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## THE COLUMBIA RIVER UNDER HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY RULE

By his *Astoria* Washington Irving drew the eyes of the world to the now far famed Columbia River and perpetuated the story of the late John Jacob Astor's ill fated enterprise on the Pacific Coast. The name "Astoria" recalls, not only the trading fort which gave the book its title, but the varied adventures by sea and land of those who went forth to plant the Stars and Stripes on the Columbia and to secure for Mr. Astor's company a share of the rich fur trade of the far West.

If Mr. Astor's great enterprise was, through no fault of his, doomed to failure, almost from its beginning, it enabled him to supply, from the correspondence and journals of his co-partners and employees, material with which Washington Irving was able to shed the halo of a romantic early history upon the Columbia and the Northern Pacific Coast. Captain Bonneville's adventures enabled the illustrious author to extend his chronicles to regions further east.

Among the cherished possessions of the present writer is an old volume, presented to his father by the author. It was published in Montreal in 1820. It is written in French by G. Franchere,  *fils*, one of the clerks who sailed in the *Tonquin* in 1810, on her memorable voyage round Cape Horn, to the Sandwich Islands and the Columbia, where he remained to assist in the founding of *Astoria* and other trading posts. On the cession of the posts to the Canadian "Northwest Company" he remained a few months in the employ of the latter, and returned over the mountains and by way of the Red River settlement and Lake Superior to Montreal in 1814. His narrative agrees in the main with that of Irving. Indeed, it is probable that it was one of the sources from which the latter obtained his account of the *Tonquin's* trip and subsequent events on the Columbia. On two points dwelt on by Irving it is, however, silent—the one, the marriage of Macdougall, one of the partners in the Astor company, to the dusky princess, the daughter of King Comcomly—the other, the chief part played by Macdougall in the transfer of Astoria to the British company. It is probable, however, that a marriage, after the Indian custom, may have

<sup>1</sup>Mr. C. O. Ermatinger, of St. Thomas, Ontario, the writer of this paper, is the son of the E. (Edward) Ermatinger and a nephew of the F. (Francis) Ermatinger who are mentioned in the entry on Monday, October 31st, 1825, of the *Journal of John Work*, which is printed in this Quarterly. Judge Ermatinger is a prominent member of the Elgin (County) Historical and Scientific Institute of Ontario, Canada. This paper was prepared for use in the East some years since; its publication in this Quarterly has now been kindly permitted.—T. C. Elliott.

taken place between these personages, M. Franchere not thinking it worth while to mention the matter, nor even the fact of the young woman's existence. That there was treachery toward Mr. Astor in McDougall's dealings with the North West Company is rather a matter of inference with Irving than a distinct charge. Franchere—who speaks of the bargain with the North West Company as participated in by all present at Astoria at the time—not being a partner, could scarcely know more than appeared on the surface.

The only sentence in English in Franchere's book is contained in a footnote. It is the now historic exclamation of Captain Black of His Majesty's ship *Raccoon* when he landed at Astoria: "What! Is this the Fort I have heard so much of! Great God! I could batter it down with a four pounder in two hours." Franchere evidently thought his French rendering of these memorable words did not do the gallant captain complete justice, so he re-translated them, and Irving repeats them in all their nautical Anglo-Saxon vigour.

Washington Irving's chronicle of Astoria practically closed with the cession of that post to McTavish, representing the North West Company—with the running up of the British in place of the American flag at the Fort in 1813 and the change of name from Astoria to "Fort George." As the North West Company thus swallowed up the American Company in 1813, so in 1821 the Hudson's Bay Company practically swallowed the North West Company—though the settlement of the irregular warfare, waged for years between these rival British companies, was termed an association or coalition.

The industrious beaver and his less industrious neighbour, the Indian, saw little or no change. It will, however, be remembered by readers of *Astoria* how disgusted was the worthy one-eyed monarch, King Comcomly, chief of the Chinooks, at the sudden change of flag at Astoria, brought about by his son-in-law, McDougall, whom he finally concluded to be a squaw rather than a warrior. Yet Comcomly lived on and, making a virtue of necessity, cultivated friendship and amity with the British as he had before with the Americans. His poor opinion of his whilom son-in-law may have subsequently been confused by the fact of the latter's leaving the princess, his wife, behind when he left the country—though, as a rule, both the wife and her family in such cases preferred her remaining among her own people to venturing into the haunts of civilization. The divorced princess in question, too, we resarved for higher honours; as we are told by Paul Kane, a Canadian artist and traveller, who visited the country in the forties, that she subsequently became the favourite wife of a powerful chief named Casanov, who could previously to 1829 lead

into the field 1000 men—leaving at home, at the same time, ten wives, four children and eighteen slaves. Casanov is described as a man of more than ordinary talent for an Indian, and of great influence with the people whom he governed, in the vicinity of the British fort, Vancouver—Chinooks and Klickataats. He possessed, among other luxuries, a functionary, known as his “Scooccone” or “evil genius”—a sort of Lord High Executioner—whose duty it was to remove persons obnoxious to his lord and master, by assassination. This functionary had the misfortune to fall in love with one of Casanov’s wives, who eloped with him—with the result that, though they at first eluded his search, Casanov at length met and “removed” his errant wife on the Cowlitz river and procured also a like fate for her lover, the whilom executioner himself.

It was the belief of the chiefs that they and their sons were personages so important that their deaths could not occur in a natural way, but were always attributable to the malevolent influence of some one, whom they selected in an unaccountable manner and unhesitatingly sacrificed. One most near and dear to the deceased was as likely to be selected as another. The former wife of McDougall, now favourite wife of Casanov, was thus selected by him, to accompany her own son, who died of consumption, to the great beyond, but she escaped and sought and was accorded protection at Fort Vancouver. Mr. Black, an officer of the Hudson’s Bay Company in charge of their Fort on Thompson’s River, fell a victim to the same superstitious custom—shot in the back by the nephew of an old chief with whom Black had been on the most friendly terms, at the instigation of the dead chief’s widow. Regard for Mr. Black, however, impelled the young man’s tribe to ignore the sanction of the custom and hunt down and put him to death.

The company chartered by gay King Charles II—“the company of gentleman adventurers trading into Hudson’s Bay,” or “the Honourable the Hudson’s Bay Company”—as it was and still is styled—was undoubtedly the dominant partner in the new coalition. Newspaper and pamphlet warfare occasionally broke out between partizans or admirers of the former rival corporations during the next half century—an occasional flow of ink of controversy instead of the flow of blood which sometimes characterized their collisions in former days—but the North West Company had ceased to exist, while the Hudson’s Bay Company ruled almost half a continent.

On the Columbia their chief post was established ninety miles up the river from the sea and was called Fort Vancouver—which must not be confused with the flourishing young city at the western terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Fort George or Astoria became thereafter

a subsidiary post, utilized as a place from which a watch could be kept on the movements of American traders. Though the territory now comprising Oregon and Washington was claimed by the United States ever since Captain Gray with his good ship *Columbia* passed the dreaded bar and gave the river a name, the Hudson's Bay Company was, under a series of ten-year treaties between the two nations, leaving the question of ownership open—providing indeed for a joint occupation—in practical possession of the country and its trade, until the boundary question was finally settled in 1846—not long after which the company withdrew its headquarters to the north of the 49th parallel. The company gradually obtained control by lease of a number of the Russian posts as well, maintaining also vessels to trade along the seashore. The country tributary to the Columbia was rich in furs in those days. Even as late as 1840, one trader, for example, was able to bring out of the Snake country 3300 beaver and otter skins, the result of his season's work for the company.

Though Sir George Simpson was the governor in chief of the Hudson's Bay Company after the coalition, the dominant spirit west of the Rocky Mountains for some twenty-five years was Dr. John McLaughlin—the "Big Doctor," as he was familiarly termed. "He was the partner in charge of the whole Columbia department, to which is attached that of New Caledonia and Fraser River, for more than a quarter of a century," wrote an old Hudson's Bay clerk\* who knew the doctor, "a more indefatigable and enterprising man it would have been difficult to find. With an energetic and indomitable spirit, his capacious mind conceived and pushed forward every kind of improvement for the advancement of commerce and the benefit of civilization. With only seven head of horned cattle and others which he imported from California, by good management and perseverance, he stocked the whole of the Oregon territory, until they had increased to thousands. He built saw mills and cultivated an extensive farm on the beautiful prairie of Fort Vancouver. Subsequently he laid the foundation of Oregon City, where he built a splendid grist mill. The machinery of the mill he imported from Scotland and from the same country a good, practical miller. \* \* \* \* By every means in his power he promoted trade and commerce with other countries. To Sitka, the principal Russian establishment, the company exported produce—chiefly wheat—to the Sandwich Islands lumber and salmon, and to California, hides and tallow. In short, under Dr. McLaughlin's management, everything was done to develop the resources of the country." Two military officers, Warre and Vavasseur, who visited Oregon on the part of the British government, reported that the doctor favoured the Americans. While his correspond-

\*The present writer's father.

ence shows a sympathy with the advanced political party in Canada, which at that time would have been there regarded as proof positive of "Americanism," the fact is that the doctor's mind was of that liberal cast which favoured everyone who could be useful to the country, Britisher or foreigner. This is borne out by his actions as well as his unpublished correspondence.

Not only was there an extensive farm established at Fort Vancouver, but others at Fort Colville and on the Cowlitz, while a large grazing company or association was formed, to raise sheep, near Puget's Sound. The doctor was, moreover, anxious to wean the red man from his savage life to agricultural pursuits, as well as to promote in every way the settlement of the country. He succeeded in making cattle plentiful by forbidding the killing of any for a considerable period. At last he wrote in 1837, "I killed forty head of cattle last summer, so, you see, the taboo is broken." He hailed with satisfaction the arrival of missionaries, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, and did much to inculcate temperate habits among the people, both whites and natives. Indeed, in 1843 he rejoiced in having for a number of years successfully enforced a prohibitory law for both Indians and the French settlers on the Willamette, at that time numbering 200, ninety per cent of whom were old voyageurs and American Rocky Mountain trappers, yet with few exceptions temperance men, "which," quaintly wrote the doctor, "I think may be said to be unique of its nature in such a number." The American traders seem to have been his chief foes in the region of the Columbia, in regard to the liquor traffic—as the Russians were in the regions farther North.

The doctor was a firm believer in exemplary punishment for crime, especially in territories where such punishment only would act as a deterrent on savages, who might at any time be tempted to outrage. One instance of his method of dealing with such cases may be referred to.

From an old manuscript report of one of the Company's traders, who took part in the proceedings detailed, the following particulars are gleaned. In January, 1828, Mr. Alexander McKenzie and four men under his charge were murdered on Puget's Sound, on their way from Fort Langley, and an Indian woman of the party carried off, by the tribe known as the Clallums. All the effective men at Fort Vancouver were mustered and told by Chief Factor McLaughlin of the affair and of the necessity for an expedition being sent off in search of the murderous tribe, to make a salutary example of them if possible. A call for volunteers brought a ready response and on the 17th June a force of upwards of sixty men under Chief Trader Alex. R. McLeod set forth, with a salute of cannon from the fort and cheers from the officers and crew of the *Eagle*—presumably an

American vessel. The voyageurs having enjoyed their customary *regale* and the Iroquois their war dance, on the previous evening, no delay for these ever necessary functions occurred and the expedition proceeded down the Columbia and up the Cowlitz to the *portage*, where their boats were *cached*, and horses obtained. Then the motley army, consisting of Canadians, half-breeds, Iroquois, Sandwich Islanders and Chinooks, with Scotch and English officers, mounted, set forth, looking, as the chronicler thought, more like a band of gypsies than a force collected for the purpose in view. At the end of the *portage* the force again embarked in canoes and on 1st July, coming upon a couple of lodges, one, understood to be occupied by Clallums, was at once attacked and death immediately dealt out to its inmates, ruthlessly, regardless apparently as to whether they were concerned in the murder of McKenzie and his party or not, while in the semi-darkness of evening men, women and even children appear to have shared the same fate.

Off Cape Townsend the company's vessel *Cadboro'*, Captain Simpson, was sighted. Thereafter the land and naval forces co-operated—so far, at least, as the somewhat divergent views and orders of their respective commanders permitted. A day or two was spent off one of the Clallum villages, near New Dungeness, in apparently fruitless negotiations for the return of the Indian woman, whose father was a man of great influence in his own tribe. Not until a chief and eight others had been slain by shots from the vessel's guns and a bombardment of a village, where some articles of Mc. McKenzie's were found, had taken place, was the woman brought on board. A second village, from which the murderers of McKenzie's party were said to have set out, was burned. The force then parted from the *Cadboro'* and returned to Fort Vancouver. The Indians stated that seven people had been killed at the lodge fired upon on the 1st, and that the friends of these had at once avenged their deaths, by putting to death two of the principal murderers of McKenzie. In all, they reported 25 people killed in these various affrays, to avenge the original crime, not to speak of a very considerable quantity of Indian property destroyed.

It would be unjust to charge Dr. McLaughlin with the responsibility for the entire proceedings of this merciless expedition. What his instructions to *Mr. McLeod* were that gentleman kept pretty well to himself. Unfortunately the latter showed vacillation and timidity, at the moments when firmness and promptness were required, disputed and quarrelled with Captain Simpson on board his own vessel, assumed too much authority at one time, too little at another, with the result that indiscriminate slaughter and destruction of property seem to have taken the place of just and merited

punishment. It is to be presumed, however, that the deterrent effect was produced, at any rate as to the Clallums.

The population, native and foreign, of the Columbia district, at this period, was of a wonderfully heterogeneous character. The number of small tribes into which the native population of the Pacific Coast and islands was divided is well known to have been large. Yet Indians from the plains and Iroquois from the far East had come in as servants of the company, while Sandwich Islanders—or Owhyhees (Hawaiians) as they were termed—were among almost all the company's crews and forces. French half-breeds and others of varying tints and gay costumes lent picturesqueness to the Hudson's Bay posts and campfires. Sir George Simpson gives a striking instance of the variety in colour and language afforded by a single boatload. "Our batteau carried as curious a muster of races and languages as perhaps had ever been congregated within the same compass in any part of the world. Our crew of ten men contained Iroquois, who spoke their own tongue; a Cree halfbreed of French origin, who appeared to have borrowed his dialect from both his parents; a North Briton, who understood only the Gaelic of his native hills; Canadians who, of course, knew French; and Sandwich Islanders, who jabbered a medley of Chinook and their own vernacular jargon. Add to all this that the passengers were natives of England, Scotland, Russia, Canada and the Hudson's Bay Company's territories; and you have the prettiest congregation of nations, the nicest confusion of tongues, that has ever taken place since the days of the tower of Babel. At the native camp near which we halted for the night, we enriched our clans with one variety more, by hiring a canoe and its complement of Chinooks, to accompany us."

Sir George Simpson was at this time on his famous overland journey round the world, having the previous day, Sept. 1st, 1841, left Fort Vancouver, where, by the way, his party found two vessels of the United States exploring squadron under command of Lieutenant (afterward) Commodore Wilkes, which contributed much to the enjoyment of their week's stay there. The circumnavigators had parted on the beach at Fort Vancouver with Lieutenant Wilkes and party and had added to their number another Hudson's Bay officer, Mr. Douglas (afterwards Sir James Douglas, governor of Vancouver Island) and had visited the company's extensive dairy on the delta or island of Multnomah or Wappatoo. Thence down the Columbia and up the Cowlitz, across to Fort Nisqually and Puget's Sound, visiting the Cowlitz farm and the sheep ranch—a four days' journey from Fort Vancouver brought them to the company's steamer, the *Beaver*, on which they set out for the posts of the Pacific coast and Sitka—that coast trip now familiar to thousands of goldseekers.



At the Stikine (or Stickeen) River—a place much in the world's eye during the past year or two—Sir George found young John McLaughlin, a son of the big doctor, in charge of the company's post, with a force of twenty-two men. The governor next proceeded to Sitka, and, after a somewhat protracted side trip to California and the Sandwich Islands, returned in the Spring of '42 to Stikine on board the company's ship, the *Cowlitz*, in tow of a Russian steamer loaned him by Governor Etholine of Sitka—to find that young McLaughlin had just been murdered by his own men, who were in a state of mingled mutiny and intoxication within the fort, while about 2000 Indians were gathered without, in readiness to take advantage of the insurrection within! The opportune arrival of Sir George, with two ships' crews at his disposal, enabled him to speedily quell the disturbance and disperse the Indians, after preparing their minds for a measure which the company was anxious here as elsewhere to enforce—the discontinuance of the liquor traffic. It may here be remarked that the one good result of this most unhappy tragedy at the Stikine was the agreement arrived at soon after with the Russian company—whose bad example had been held to necessitate the British company's fighting "fire-water" with "firewater" at competitive trading posts—under which agreement both companies inaugurated a prohibitory liquor law on this coast.

Doubts as to his powers and the best policy to pursue led Sir George to take the man who fired the fatal shot with him to Sitka, whither he was returning *en route* to Siberia and Europe. For a less comprehensible reason he sent another man—a supposed participant in the affair—to Fort Vancouver, accompanied by a letter to Dr. McLaughlin, apprising him of the tragedy and casting some blame upon the murdered son for the insurrection. The letter the big doctor had, of course, no alternate but to receive, but the man he would not see nor so much as suffer to set foot on shore at Fort Vancouver—but had him kept a prisoner on board the *Cadboro*. On a trip of that vessel to Vancouver Island, this man saw Mr. Douglas and at once made a confession to him, implicating all the people at Stikine in a plot to murder John the younger. He even stated that an agreement to that effect had been drawn up by the man who was acting as a temporary assistant or clerk to the murdered man. The confession absolved the young trader from the charge of drunkenness and contradicted the depositions taken by Sir George in every material point. Little wonder is it that the doctor, smarting under the blow received, was not satisfied with the apparently easy methods pursued by Sir George, with whom he had moreover recently exchanged some angry words in California on matters of business; nor that he sent an officer of the company to Mr. Manson, with a complete new complement of men, to the Stikine to re-open the in-

vestigation—with no known retributive result, though the evidence taken tends to justify the doctor's summing up—his vigorous penmanship adding strength to his words—"The short and the long of the affair is, these fellows wanted to impose on my son, to which he would not submit"—true chip of the old block it seemed!—"They, finding they could not make him bend, conspired and murdered him."

It is worthy of note that at the last the young man seems to have relied upon his Owhyhees (Hawaiians) to make a stand against the whites.

The doctor's subordinate officers at these various and remote posts eagerly scanned all news of the affair which reached them and sympathized with the afflicted father—but they could scarcely grasp the situation in all its details of doubt and difficulty as to criminal procedure, territorial jurisdiction, etc. "I fear we have got ourselves into a hobble and that it will turn out we are more *au fait* in our humble occupation as Indian traders than as the dispensary of Her Majesty's criminal law," wrote one. But the big doctor's feelings were still aroused—he attributed, whether rightly or wrongly, his son's death to Sir George indirectly, as a result of the governor's having removed a trusted man, Mr. Finlayson, from the post of assistant to the young trader, substituting a labourer in his place—and he carried the matter before the heads of the company in England—"wrote a thundering epistle to their honours at home, concerning Sir George, ripping up old grievances," as another old trader, John Tod (1 Sept. 1842) put it. Yet Sir George remained at the head of the company, while the old doctor continued to mourn the unavenged death of the son he evidently loved much.

The witnesses who were examined by Mr. Manson at Stikine testified that the document referred to by their former comrade in his confession, as an agreement to murder the trader, was simply a formal complaint against him, which they intended presenting to Sir George Simpson, as head of the company, on his expected arrival—but that it was never presented, but destroyed, because it was too dirty to be presented to the governor. Not only was Sir George a man whose examples as to soiled documents had to be considered, but he seems to have had a prejudice in favour of clean linen as well—as the following less tragic incident would seem to indicate: Sir George at one time wrote Dr. McLaughlin to remove the officer in charge of Fort George (Astoria), with a seven years' pension. The doctor declared the governor "must do his dirty work himself," and took no decisive steps to interfere with the officer in question, who was described as youthful in appearance, though fat and indolent, but with "children enough for a colony." The officer nominated to succeed him enquired of the condemned, what he had done to offend the

governor. He stated that Sir George had sent two cotton shirts ashore to be washed and while they were being taken, under the fat officer's charge, from the fort to the ship, one of them fell overboard—but he declared his intention of sending another to London and hoped his offense would be forgiven. His proprietary offering, or Sir George's better feelings, it is presumed, prevented his becoming the victim of another "tale of a shirt," by an ignominious expulsion from office, for such a cause.

On December 8th, 1846, there arrived at Fort Vancouver a person whose errand was of a novel character to dwellers upon the Columbia—Mr. Paul Kane, to whom reference has already been made, was a native of Toronto, who had adopted painting as the profession of his choice and, after spending some four years in Europe qualifying himself in his art, conceived the idea of making an overland trip across the continent, making sketches, as he proceeded, of the representative Indians of the various tribes and of the scenery of the country through which he passed, then an almost unbroken wilderness. He spent nearly four years in these wanderings, to and from the Pacific, sketching portraits of chiefs, medicine men, warriors, their wives and daughters—also fishing, hunting and other scenes, illustrative of the customs, occupations and amusements of the red men and the physical features of the country. From these sketches he subsequently executed many paintings, some of which are on the walls of the embryo Canadian national gallery at Ottawa, but a much more extensive and elaborate series in oils—numbering about 100 canvasses—is among the valued possessions of a Toronto gentleman, the Hon. George W. Allen, Canadian senator.\* The artist's Journal, published in London in 1859, with specimens of his work—now unfortunately out of print—gave an interesting narrative of his travels and adventures, with much of the history and folklore of the various people of the Northwestern regions.

Kane reached the height of land on November 12th. His voyage down the Columbia to Fort Vancouver he accomplished in little more than a fortnight—including stoppages at Forts Colville and Walla Walla *en route*—whereas it took him four months to cover the same distance on his return the following year.

It may well be imagined that the advent of such a character excited no little interest. At Fort Vancouver two chief factors, Messieurs Douglas and Ogden, now reigned, in place of Dr. McLaughlin, with eight or ten clerks and 200 voyageurs. Her Majesty's warship *Modeste*, with her complement of officers, lay in the broad river, opposite the fort. Outside the stockade was the village with its motley population of English, French,

\*Now deceased. The paintings were purchased I believe by Mr. C. B. Estes, M. P., of Toronto.

Iroquois, Sandwich Islanders, Crees and Chinooks, and its confusion of tongues. The artist enjoyed the hospitality of the officers at the fort for about a month and on 10 January, 1847, in company with Mr. MacKenzie, a chief trader, proceeded up the Willamette to Oregon City, passing "two cities that are to be," one of which contained but two houses and the other not much more advanced. Oregon City, located by Dr. McLaughlin, who owned the chief mills, contained then about ninety-four houses and two or three hundred inhabitants, a Methodist and a Roman Catholic church, two grist mills and as many hotels. A lawyer and "doctors ad libitum" were already on the ground. That it would be rivalled, if not eclipsed, by a city to be built where Portland now is, was even then predicted, owing to intervening impediments to navigation. A few weeks at Oregon City and a few days at the Roman Catholic missions further up the Willamette, and Kane returned to spend the balance of the winter pleasantly with the Hudson's Bay and naval officers at Fort Vancouver in riding, and in fishing and shooting the waterfowl and seal with which the neighbourhood abounded. In the Spring he made a trip to Vancouver Island and adjacent coasts and islands, returning to Fort Vancouver in June, and on July 1st began his homeward journey.

The artist was regarded as a great "medicine man" by the natives, who sometimes gathered in great numbers to watch him manipulate his supposed implements of magic—insomuch that at one village on the coast of De Fuca Straits, so great was the crowd gathered in the head chief's lodge that it was filled, and those outside climbed to the roof and, tearing the mats from their supports, to which they slung one upon another, peered down at him from above. He experienced much difficulty everywhere, however, in prevailing upon the natives to sit for their portraits, owing to their superstitious fear that the possessor of their likenesses would have some mysterious power or evil influence over them. In addition to entreaties and bribes, he had sometimes to resort to various strategies and arguments to attain his end—as, for instance, that the pictures were to be shown to their "great mother," the queen, who would no doubt be much disappointed on missing his proposed subject's portrait. On one occasion he allayed the fears of a repentant sitter, who continued to pursue him only by hastily preparing a duplicate sketch of him and destroying the duplicate in his presence—on another occasion he was in great peril owing to the unexpected death of one of his subjects—a woman—whose demise was attributed to his malign influence.

Kane, notwithstanding, had many interesting subjects. Among others he met at Fort Victoria the great Yellow-cum, head chief of the Macaws at Cape Flattery and the wealthiest man of his tribe in slaves and

iaquas, the shell money then in circulation there. His father was the pilot of the *Tonquin*, who escaped destruction by the terrible explosion, which blew in pieces Mr. Astor's ship, with the man who fired the magazine and all the savage horde on her deck. On his way home he paid a four days' visit to Dr. Whitman, the well known missionary, and his family at their home on the banks of the Walla Walla. The doctor took him to see an Indian named To-ma-kus that he might take his likeness—his appearance being the most savage, Kane says, he ever beheld. The Indian, a prey to superstitious fears, endeavoured to burn the sketch made of him by Kane, who snatched it from him and fled, the man appearing to be greatly enraged. The circumstance is referred to, as it must have been peculiarly distressing to the artist to hear when at Colville of the massacre of Doctor and Mrs. Whitman and a dozen others and that the ferocious To-ma-kus was the man who had tomahawked his late host, while another Indian, whom he had sketched, was present when the deed was done. Kane had, however, done all he could to warn Dr. Whitman of his danger and endeavoured to persuade him to seek safety at Fort Walla Walla—having, indeed, taken a three hours' ride back from the fort, where he had heard and seen enough to arouse his fears for the missionary, to the missionary—but in vain. The devoted man said he had lived so long among these Indians that he had no apprehension of their injuring him—yet they attributed, it seems, to him various ills which Providence and their enemies visited upon them, with the lamentable result just mentioned. Rev. H. Spalding and family were made prisoners by another tribe, from whom, however, Mr. Ogden, chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, who had at once repaired to the scene on hearing of the trouble, purchased their release.

The light of the gospel had first been brought to the natives of the Columbia some 14 years before this sad occurrence by a young Indian lad, christened Spaganbarry, by the English missionary at Red River, where he with some other sons of chiefs, had been sent in 1825, through the instrumentality of Governor Simpson. He returned in 1832 and subsequently spent some time in instructing his people, but afterwards himself lapsed into a profligate and savage life, according to the testimony of Governor Simpson himself. The Methodist Episcopal mission on the Willamette was begun by the Lees in 1834. In 1836 Dr. Whitman and Rev. H. Spalding with their wives—said to have been the first white women to cross the mountains—had begun their work among the Indians, as did also two Roman Catholic missionaries in 1838—while a chaplain, Rev. Mr. Beaver, and his wife, had come from England to supply the spiritual wants of Fort Vancouver. More than a decade of Christian

teaching, it will be seen, had failed to eradicate superstition and savagery from the native character; yet the same spirit which has imbued those who have suffered similarly in Africa and China, in more recent years, has inspired the soldiers of the Cross on the Columbia and its tributaries to persist in their self-sacrificing labours, with what success the present residents of Oregon and Washington can best attest.

The difference in appearance and customs, as well as language, between the Indians of the plains east of the mountains and those of the coast was great. Washington Irving attributed—no doubt correctly—the bent legs, corpulent bodies and generally squat appearance of the latter, as compared with the tall, straight figures of many of the natives of the East, to their life as fishermen and mariners, constantly squatting in canoes, while the aborigines of the plains scoured the prairies in the chase. Their disposal of their dead also reflected the character of the coast Indian's life—their cemeteries being collections of elaborately decorated canoes, containing the corpses, and finished with all manner of paraphernalia and provision for the deceased in their future state, in happy *fishing*, rather than *hunting*, grounds.

Slavery was rife among the aborigines of the coast, the number of a man's wives and slaves being the two chief items in estimating his importance. The lives of these slaves were completely at the mercy of their owners, who killed them without compunction whenever the occasion seemed to them to call for such a sacrifice.

The custom of flattening the head in infancy was a characteristic of certain of the tribes in the region of the Columbia and Puget's Sound, especially of the Chinooks and Cowlitz Indians. The process, which is well depicted, as well as described by Paul Kane, commenced with the birth of the infant and continued for a period of from eight to twelve months, in which time the head had lost its natural shape and acquired that of a wedge, the front of the skull flat and higher at the crown, giving it a very unnatural appearance. The infants are said to have shown no signs of suffering while subjected to the treatment, but on the contrary to have cried when their bands were removed—nor was their health or acuteness of intellect apparently impaired by it. The Flatheads took their slaves from among the roundhead tribes, the former looking with contempt even upon the whites, whose heads had grown in the natural shape which served to distinguish slaves from their masters.

The fondness of the Indian for arraying himself in the white man's garments, especially if they be of a showy or striking appearance, has been often remarked, and the Indians of the Columbia were no exception to the rule. "I remember old King Comcomly," said the old Hudson's Bay

clerk quoted in the earlier part of this article\* , "once marching into Vancouver, with all his naked aides and followers, rigged out in a British general's uniform. But His Majesty had thrown off the pantaloons before he marched out—considering that they impeded his progress"—a scene which reminds one somewhat of the visit of the founder of the late Hawaiian dynasty and his suite to the *Tonquin*, while she lay at the Sandwich Islands.

The lot of the officers and clerks at the more remote posts of the Hudson's Bay Company was, in most cases, by no means an enviable one. Their letters to their friends and to each other—usually long and neatly written documents—contained many a tale of dangers surmounted and hardships endured. One wrote from Colville, in 1835, "we had five or six hundred Blakfeet upon us and fought some hours"; another, speaking of Fort Simpson in the same year, said: "A winter voyage on that rugged stormy coast is both dangerous and unpleasant and, when arrived, the matter is not much mended. The natives are very numerous, treacherous, daring, savage and ferocious in the extreme." Separated from his family, whom he would not expose to the dangers of the voyage, he exclaims against the country of his exile. Such instances might be multiplied and it is little matter of wonder that the burden of the trader's letter was at all times an expression of longing for the time when he hoped to "go out" to the far away civilized world and that he invariably looked upon one already there as in a situation akin to Paradise. The hope of promotion—which could not begin until after many years of service—the heartburnings at sometimes being passed over, the long waits of twenty or even thirty years for their "parchments," as they termed their commissions as chief factors or chief traders—were the subject of ceaseless thought and some grumbling. Now and again the bullet, knife or tomahawk of some treacherous foe would put an end to the earthly solitude of the trader at a remote post. In spite of all their drawbacks, however, the Hudson's Bay factors, traders and clerks formed a brotherhood of men, who, for courage, loyalty to the service and good comradeship, were unexcelled perhaps anywhere. In Eastern Canada, the Red River settlement and Vancouver Island, which formed the chief havens of their retirement from service, the old Nor'westers and Hudson's Bay men formed a confraternity of large-hearted and often opulent veterans, full of affection for their families and old comrades and of thankfulness to God for mercies vouchsafed them. That not only the highest position in the company's service, but the highest imperial honours as well, were open to the Hudson's Bay clerk possessing the necessary ability, tact, vigour and perseverance is evidenced by the

\*The writer's father.

case of the Hon. Sir Donald A. Smith, who, entering company's service as a lad from Scotland, 18 years of age, has risen, step by step, to the highest position in that service, has amassed great wealth, held a seat for many years in the Canadian parliament, and occupies now the important position of High Commissioner for Canada at London, where he holds a seat in the House of Lords as Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal.

As already stated, the Hudson's Bay Company withdrew headquarters to the north of the present boundary after it became fixed in 1846. Meantime settlement, especially in the Willamette valley, was going on apace and cities and towns arose. Though the fur trade departed, the fisheries have remained and the city of Astoria has been reared chiefly on a diet of fish—for the salmon and sturgeon, as well as smaller fish, of the Columbia, were ever justly celebrated. Ships of all nations found their way in increasing numbers across that bar which has ever been the chief drawback to navigation to and from the Columbia. Across the broad river down which the express boat propelled by the light-hearted, gaily-singing voyageurs, made its way in former times, the swift express train now travels with passengers who mayhap have crossed the continent in less time than would, in the early days, have been consumed in a trip from Spokane to Fort Vancouver.

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