

a distance of 239 miles, at the rate of thirty miles an hour, in a commodious, lofty, and well-ventilated car, the charge being only three dollars, or thirteen shillings. We went by a route newly opened, first through Long Island, ninety-five miles in length, over a low, level tract, chiefly composed of fine sand; and we then found a steamer ready to take us across the Sound to New London in Connecticut, where we were met by the cars at Point Allen; after which we enjoyed much delightful scenery, the railway following the margin of a river, where there were cascades and rapids foaming over granite rocks, and overhung with trees, whose foliage, just unfolded, was illumined by a brilliant sunshine.

In the estuary of New London we saw many large whalers, and a merchant talked to me with satisfaction of the success of the United States whale-fishery in the Pacific, saying it amounted to 200,000 tons, while that of Great Britain did not exceed 60,000. "Five fish," said he, "is the usual cargo of an English whaler, as they boil the blubber at home, whereas the Americans boil it in a huge cauldron on deck, and after staying out three years, return with the oil of ninety whales in one ship. Our fishery in the Pacific is becoming a most important nursery for seamen, giving occupation to about 20,000 men, which would enable us at any moment to man a powerful fleet. The possession of California is therefore much coveted by us, because the port of San Francisco is the only one in the northern Pacific not exposed to the west wind, or blocked up by a bar of sand, such as that which renders the mouth of the Columbia River impassable to large ships. It is not territory but a sea-port we need, and this advantage a war with Mexico may give us."

There was besides much characteristic conversation in the cars, about constructing a railway 4000 miles long from Washington to the Columbia River; and some of the passengers were speculating on the hope of seeing in their lifetime a population of 15,000 souls settled in Oregon and California. A variety of plans was also freely discussed for crossing the isthmus from the Gulf of Mexico into the Pacific, so as to avoid the long and dangerous voyage round Cape Horn. A ship-canal across the isthmus of