

causing a loss of a thousand bushels. Although the Columbia does not overflow its banks any where except in the lower prairie, there are quicksands in these, through which the water, before it reaches the height of the embankment, percolates, and rises on the low parts of the prairie. In consequence of the low temperature of the water, as I have before observed, it chills and destroys the grain.

I witnessed the Columbia at its greatest and least heights, and no idea can be formed of it unless seen at both these epochs. The flood is a very grand sight from the banks of the river at Vancouver, as it passes swiftly by, bearing along the gigantic forest trees, whose immense trunks appear as mere chips. They frequently lodge for a time, in which case others are speedily caught by them, which obstructing the flow of the water, form rapids, until by a sudden rush the whole is borne off to the ocean, and in time lodged by the currents on some remote and savage island, to supply the natives with canoes. I also witnessed the undermining of large trees on the banks, and occasional strips of soil: thus does the river yearly make inroads on its banks, and changes in its channels.

From the circumstance of this annual inundation of the river prairies, they will always be unfit for husbandry, yet they are admirably adapted for grazing, except during the periods of high water. There is no precaution that can prevent the inroad of the water. At Vancouver they were at the expense of throwing up a long embankment of earth, but without the desired effect. It has been found that the crop of grain suffers in proportion to the quantity of the stalk immersed: unless the wheat is completely covered, a partial harvest may be expected.

The temperature of the waters of the Columbia, during the months of May and June, was 42°, while in September it had increased to 68°.

The waters of the Columbia have no fertilizing qualities, which is remarkable when the extent of its course is considered: on the contrary, it is said, from experience, to deteriorate and exhaust the soil. It is, when taken up, quite clear, although it has a turbid look as it flows by. Quantities of fine sand are however borne along, and being deposited in the eddies, rapidly form banks, which alter the channel in places to a great degree.

During my stay at Vancouver, I had a visit from three of a party of eight young Americans, who were desirous of leaving the country, but could not accomplish it in any other way but by building a vessel. They were not dissatisfied with the territory, but they would not settle themselves down in it, because there were no young women to marry, except squaws or half-breeds. They informed me that they were then