

EARLY DAYS ON PUGET SOUND.

EXTRACTS from the annual address delivered by the Hon. Elwood Evans, at Tacoma, June 16, 1885, at the Second Annual Reunion of Washington Territory Pioneers. To the old settlers of the original Oregon Territory, of which at the time of the incidents related the Puget Sound region was a portion, they will be especially interesting:

Hon. William P. Bryant, the first Chief Justice of the organized Territory of Oregon, held the first court north of the Columbia River at Fort Steilacoom, on the 1st day of October, 1849. It was a special term, authorized by an act of the Oregon Legislature, for the purpose of trying the murderers of Leander C. Wallace. Lewis County, in which the murder had been committed, extended northward to the forty-ninth parallel, and included the whole of the present Washington Territory north of Clarke and Pacific counties, and for the purposes of this trial had been attached to Judge Bryant's district (the First Judicial District of Oregon). The Court convened in one of the old log-houses on the site of the present Territorial Insane Asylum, in a room inadequate to seat either grand or petit jury, and adjourned to an open shed, used as a carpenter shop in the progress of erecting quarters for the soldiers.

Those houses which had been built for and until recently occupied by the herders of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company were the most remote of the outposts of the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Nisqually, hence the *ultima thule* of the civilization of Northern Oregon. Three such log shanties with a barn constituted the officers' quarters and guard-house, the soldiers being camped in tents near at hand. These huts were rented by the United States of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company for a military post, at which was stationed Company M, Fourth Artillery, Captain Bennett H. Hill, to defend Northern Oregon. Such was Fort Steilacoom in the fall of 1849. The site of the present city of Steilacoom was primeval forest, and not an American settler disturbed the virgin quietude of the shores of our magnificent inland sea from the mouth of Squalitchew Creek to the Pacific Ocean.

Leander C. Wallace, who had located a claim upon the island now bearing his name, was the murdered pioneer; his murderers were Snoqualmie Indians. The tragedy itself, the first murder by the natives of an American settler on Puget Sound, the first appeal to the courts to redress by law the wrongs upon our people perpetrated by savages, then so greatly outnumbering the little handful of Americans who were here, not only invest that trial with the greatest interest, but manifest triumphantly the regard for law and right of those primitive settlers.

In tracing the causes as they lead up to that first tragedy, the native characteristics of the aborigines become apparent. We acquire an idea of that race by whom the American pioneer was surrounded—with whom he was required to come in daily contact; we are advised of the nature of the labors incident to occupying the country—his condition of life as an American settler.

The settlement of a new country by many is regarded as the invasion of proprietary rights of native population, and it is cheerfully conceded that where there has been appropriation of lands, or utilization thereof, any privation of occupants without compensation is a wrong. I do not purpose to discuss the assumption that the North American continent belonged to the Indian race; that such race had proprietary rights to its lands, or rivers, or seas. Practical experience teaches that American su-

premacy means the very best civilization; that it means recognition of man's individuality; that it can only be extended by Americans utilizing the whole continent as the homes of American men, women and children. Such is the life-lesson of the American pioneer—

He is but as the instrument of Heaven;
His work is not design, but Destiny.

His faith—that Infinite wisdom beneficently purposed that this continent should become the abiding place of civilization, science and the arts, a land of homes—home, "The resort of love, of joy, of peace and plenty, where supporting and supported, polished friends and dear relations mingle into bliss." That the march of civilization steadily supplants barbarism and ignorance, necessitating a conflict between an obstructing race and that one whose advance is marked by progress. The former, savage, content to live as have lived his progenitors; no advancement is sought; the very earth which he inhabits partakes of lethargy; the region remains in its virgin wildness. The aggressive race, obedient to the first great commandment, "Subdue the earth and replenish it," levels the forest and makes it yield life and bread to man. Thus civilization drives before it the savage, together with the wild game which has furnished him subsistence. The earth thus subdued promptly responds to tillage and abundantly affords sustenance to man. The very presence of our race means aggressive civilization. Its presence is the standing menace that the earth shall afford homes to civilized men and women. In the very nature of things the Indian must recede before the advancing civilization or be absorbed by and merged into the advancing column. No revision of the Old Testament will diminish the broad significance of the Almighty fiat at the dawn of creation "To subdue the earth and replenish it." The New Testament will forever command, "Go ye into all lands and preach its gospel" of civilization and succeeding peace. If those keystones of civilization be error; if it was wrong to establish the United States of America; if it was wrong for John Adams, in 1787, to have predicted "That the United States of America were destined to spread over the northern part of this whole quarter of the globe"; if it was wrong "To go forth and preach the gospel unto all nations," "To subdue the earth and replenish it," then was it wrong for the pioneers to have wended their perilous way to the shores of the Pacific, and for us to be here to-day to commemorate their deeds; then American settlement, which means only American civilization, is wrong. But if such be right, if manifest destiny be right, if the great commands of the Old and New Dispensations be right, then, indeed, is the calling of the pioneer a rightful one, his presence in new countries is obedience to the highest of duties, his mission the most justifiable. But for the pioneers, those who have in all ages paved the way for civilization, the great United States of America would not be the greatest nation upon the map of the world. Its territory would simply have been left in the condition it was when Columbus discovered the New World. The pioneer rightfully settled here; the ultimate purpose of his presence was proper; the result of that presence has proven of incalculable benefit to humanity. The right, the purpose and the result of that presence are all suggested as matters of reflection by that first murder; that first court upon Puget Sound; that first assertion of criminal jurisdiction, under the forms of law, in adjudicating upon the wrongs between the races present in the country.

The murdered victim was a good man, a quiet, unoffending citizen. He gave no provocation for his taking off. He was simply known to the Indians as a "Boston." He was lawfully, and in pursuit of his business, outside of the stockade of Fort Nisqually. He was there wan-