

This ambition of the people of the west to possess Oregon, is at least no new idea, for I happened to purchase at Louisville an old guide-book, describing the Falls of the Ohio and the city, in which, when speaking of commercial matters, the colonization and annexation of Oregon was set forth as the means of "opening a direct trade with China." I observed to one of the citizens, that it was satisfactory to see that none of the upper, or even of the middle classes, were taking any part at Greensburg in this agitation. He shook his head, and said, "Very true; but these meetings are most mischievous, for you must bear in mind, that your nobody in England is our everybody in America."

I had determined to visit Greensburg, on my way from Pittsburg to Philadelphia, that I might examine into the evidence of the reality of certain fossil foot-prints of a reptile said to have been found in strata of the ancient coal-formation, and of which Dr. King, of Greensburg, had published an account in 1844. The genuineness of these foot-marks was a point on which many doubts were still entertained, both in Europe and America, and I had been requested by several geological friends not to return without having made up my mind on a fact which, if confirmed, was of the highest theoretical importance. Up to this period, no unequivocal proofs had been detected of the fossil remains of vertebrated animals more highly organized than fishes, in strata of such antiquity as the carboniferous rocks, and the absence of air-breathing quadrupeds or birds, served to constitute negative evidence, of peculiar significance, in reference to the coal-measures, because, as before stated,* they contained the monuments of shallow fresh-water swamps, and often of surfaces of land covered with a luxuriant vegetation of *terrestrial* plants, some of the buried trees of which still remain with their roots in their natural position. That we should never have found, in such deposits, the remains of air-breathing creatures, except a few insects, that we should not yet have met with a single mammifer or bird, or lizard, snake, or tortoise, or the faintest indication of their existence, seemed most inexplicable, and led many geologists to embrace the opinion, that no beings having a higher

* See ante, p. 185.