The absolute elevation of the northern parts is probably not under 1500 feet, for Cassina lake, thirty miles below the sources of the Mississippi, is 1330 feet above the sea. (Mellish, p. 32. James’s Expedition, iii. 204.) 3. The last

and largest division of this great valley, extending from the Mississippi and Missouri to the Rocky Mountains, consists of two very different qualities of soil, which graduate into each other, but, on the great scale, may be conceived to form two parallel tracts of nearly equal extent, parted by the 98th meridian. In the middle of the eastern section, and, as it were, in the very bottom of the great basin of the Mississippi, lie the Ozark Mountains; a chain, like the Alleghanies, of great length and breadth, and small height, ris­ing only from 1000 to 2000 feet above the sea. (James’s Expedition, iii. p. 313.) Mr Mellish erroneously calls the height 3500 feet. Their breadth is from 100 to 150 miles : their sides, which slope with gentle declivities, are deeply furrowed with streams, and partly covered with small timber. The Arkansas and Red River are the only streams which cut their way through this chain. On the east side of the Ozark chain is the Great Swamp, 200 miles long and twenty broad, which is converted into a lake by the annual overflow of the Mississippi, but is dry during the heats of summer, and rendered impenetrable at all times by a thick growth of cypress. The country round it is rich bottom or meadow land, clothed with excellent timber. The country for one or two hundred miles west of the Ozarks is also good, but less wooded ; and in the eastern section, taken al­together, the open ground occupies nineteen twentieths of the surface. The western section, extending from the meridian of 98° to the Rocky Mountains, is comparatively dry and sterile, and much of it an absolute desert, destitute of herbage, and unfit for human habitation. As we approach the mountains, the ground, which is at first hilly, subsides into smaller undulations, and these terminate in table-lands, nearly fiat on the top, with steep, and sometimes precipi­tous sides, and rising 600 or 800 feet above the common level. These table-lands, consisting of alternate beds of sandstone and breccia, increase in number and diminish in extent as we approach the base of the mountains, which is believed to have an elevation of 3000 feet above the sea. The desert aspect of the country, however, is not the effect of its elevation, but more probably of its aridity ; for valleys among the mountains, which are still higher, are fertile. The rivers in this frightful solitude often spread out to a breadth of one or two miles, and dry up in the warm weather. Salt springs are numerous, and salt incrus­tations cover many square miles. Trees are only to be seen at some spots along the rivers, and arc rather more abundant in the south than in the north; but throughout the whole section, the wood does not cover the thousandth part of the surface. Of the basin of the Mississippi alto­gether, it may be observed, that the western side is a barren desert ; the middle contains much good lands, but abounds in swamps; the east side, comprehending the basin of the Ohio, is the richest, and most eligible for human habitation. The woods, in their natural state, increase continually as we advance from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic; a proof, perhaps, that the summer heat, and the quantity of atmospheric moisture, follow a similar law.@@1

The *Pacific Region* extends from the Rocky Mountains to the ocean, and (exclusive of disputed ground) from lati­tude 42° to 49°, embracing an area of 300,000 square miles, It consists almost entirely of the basin of the Columbia river. This country naturally divides itself into three parts, the first of which commences at the coast of the Pacific, and extends inland to a range of mountains running pa­rallel with the coast, south-east and north-west, through which the Columbia river passes, and enters the sea in lat. 46° 19' N. and in long. 124° W. These mountains lift their bold summits several thousand feet from their bases, but from their mid distance upwards their barren sides pre­sent the naked deformity of rocks, lava, and cinders. Their elevated summits appear to be the craters of extinguished volcanoes. Some of the high snowy peaks of this range are seen far at sea on the Pacific Ocean. The extent of this tract from west to east is about 130 miles, and south­ward to the limits of California, and probably very fat north. The climate is remarkably moist, almost uninterrupted rain falling from October to April. In winter the weather is clear and the cold moderate. The temperature is mild and equable, resembling that of France and Spain much more than that of the Atlantic coast. Snow is seldom seen at the mouth of the Columbia river, so that ploughing could be carried on through most winters. This region contains a great proportion of barren inaccessible land ; but the water-courses, which are numerous, afford valleys that are as fertile as can be found in the United States. The im­mediate sea-board is the worst part. For farming pur­poses, the level country may be upon the whole reckoned equal to any part of the state of New York. One half is of excellent quality, the other half inaccessible mountains.

The second division extends from the mountains, embra­cing the lower course of the Columbia, including its great tails, and eastward to the Blue Mountains a higher range, about 168 miles. The temperature differs little from that of New England; the snows are light, and do not last long, seldom so long as to obstruct the feeding of animals. Little rain falls in summer in this division; about the middle of Oc­tober there are usually rains, but not heavy. In this division of country the river-bottoms are neither so frequent nor so ex­tensive as in the first, but at the foot of the mountains bound­ing each side of the valley, there are large tracts very fertile.

The third division extends from the Blue Mountains on the west to the Rocky Mountains eastward, a distance of about 286 miles, and presents wide sandy deserts, almost destitute of water. The deposits of vegetable matter are few, and there is very little moisture except near the rivers ; and thousands of acres are white with Epsom and Glauber salts. In this valley is the great salt lake, on the bottom of which, when low, the salt is deposited as in a salt-pan. The climate is remarkable for dryness, and for the difference between the temperature during the night and the day. Not a cloud will be seen in the sky for six weeks, and no rain falls except for a few days in the spring, nor is there much snow in winter. A traveller mentions, that on the 18th August 1832 the thermometer at sunrise was as low as 18°, a depression which it seldom reaches in Great Bri­tain, and on the same day was at 92°. A difference of 40° between sunrise and noon is not uncommon. On the Co­lumbia river, about eighty miles from its mouth, the two great companies of Canadian traders, who in 1821 were formed into the North-West Company, established a settle­ment and the fort of Vancouver, which has since become the centre of the fur trade. It has been gradually improved, and the cultivators, clerks, factors, and traders who reside here amount to about 2000 souls. In 1835, they produced 8000 bushels of wheat, 5500 bushels of barley, 6000 of or.ts, 9000 of pease, 14,000 of potatoes, besides large quantities of vegetables. There is also a thriving orchard, in which are produced abundantly, apples, quinces, pears, and grapes. A large ship annually arrives from London with goods, and a trade is also carried on with the Sand­wich and other of the South Sea Islands. There are other stations occupied by the North-West Company’s servants; namely, at Wallawallah, 250 miles above Vancouver, and at

@@@1 This account of the basin of the Mississippi is entirely taken from Major Long’s Memoir, published in the third volume of James's Ac­count of the Expedition to the Rocky Mountains.