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OREGON SENTINEL

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JACKSONVILLE, OREGON.
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The People of this Valley Save
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Dry-Goods and Fancy-Goods
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All work guaranteed.
Give me a trial.
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Give me a call and I will convince you.
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GOLD-HUNTING ON QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S ISLAND.

BY THE EDITOR.

We were not looking on "fairy land," but on such a place as that in which the genii and ogres of olden time guarded the treasures of the orient, and the fact that it was a terra incognita only increased our anxiety to set foot upon it. The entrance to the harbor was narrow and apparently intricate. Standing far out on each side were low rocky islands, or rather masses of rock, among which the heavy swell was surging and thundering. Now and then a dangerous reef showed itself unpleasantly close, and there were but few of us who did not long for the moment when we should drop anchor in the smooth water clearly discernible beyond. It was then that our Indian passengers rendered valuable services as pilots. During the night their canoe had been dashed to atoms, and therefore, they had a common interest in our safe landing. McLean spoke a little "jargon," the language used among these northern tribes by the Hudson's Bay men, and it was evident from his anxious looks that he depended more on the knowledge of the Indians than on his own judgment. Perched high on the vessel's bow, our dusky pilots watched earnestly every reef and sunken rock, giving their orders by quick nervous signs, but with the judgment of experienced seamen. We had nearly gained a point of safety, when the wind slackened, and we soon realized the fact that a strong current was setting us among the most fearful of breakers. A whale-boat was launched and manned in a few minutes, and a line made fast to our bows. In vain did her crew bend to their oars; they pulled with a will, but the current was stronger than human muscle. Then was a moment of wild excitement. Lortt was unequal to the emergency. He ordered the sails backed, then braced to every point of the compass, wrung his hands, and told us we were lost. In truth, it looked like it. We had one more boat on board, but in the confusion it was forgotten. We only thought of a desperate swim for our lives, where muscle and skill only stood one chance to win against a hundred chances to lose. Every instant was an age. We could have tossed a biscuit among the outer breakers, when a cat's-paw struck us and filled the foresail. The boat's-crew saw it, and with a wild cheer they bent again to their oars. Venner, the San Francisco pilot, sprung to the wheel, the braces were hauled taut, and in a few minutes we were safely anchored in twenty fathoms of smooth water.

Much to our surprise, we were boarded the next morning by the first mate of the Hudson's Bay Company's brigantine "Recovery," which he reported as lying fifteen miles farther up the harbor, really an estuary penetrating about twenty miles inland. The envoy was a genuine John Bull, who informed us that we would oblige the agent of the company if we would immediately weigh anchor and leave the island, as our visit was one of interference with the privileges of the company. The request was accompanied by a command, inhibiting us from proceeding farther inland. This modest communication was delivered in a sort of Dundreary style, and with such a reprehensible disregard of the rules of international politeness that we actually laughed at it. Our conduct was certainly impolite, but, under the circumstances, how could we help it? We were Americans, imbued thoroughly with the American idea that we had a natural right to all this broad continent. We had opened the gates of California to all nationalities; surely, then, it was no more than courtesy that all other gates should be opened to us. This was our opinion, and we had full confidence in our power to sustain it. We sent the envoy back to the agent of the company, with the hope that he would enjoy our genial society very much, as we would assuredly drop anchor alongside of him within a few hours. We assured him that as the boundary question was an open one, somewhat dependent on the interpretation of the "Monroe doctrine," we would be, each and every one of us, personally responsible for any complications that might arise between the magnates at Washington and the Court of St. James, in consequence of our uninvited [illegible] on the island, and promised him our valuable co-operation in the development of its mineral resources. We were as good as our word. A few hours saw us snugly anchored within a few lengths of the "Recovery," and in the evening her commander, Mr. Simpson, and Captain Stewart, of the Hudson Bay service, visited us. No allusion whatever was made by either party to the messages of the morning, as the subject would not have been an agreeable one, and the agent was shrewd enough to perceive that we had come to stay. We found them pleasant and cultivated gentlemen, and, as they had the freedom of the "Tepic," they no doubt enjoyed their visit. They gave us all the information in their possession with regard to the mineral deposits on the island, but confessed that it was vague and mostly derived from the Indians, who were not communicative on the subject. The vein of which we had heard such marvelous stories was being worked by them, but had decreased in richness; and on board their vessel they exhibited several thousand dollars' worth of specimens that must have been torn from an almost solid vein of gold. They informed us that faithful search in that portion of the island had failed to develop any more gold-bearing quartz; but we were not satisfied. The sight of the gold specimens only increased our ardor, and we ascribed to sinister motives information that we subsequently found to be the truth.

Our first step was to examine the discovery of the Hudson's Bay people. We found it a narrow but well-defined vein of white flinty quartz, only about eight inches in width, incased in a hard blue slate, and breaking off abruptly at the water's edge. Dipping into the mountain at an angle of about forty-five degrees, and only uncovered for about twenty feet, it was difficult to determine either its extent or value. [illegible] rich, and the rock sh[illegible] some free gold; but the discove[illegible]s evidently only a pocket, that w[illegible]n exhausted. Far from being discouraged, we immediately organized prospecting expeditions, and determined to penetrate the island as far as practicable in every direction. The "Tepic's" boats were brought into service, canoes were purchased from the Indians, and for about ten days we prosecuted a patient but unfruitful search. We found numerous quartz-veins—hard, flinty, and barren. One small vein was discovered in which was a little free gold, but we had no appliances for working it, and in that early stage of quartz mining it was considered valueless. The conformation of the country was unfavorable for placer-mining. There were no water-courses, except those that poured almost vertically down the rugged and broken mountains, fed by the melting snow; no evidence whatever of any gravel deposits; and we were beginning to feel discouraged, when a mining excitement was raised that gave us new hope. The Indians we had picked up at sea were still on board the brig. On our arrival we had purchased a canoe for them, and supplied them with provisions, but they stubbornly refused to leave or even set foot on shore. They were among a hostile tribe, and insisted on staying with us until we left the harbor. They had been watching our operations carefully, and on learning the object of our search, informed McLean that in their country, on the west side of the island, we could find any quantity of such stuff. They were anxious to have a party start at once, and as we saw no reason why gold should not exist in one part of the island as well as in another, we resolved on the expedition. We had one fine boat, which was immediately put in sailing trim and supplied with ten days' water and provisions. Six of us volunteered for the voyage, by no means a safe one, and led by our native pilots, we got off in as fine style as if entered for a regatta, instead of a venture among hostile savages and along an unknown and a dangerous coast. Our guides staid close to us until fairly out of the harbor, when they began to show signs of impatience. Doubtless they were anxious to reach their homes, but, as the distance to their village could not exceed forty miles, we saw no reason for undue haste. Our crew were all good oarsmen, but several times it taxed our skill to follow the canoe among the foam-lashed rocks that beset us on every side. Instead of steering for the open sea, the Indians hugged the shore, depending entirely on their paddles, their canoe bobbing among the rocks like an egg-shell. We were losing ground, and hailed them to suggest a change of course. A furtive glance behind them, a few rapid strokes of their paddles, and the canoe shot through a narrow passage where we dared not follow. We never saw those guides again. The guileless savages had played us a trick—the Red had outwitted the White. We immediately realized the situation. The Indians only wanted a convoy from among their enemies, and had shrewdly made use of our cupidity to procure it. We indulged in no angry feeling, but rather felt grateful to those untutored children of the forest for not leading us among their people. At best our expedition was a fool hardy one, and had we actually reached the strange village we might have been scalped for our pains, or held as prisoners until ransomed by some passing vessel—a common practice among these tribes.

Interest in the object of the expedition was now manifestly slackening. Three other vessels, two from San Francisco and one from Portland, Oregon, had entered the harbor. The newcomers had as strong faith as we, and they prospected with the same energy and the same result as ourselves. Most of us were thoroughly dissappointed and discouraged. We had seen "the elephant," and felt anxious to return to California; but the "Tepic" had been chartered for thirty days' sojourn in Englefield harbor, and no inducement could persuade her captain to sail for any other point on the island, or to weigh anchor until the expiration of that time. Fishing excursions to the cod and hallibut banks at the entrance of the harbor were made with good success. Boat races and shooting matches with the Hudson's Bay men served to fill up the time, and as the natives were perfectly friendly, pheasant-shooting was extensively indulged in. We had expected the Indians to be sullen and hostile, but found them over-friendly—so much so, indeed that boarding-nettings were absolutely necessary to prevent them from crowding our decks; and, anchored only a cable-length from a large village, we had ample opportunities for studying them. Physically, they probably have no superiors on this continent; but in point of morals, judging both from observation and the information of the Hudson's Bay men, it is equally probable that they have no inferiors. The men were great stalwart fellows, many of whom were over six feet in height, broad-chested, muscular as athletes, very light complexioned, many of them with finely chiseled features and wearing a savage dignity that but ill comported with indolence and idleness. It was not infrequent to see a splendid-looking savage—noble as any specimen that ever guarded the door of a tobacconist or adorned the pages of an Indian romance—offer to barter his wife, or sister, or daughter, for a drink of rum or a plug of tobacco. Industry was not really a matter of necessity; and, with the exception of canoe-building and fishing, no labor was performed by the males. Hallibut and cod were easily taken in large quantities. Small patches of potatoes, wherever a level spot of ground could be had, were cultivated by the women, for the men were too proud to work. Some of the women were good looking, but the majority were absolutely frightful. As usual, they bore all the heavy burdens, and it was apparent that more of their time was spent in providing for their lords than at the toilet. Tattooing was common, and so effectively done as to leave the face deeply scarred with unseemly corrugated lines. A practice of piercing the lower lip about half-way down to the chin was prevalent. In infancy, a pin or small piece of silver was inserted; this was increased in size, until at puberty it was replaced by a wooden plug, usually a quarter of an inch in diameter. In old age, a mussel-shell was inserted, in such a manner as throw the lip outward and downward, exposing the lower teeth and forming a receptable for saliva, giving the wearer an extremely disgusting appearance. A canoe-load of voluble old hags, their faces darkly streaked with fanciful forms and their shell-lips wagging in time with their tongues, was a singular spectacle; and yet they seemed happy in the observance of a custom not less ridiculous, perhaps, than many of our own fashionable follies. There is considerable ingenuity among these islanders. Slate pipes manufactured by them, elaborately carved with grotesque figures representing "Boston" or "King George" men, and other strange things, not found under the sun, were sold at a nominal price. Stone plates, very creditably worked, were purchased for a few biscuits each, and many of these found their way to San Francisco as presents to friends. Their appliances for fishing were rude, but quite effective. The lines were made of long strips of kelp, tied together with a genuine weaver's knot; they were very brittle when dry, but strong enough when wet to hold the largest halibut. The hook was made of wood bent like the letter V, a strong piece of bone lashed across the outer arm for a barb; and rude as it was, it was no doubt as serviceable as a genuine "Limeric." The canoes of these people were marvels of beauty, and it is doubtful if ever a clipper was launched from the ship-yard of any civilized nation more exquisitely modeled. The cedar of this region grows to an immense size, and during our stay a delegation of the Nootkas from the mainland visited the island, bringing with them several canoes over sixty feet in length, with lofty and beautifully carved bows, giving them the appearance of a Venetian gondola. In fair weather they carry large sails made from the inner bark of the cedar, and are said to perform long sea-voyages with speed and safety.

Who can fathom the wisdom of the Creator in the allotment of a race of people to this sterile, uninviting region? Incomprehensible to us, it seems to be in contravention of the universal law of human progress. For untold centuries, perhaps, these people have occupied this barren, inhospitable spot—for centuries trading in the same steps as their forefathers, observing the same customs, depending on the resources for sustenance—making no step forward. They are pure savages. Contact with the superior civilization has taught them little, and the policy pursued toward them by the great Hudson's Bay Company, very unlike our own, has been peculiarly fortunate and successful. They have accepted the Indian as God made him—as they found him. They have striven to utilize him on the earth, rather than "civilize" and "evangelize" him of it, making him a friend and auxilliary, useful in his own sphere. Possessing exclusive jurisdiction in all matters, civil and commercial, throughout their territory, they have taught the Red people to respect them as masters; but while ruling them sternly have treated them with justice. They have kept all compacts faithfully. No shoddy is found among their articles of barter. The agents of the company are, like "John Littlejohn," upright and downright in all their dealings—passing no spurious coin, weighing no light weight, and their word is never doubted. On the other hand, any violation of law is inflexibly, summarily punished; powder and lead are the "peace commissioners" of the English company, and the result is that murders or outrages against their employes rarely occur.

While it is true that the missionaries of various denominations have been allowed to establish themselves among the Indians, it is questionable whether any serious or systematic attempt at Christianization has been made among the northern tribes. On the contrary, any system of education or enlightenment likely to change the aboriginal character, would have depreciated as unprofitable and inimical to the interests of the company. Agricultural pursuits, or a desire among the Indians for civilized life, would have diminished the annual quantity of fur taken, and resulted in a corresponding decrease in the annual receipts of the company's treasury. It may look strange that a purely selfish policy should outweigh that which springs from the noblest motives; but the reason is obvious. The Hudson's Bay people recognize an existing state of things; they leave the Indian undisturbed in his normal condition, control the evil in him by wholesome fear, fairly reward the good, and are successful. Our Utopen dreamers endeavor to immediately change the not-immediately changeable, and fail because the motive is misunderstood and unappreciated by the object of their doubtful philanthropy. God has apparently made beasts that kindness can not tame and created men whom civilization can not refine.

We had made all preparations for departure from the island, when an occurrence took place which nearly involved us in a serious difficulty. A boat race had taken place between a canoe belonging to one of the crew of the "Recovery" and our whale-boat, in which our boys were beaten. The wager was five gallons of whiskey, and the victors indulging too freely, as a consequence a canoe containing two of them was capsized that evening and one of them drowned. The natives were greatly alarmed and excited, fearing that they might be blamed for the accident. Canoes flocked about us in great numbers, and some of our own crew, a little in liquor, prepared for hostilities. A swivel loaded to the muzzle was about to be fired into a groupe of canoes by McLean, when he was knocked down by a passenger and the match extinguished. A timely explanation allayed the excitement, and the next day the natives got up a performance for the benefit of the white strangers and the expression of their friendly feelings. The first intimation we had of the exhibition was the beating of drums and the approach of one of their finest canoes accompanied by a fleet of smaller craft. The large boat contained about fifty men and four or five women, painted and arrayed in their gayest and most fantastic style. Some of them had their heads covered with white down, much like the powdered hair of a gentleman of the last century. Others wore head-dresses of eagle's feathers, or were adorned with circlets of claws and teeth taken from wild annimals. The music was peculiarly wild and barberous. Drums singularly like those used by the Asiatics, pipes that might have been hair-looms from the house of Pan, and tamborines constructed with shells were beaten and played with considerable skill and a marked attempt at harmony. The chief performers chanted in a low, monotonous tone, keeping time to the music with their bodies; and an occasional burst of savage melody from the instruments would almost throw them into spasms of contortion. For several hours this was kept up, the fleet passing from vessel to vessel, receiving presents of biscuit and other things, for which they seemed very grateful.

Our time had expired; the anchor was apeak; the "Tepic's" bows turned homeward, and we bid good-bye to these wild scenes forever. The passage from our anchorage to the sea was narrow and tortuous, and the captain of the "Recovery" very kindly sent a boat's-crew to assist us in reaching the mouth of the harbor. We gave the "Recovery" a parting salute, and with the red cross of St. George at our mizzen we made our way to the sea, in idiotic wantonness firing volley after volley, that went crashing among the timber, waking echo upon echo among the old granite cliffs that we wished never to look on more.

Twenty-one years have passed, and that band of adventurers is scattered far and wide—some in the Atlantic States, some growing gray among the blue mountains of California and Oregon. Some are in "Silverland," and some are gone to the "shadowy mountains of the moon" to seek for El Dorados, and some—where there is no more gold-hunting.

PRETTY MOUTHS.

Should have pretty teeth in them, but it is not unusual to see between rosy lips, teeth discolored and decaying through neglect. This disfiguring defect should be repaired without delay, by using fragrant SOZODONT, which removes every particle of tartar from the teeth and renders them snowy white. This admirable aid to beauty is perfectly harmless and exhales a most delightful aroma, and is in every respect preferable to the ordinary tooth pastes and powders. Try it and see for yourself.

The National Gold Medal was awarded to Bradley & Rulofson for the best photographs in the United States and the Vienna Medal for the best in the world. 429 Montgomery St., San Francisco.