins of rivers. They are variegated with an infinite variety, and abundance of vegetable productions, gay with a thousand blossoms, and fragrant with countless perfumes. Among the grasses which, in the month of September, were in full growth and vigor, I noticed the red clover, wild rye, wild oats, and a peculiar species of coarse grass, whose seed furnished the native with their most common article of food.

The timber trees of this region are numerous and valuable and deserve some notice.

About the highlands of the Sacramento, I discovered abundance of the *white pine*. But this species, though of great size and value, does not compare with the prodigious size and towering height of the Lambert pine; (*pinus Lambertiana*) or *pino colorado*. Cabrillo, in 1542, gave the name of "Bahia de los Pinos" to the harbor of Monterey, undoubtedly with reference to this splendid species of the coniferee. The dimensions

of the Lambert pine may be inferred from the fact that I found near Santa Cruz an extensive forest, the full-grown trees of which, at the height of twenty feet from the ground, in their diameter, would average from five to six feet. Their trunks run up like the spars of a ship, without branches, to a prodigious height. The wood of this pine has the color of red cedar, as might be inferred from the Spanish name, (colorado,) and the rift and softness of white pine. I examined one of the trees which had been felled, and by its concentric laminae ascertained its age to be 510 years.

These majestic towers of evergreen continue as far northward as 40 degrees.

There are several kinds of *oak*. Of these, the most common is in California called white oak, (*encina blanca*.) rising to the average height of forty feet, its trunk measuring from six to eight feet in girth, with numerous branches, which grow together with such compactness as to furnish an impenetrable retreat to those who seek concealment therein, and in perfect symmetry of form, like the rounded tops of an apple orchard; these oaks present a very pleasing appearance to the eye.

The live oak (*quercus virens*) is likewise found in great abundance. [52] It is said to grow only on the highlands: in this respect differing from the live oak of Florida. It has a diameter of three or four feet, and an altitude of sixty or seventy. For solidity, strength, and durability, judging from specimens in my possession, I deem it equal to any in the world. This invaluable timber extends northward beyond the 40th parallel.

But the most lordly species of oak here found is the white oak, (*q. navalis*.) It abounds on the river banks, and covers the low hills on the prairies. It not infrequently gives a diameter of five feet, measured at a height of ten or twelve feet above the ground, and its branches attain to corresponding dimensions, and extend a prodigious distance horizontally from the stem.

I might pursue to much greater length my statements in regard to this interesting region; so as to speak of its towns, villages, missions, population, and of all its natural features and productions, more fully and minutely. But while I felt bound to allude, as I have, to the most remarkable facts which I observed during my travels in High California, I have avoided going into details, or making statements which my own inspection has not enabled me to verify. A few words more concerning the native tribes of California, and I will pass northward to the Oregon.

Most of the native Indians have perished, or have gone into the missions about the bay of San Francisco. Many tribes are utterly extinct; in places where I was told that, in 1832, there was a population of a thousand or fifteen hundred souls, I found sometimes but one hundred, sometimes not more than fifty, and sometimes none; and not a vestige of their habitations, save a pile of discolored stones, or a slight depression of the soil. Pestilence and the wrath of man have combined in the work of extermination, until, of the ancient owners of this most interesting territory, very few now occupy its fertile fields. I do not believe, and I speak after due investigation, that the whole Indian population between the Colorado and the Pacific, in 1834, exceeded three thousand souls. But along the Sacramento and elsewhere, there is abundant evidence that, in former times, a teeming and crowded population was spread over that now desolate region.

When I remember the exuberant fertility, the exhaustless natural wealth, the abundant streams and admirable harbors, and the advantageous shape and position of High California, I cannot but believe that at no very distant day a swarming multitude of human beings will again people the solitude, and that the monuments of civilization will throng along those streams whose waters now murmur to the desert, and cover those fertile vales—whose tumuli now record the idolatrous worship and commemorate the former existence of innumerable savage generations.

OREGON.

I will now present to the committee, in brief, the facts which I gathered during a residence of five months in the Oregon territory, and which relate to the aspect, mountains, rivers and other waters, climate, soil, productions, trade and population of that country. My inspection having been confined to the southwesterly portion of Oregon, I shall limit my statements accordingly.

The eastern section of the district referred to is bordered by a mountain range, running nearly parallel to the spine of the Rocky mountains [53] and to the coast, and which, from the number of its elevated peaks, I am inclined to call the *President's range*.*

There is a great uniformity of aspect among these peaks. They all resemble the frustum of a cone, the declivity forming an angle of from thirty to thirty-five degrees with the horizon. They lift their bold summits several thousand feet from their mountain bases, are thinly wooded near the bottom, but from mid-distance upward present their barren sides in the naked deformity of rock, lava, cinders, or whatever else might have come glowing, at some former period, from the deep-caverned volcanic cauldrons below. I did not ascend them; but if it be safe to reason on the analogy furnished by the Mexican peaks, whose summits I did explore, and whose forms are precisely similar, these elevated summits are the chimneys of extinct volcanoes, and retain the vestiges of those craters from which the fiery discharges and eruptions were wont to be made.

I encamped for some time at the base of Mount Jackson, and was equally moved by the sublime spectacle of its abrupt ascent and towering grandeur, and by the beautiful diversity of its aspect and colors. engirdled as it was below with suc-

*These isolated and remarkable cones, which are now called among the hunters of the Hudson's Bay Company by other names, I have christened after our ex-Presidents, viz: 1. Washington, latitude 46 deg. 15 min.; 2. Adams, latitude 45 deg. 10 minutes; 3. Jefferson, latitude 44 deg., 30 min.; 4. Madison, latitude 43 deg. 50 min.; 5. Monroe, latitude 43 deg. 20 min.; 6. J. Q. Adams, latitude 42 deg. 10 min.; and 7. Jackson, latitude 41 deg. 40 min.

cessive belts of forest, shrub and hardy plant, and terminating aloft in perpetual frost and unbroken desolation. It was my misfortune at this time to be disabled by ill health, so far as to be prevented both from ascending this peak, and from measuring its altitude and fixing its exact latitude.

From the Presidents' range there are two chains of hills extending to the Pacific ocean; one of them branching off from the base of J. Q. Adams peak, flanked on the north by the Umpqua river, and on the south by the Clamet, and terminating on the coast, in latitude ———, in high bluffs; and the other chain running from Adams peak nearly parallel with the Columbia river, until it reaches the ocean in a lofty summit, called by Lewis and Clark "Clark's Point of View."

In all these chains of hills, and conical peaks, and isolated piles, whether springing from the heart of the prairie or clustering amongst the highlands, I feel confident that we discover unquestionable proof that in former ages this western portion of our continent was convulsed, rent asunder, and thrown into wild disorder, by earthquakes and the operation of subterranean fires.

The first important river in Oregon, on the northerly side of the Snowy mountains, is the Clamet. It is formed of two branches, one of which rises in a lake of the same name, measuring some fifteen or twenty miles over; the other in Mount Monroe.

Both these branches are mountain torrents, rushing furiously over rocky beds to their confluence. After breaking through a ridge of low rocky hills, some thirty miles from the coast, the Clamet proceeds in a northwesterly direction, and with a moderated current to the Pacific.

Next northwardly from the Clamet is the river Umpqua, very similar in size, character and direction, rapid during most of its course, but passing through the level country near its embouchure with slackened speed. [54]

These two rivers are divided, as I have before stated, by one of the spurs of the Presidents' range. Their margins

are finely wooded and timbered, broken into an agreeable variety of hill and dale, and covered with an excellent soil. The pine, oak and other timber is very abundant and very heavy, not only along the main stream of these rivers, but among all the highlands where they and their tributaries rise.

The Wallamette, an important branch of the Columbia river, has its headwaters near the sources of the Umpqua, receives numerous tributary streams from the Presidents' range, to which its course runs nearly parallel, and pours its floods into the Columbia, about eighty miles from the ocean. On its upper course it is said to be broken into several beautiful cataracts. For the last hundred miles above its junction it traverses a comparatively level and open country; and, with the exception of one short portage, is navigable for this whole distance by boats drawing three or four feet of water. It penetrates the ridge of hills bordering the southern shore of the Columbia, and at that place falls over three several terraces of basaltic rock, making in all a descent of twenty-five feet. These falls are twenty miles from the Columbia. Below this point its banks are low, are subject to inundation in the season of the "freshets" or vernal floods. It has two mouths, formed by the position of a group of three islands whose longitudinal extent is sixteen miles, and which, though lying chiefly in the Columbia, project into the current of the Wallamette, and divide its waters in the manner described. This river has been sometimes misnamed the "Multnomah," with reference to a tribe of Indians, now extinct, who formerly occupied the land lying around its northern entrance into the Columbia.

In beauty of scenery, fertility of soil, and other natural advantages, no portion of our country surpasses that which is found upon the Wallamette. The whole valley of this river abounds in white oak and other valuable timber. Fringes of trees grow along the margin of the stream, and back of these are rich bottom lands or prairie ground of inexhaustible fer-

tility, and adorned with all the wealth of vegetation. From these prairies, which are sometimes a few rods and sometimes several miles wide, often rise round isolated hills, heavily wooded, and presenting a lovely contrast to the sea of grass and flowers from which they spring.

I have now reached the *Columbia* river. The few statements which I propose to make concerning this noble stream will refer to matters which may not come within the knowledge of the committee from other sources.

I made surveys of the *Columbia* from the *Wallamette* to the ocean, the results of which appear upon the map which I had the honor to transmit to the committee.

For about 100 miles above its mouth the banks of the *Columbia* are generally above the reach of inundation. The periodical floods begin about the first of May, and subside about the middle of June; and of the distance of which I have spoken, it may be that one-tenth part is reached by the waters.

During all seasons of the year the entrance into the *Columbia* is both difficult and dangerous. Flats and sand bars stretch nearly the whole distance between its two headlands, *Point Adams* and *Cape Hancock* ("Disappointment") leaving only a narrow channel near the point last named. This channel, however, furnishes at all times more than twenty feet of water. [55]

From October to April, the prevalence of strong westerly winds increases the difficulty of threading this channel. The waves are driven landward with great violence, and break upon the shoals and bars with tremendous force and deafening roar. It sometimes happens, therefore, that vessels are driven by the force of the waves from the channel, and dashed hopelessly upon those treacherous sands.

There are several *harbors*, formed by the curvature of the river banks, which deserve mention.

Of these, *Chenook harbor*, on the northerly shore, is a spacious bay, directly back of *Cape Hancock*, having deep soundings and a good bottom, the outer part of which is somewhat exposed, but within it is sheltered by the cape.

Gray's harbor, on the same side of the river, about ten miles from the cape, is better protected than Chenook, but it is comparatively shallow, except for a short distance, where the water measures three and four fathoms. It must become a great place for shipbuilding, in consequence of the vicinity of immense quantities of ship timber.

Nearly opposite is *Astor harbor*, lying a little south of "Tongue point." Though not wholly defended from the westerly winds, it is the best of the harbors yet mentioned, having soundings of from four to seven fathoms, and a muddy bottom. From Astor harbor to Cape Hancock the direct distance is eleven miles; but by the channel it is increased to something over fourteen.

Directly over against Chenook harbor is *Meriwether bay*, a deep opening behind Point Adams, inaccessible to vessels of large size, by reason of sand bars, but furnishing a secure anchorage to the smaller craft.

It would be easy to improve the entrance of the Columbia by cutting a ship channel across a narrow strip of lowland from Chenook bay to a small but deep harbor which lies north of Cape Hancock. The distance does not exceed a hundred rods; a creek extends nearly across, and the spring flood flows quite over it. My belief is that, at some former period, the waters of the Columbia had a free outlet at this place, but that the gradual deposits of sand and alluvion have choked up the channel.

So also might a canal be cut at small expense from Chenook harbor, some thirty miles northwestwardly, to Bulfinch's bay, by which the navigation would be greatly facilitated. The intervening land invites this enterprise; for it is not only low and level, but, for a considerable portion of the distance, ponds and natural channels of water furnish great facilities to such a work.

The Columbia is, at all seasons, navigable for ships to the head of tide water, which is two miles from its outlet. The brig *Convoy*, Captain Thompson, in the season of the freshet, ascended forty miles further to the falls.

The climate of this region is mild, salubrious and healthful. During the whole winter of 1834-5, settlers on the Columbia were engaged in ploughing and sowing their lands, and cattle were grazing on the prairies. One of the factors of the Hudson's Bay Company, who cultivated an extensive farm on the northern bank of the Columbia, informed me that he sowed one hundred and fifty bushels of wheat during the months of January and February. I knew of but three falls of snow during that winter in the vicinity of the river. These occurred in February, and neither of them exceeded three inches in depth. The 28th [56] of February was the coldest day in the season; rain fell during the forenoon. It then cleared off cold and, for a few hours, houses, trees and fields sparkled in an icy covering.

During the winter, nearly every day witnessed an alternation of sunshine and rain: the forenoons being mild and clear, and the afternoons ending in showers or drizzling rain.

The healthfulness of this country is unquestionable. With the exception of some few low and swampy spots on the banks of the Columbia, at and below the junction of the Wallamette, the whole region of the Columbia enjoys a clear and fine atmosphere, and an exemption from all the ordinary causes of endemic disease. It is said that till the year 1830 fever and ague had not been known. In that year, as I was informed, the Indians suffered from intermittent fevers. But there was no reason to attribute this mortality to climate. On the other hand, it is believed that the excessive filth and slovenly habits of the inhabitants of the English settlement at Vancouver were the occasion of the disease. Vancouver itself is situated on a high, delightful and salubrious spot, and nothing but gross and unpardonable habits of life could render it unwholesome.

All veritable evidence speaks favorably of the climate of this beautiful tract of country, and none but ignorant or deceitful witnesses have ever testified to the contrary.

The valley of the Wallamette is the finest country I ever saw, whether for the gratification of the eye or the substantial

comforts of life, for all the natural elements of wealth or for its adaptation to the wants and happiness of civilized man. It declares to the intelligent observer, beyond the power of doubt, that it is intended to be the habitation of myriads of civilized and happy men.

So far as I could learn from intelligent and credible witnesses, the country north of the Columbia, to the 54th parallel, possesses nearly the same character which I have described as belonging to the region which I myself traversed.

The *Hudson's Bay Company*, who have long occupied this territory, and endeavored to monopolize the benefits of its trade, it is believed, possesses greater capital, and employs a larger number of men in its various departments of service than any other association, excepting, perhaps, the East India Company, under the auspices of the British Government.

For nearly twenty years, ever since, in 1821, the Northwest Company was finally broken up, the Hudson's Bay Company have exercised an almost unlimited control over the Indian tribes and the trade of the whole country west of the Rocky mountains.

It has made great progress in settling that region. In 1834 it had over 2,000 men engaged in trading, farming, mechanical and commercial operations. Of these individuals, the major part had taken Indian women to wife, by whom they had children of all ages, from infancy to manhood. The company exercises full authority over all, whether Indians, English, or Americans, who are in its service, and in a manner always injurious, and generally disastrous, to all others who undertake to trade or settle in that territory. It may be said in fact that Americans, except associated with this company, are not permitted to carry on a traffic within several hundred miles of the company's posts. I cannot state how long the inland trade has been cut off. But within the last season, our [57] merchants, since 1834, have not been allowed to participate in the lucrative trade and commerce of the northwest coast. While I was at Vancouver, in that year, the American ship

Europa, Captain Allen, of Boston, was on that coast. The Hudson's Bay Company, in pursuance of their regular policy, immediately fitted out the brig Llama, and instructed her captain, McNeil (as he himself informed me), to follow the Europa from port to port, and harbor to harbor, and drive her off the coast at any sacrifice, by underselling her, no matter what her prices, whenever she should open a trade. It has been declared by Mr. Simpson, who was at the head of the company's marine, that they were resolved, even at the cost of *a hundred thousand pounds*, to expel the Americans from traffic on that coast.

I am informed that in November last (1838) the brig Joseph Peabody, of New York, was fitted and sent out to attempt once more the northwest fur trade. The voyage is regarded as an experiment, and her chance of success depends on her finding the company unprepared for her arrival. So long as our Government slumbers on her rights, so long must the enterprise of our citizens, even within our own territorial limits, even within American sovereignty, be rendered abortive by the force or fraud of foreign monopolists.

In their intercourse with the Indians, the company are governed by no higher principle than self-interest, and are frequently guilty of the most arbitrary acts. While I was there, the company surgeon at Vancouver deliberately seized an Indian who had been guilty of some indecency, and proceeded to mutilate his person, and for this wrong, neither the victim nor his friends dared to ask for redress, or even to make any complaint.

The number of trading posts in Oregon, belonging to this company, in 1834, exceeded twenty. They are called "forts," but they are mostly regular villages, such as Vancouver, Wallawallah, Oakenagen, Colville, Neperces, &c. At these places are seen houses, stores, workshops, traders, farmers, artisans, herds of cattle, and cultivated farms, waving with abundant harvests; in short, every appearance of permanent and flourishing settlements. Of these farming establishments,

full accounts are already supplied by Mr. Slacum. I will only add a few facts in regard to this subject. I saw at Vancouver a large and splendid barn, in which was a thrashing machine that cost \$1,500, and was worked by oxen. Connected with the same farming establishment I saw also more than 1,000 head of neat cattle, grazing on the ever-verdant prairie, and flocks of sheep, swine and horses, and domestic fowls of various kinds, both in and around the village.

The stocks of grain on that farm exceeded anything of the kind that I had ever seen in the United States. Twelve thousand bushels of wheat, at a very moderate computation, remained in the sheaf at the time of my leaving Vancouver in the spring.

Six miles above Vancouver, on the same side of the river, was a large sawmill, capable of cutting from 20 to 25 thousand feet of boards per day, throughout the year. It can be readily inferred that, with this and other such mills, vast havoc would soon be made in the timber of this region, and the banks of the rivers and streams be cleared of that which is at once the most valuable and the most accessible.

The town of Vancouver, as I have stated, stands on a high and healthy [58] spot. I might, with propriety, dwell for a moment upon its picturesque and beautiful landscape. Directly back of the village the ground rises considerably, forming a kind of "*steppe*" or *plateau*, from which the prospect is one of the loveliest on which my eye ever rested, diversified by all that is wild, rugged and sublime, in forest and mountain scenery, or soft and smiling in lowland and meadow, river and plain; all that the bounty of nature or the skill of man combined can furnish to surprise or delight the eye and the taste of the beholder. In the distance, yet looking as though within reach, are the snowy peaks of the Rocky mountains, whose frosty mantle defies the hottest sun of summer. Nearer at hand is a vast ocean of forest, variegated with every hue known to the foliage of trees, whether deciduous or evergreen. At your feet are a thousand appearances of industry, wealth and pros-

perity, and before you are the valleys of both the Wallamette and Columbia, spreading and winding afar, and almost wearying the eye with countless varieties of aspect and innumerable forms of loveliness.

Amongst the other forms of industry at Vancouver, ship-building should not be omitted. There was a shipyard there in 1834, where several vessels had been built, and where all the vessels of the Hudson's Bay Company were repaired. The neighboring forests abound in timber adapted to naval purposes, such as oak, cedar, spruce and firs, of gigantic growth. There is, in particular, an extensive forest of white oak within a small distance of the fort.

I found that a canal had been commenced at the falls of the Wallamette by the company, for the purpose of making the head of water available for practical purposes—the propulsion of machinery, &c.

Families who had settled in the valley of the Wallamette continued under the government and control of the company, receiving therefrom, on loan, all the stock, stores and implements of agriculture, in consideration of which they stipulated that all the marketable products of their farms should be sold exclusively to the company. Oxen and cows were furnished in like manner, it being the settled policy of the company not to kill or sell any cattle until the country should become well stocked.

All these circumstances indicated a disposition to form permanent interests and establishments on the part of this great association and its members and servants; and I was assured that, whatever may be the result of the disputed question of sovereignty and occupancy, most of the people of this territory will remain quietly fixed in their residences.

The fisheries of this territory have been comparatively neglected by the company. They might be made immensely productive and profitable, for there are several species of fish, particularly salmon, which swim in countless numbers in the Columbia and its branches, and are easily taken and prepared

for exportation. Formerly they put up 500 or 1,000 barrels of salmon per year at Vancouver alone, and a much larger quantity at Fort Langley.

The trade of the company consists of furs, lumber, flour, fish, grain and potatoes. The amount of traffic in furs I have no accurate means of computation; but that it is enormous may be safely inferred from the fact that a single individual at Astoria, in 1834, collected more than 1,800 beaver skins, although that post was nearly deserted.

The furs and peltries are shipped to London. Other exports find a ready market in California and the Sandwich Islands, such as fir boards [59] and other lumber, white oak ship timber, spruce knees and spars, and white ash oars. In return, the company receives provisions, salt, sugar, molasses, spirits, &c. They obtain beef cattle from California, at three dollars per head, and pay for them in lumber, at sixty to one hundred dollars per M.

Some notion of the amount of lumber exported may be obtained from the fact that the vessel which bore me from Oregon to the Sandwich Islands brought out the complement of a quantity of boards contracted for at the price of twenty thousand dollars.

The value of flour at the Russian settlements varied from fifteen to twenty dollars per barrel. In more southerly markets, salmon were worth twenty dollars per barrel, and sixty dollars per M was the minimum price of merchantable boards.

I arrived at Vancouver unwell, and was hospitably welcomed by Mr. McLaughlin, the chief factor. Medical aid was rendered me; a house in the village was furnished for my use, and all my physical wants were supplied; but I was forbidden to enter the fort. Before I had been long in the country, I learned that the factor and his agents were preparing, in every artful way, to render my abode there uncomfortable and unsafe. The most preposterous calumnies and slanders were set on foot in regard to my character, conduct and designs. All my movements were watched, and, in some instances, I was threatened

with violence by persons who had been instigated, as I had reason to believe, by the company. Had I been willing to place myself under the direction and control of the company, all would have been peace; but so long as I was resolved to act independently, as an American on American soil, seeking authentic information for general diffusion, and pursuing the avowed purpose of opening the trade of the territory to general competition, and the wealth of the country to general participation and enjoyment, so long was I an object of dread and dislike to the grasping monopolists of the Hudson's Bay Company.

My abode in Oregon was thus rendered very disagreeable. The loss of my property on the route had obliged me to vary my original plans, and limit my enterprise to such an examination of the country as would enable me to enlighten the American public on my return to the United States. I remained, therefore, in Oregon no longer than was needful to satisfy myself on the desired points of inquiry; and so long as I did remain, I was treated very much like a prisoner of war, although not subjected to actual confinement.

When I left the Oregon country, I took passage in the brig Dryad, Captain Keplin, for the Sandwich Islands.

The petition recently presented to the Senate of the United States, signed by residents of Oregon, will fortify my views in regard to the necessity for some degree of protection on the part of the Government over the people of that territory.

I come now, in conclusion, to say something of the Indians of Oregon.

This unfortunate race of men, as on the eastern so on the western coast of America, perish and pass away at the approach of white men, like those who are swept off by pestilence. By the accounts of voyagers and travellers who visited Oregon 30 or 40 years ago, it is made evident that the Indian population was very numerous. But of their hundred tribes, sovereign or subordinate, including probably one hundred and fifty thousand souls, but a small fraction now remains. [60]

In 1804, within 100 miles upward from the mouth of the Columbia, there were no less than eight Indian tribes, with an average population of nearly a thousand persons to each tribe. In 1834 nothing remained but the remnants of these tribes, including less than four hundred Indians. Two-thirds of all the tribes ever known in Oregon are utterly extinct, and the names of them are scarcely remembered.

The Multnomahs, who formerly occupied the Wappatoo islands, and the country around the mouth of the Wallamette, and who numbered 3,000 souls, are all dead, and their villages reduced to desolation. The once numerous Clatsops have lost their national existence, the few who survive seeking a shelter amongst the Chenooks, who are also reduced to less than one-fourth of their former numbers.

All the remaining Indians below Vancouver live in the most brutal, sottish and degraded manner, addicted to the grossest intemperance, and associating with the whites in such manner that there can scarcely be found among them a full-blooded Indian child. Rum and other intoxicating liquors are used as the besom of destruction among the miserable victims of the white man's cruelty. While I was on board one of the company's vessels, at the mouth of the Columbia, I saw the captain dealing out rum by the bucket to the chief of the Chenooks, in return for wild game. I saw the chief, with his family of eight persons, intoxicated on the shore.

Such has been the result of the intercourse between the untutored children of the wild and the inhabitants of civilized and Christian communities.

In concluding this imperfect letter, I ought, in justice to myself, to state that it was not disappointment in regard to the natural advantages of Oregon which prevented my forming a permanent connexion with that region; but I was impelled by a determination to do all in my power, by constant effort in the United States, to lead our Government to extend over Oregon that paternal care which alone is needed to render it the very nucleus of emigration, and the most attractive portion of our national domain.

Having, by the hardships and exposures of a lonely and long continued adventure of life, been deprived in a great degree of the use of my eyes, my health broken down, and my constitution shattered, I have, of course, since my return, found my exertions restricted and impaired, but by no means terminated. It is consoling to me, in the midst of poverty and suffering, to believe that my fellow-citizens and my country are at last beginning to appreciate the value of the objects and measures for which I have sacrificed my possessions, my health, and the best portion of my life. It is also a matter of congratulation to me that some of those whom my persuasion induced to emigrate to Oregon have there found prosperous settlements, and are now asking Congress to accept them and protect them as citizens; and that I have, therefore, been instrumental in planting the seed of American empire in a soil where it shall take root and spring up and flourish like the luxuriant productions there scattered by the bounty of nature.

I have the honor to be, dear sir, yours, with the highest consideration and respect.

HALL J. KELLEY.

Hon. Caleb Cushing. [61]



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