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GEO. L. CURRY, Editor and Proprietor.

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HISTORICAL INCIDENTS ABOUT OREGON.

NO. 3.

Though the late N. W. Company, and their successors, the H. B. Company, had withheld liquor from the Indians in the interior of the country, still, at the entrance of the Columbia, the coasters had issued it so freely that the Indians there had become much attached to it—but the officers of the H. B. Company, in 1827, stopped the issuing of liquor to Indians, and limited the sale of it to the Company's servants, and whites on the sea board, (as there was no liquor in the interior,) to half a pint two or three times in the year—but allowed them the usual gratuity—say, one pint on leaving the depot, and the same on arriving from winter quarters. As this was a gratuity established by custom, the officers considered it was a right of which they could not deprive the servants; at the same time they paid those who left their liquor the sale price, in any thing else, which was paying high; as, to prevent its consumption, the Company sold liquor 300 per cent. on prime cost, whereas all their other articles were sold to servants at 50 per cent. on prime cost. But the toppers exclaimed against this limitation as an act of tyranny and oppression, and to refuse to sell them liquor, when they had money to pay for it, as an infringement of their liberty as freemen. But the officers observed, it was true, freemen had a right to do with their money as they pleased, and purchase what they pleased, and also to sell what they pleased, and the officers only availed themselves of the latter right.

But as the Indians, who had been allowed to indulge in liquor, had become attached to it, the officers had to use management in dealing with them, and though orders were issued, publicly, to stop issuing liquor to Indians, still the Indian trader was permitted to allow the principal chiefs a bottle of rum occasionally—but he was to tell them they were indebted for it to his kindness—and therefore they must be on their guard, that the officer in charge did not find it out, as it would expose the Indian traders to severe consequences. Often have the officers smiled at seeing an Indian leave the Indian shop, a little elevated with a bottle of the stuff under his arm, which he was most careful to hide by wrapping his blanket about himself—and endeavoring to conceal his state by affecting a more than ordinary dignity and gravity. But when the inferior Indians were reconciled to the want of liquor, the officer in charge took measures to withhold the small quantity indulged to the chiefs, and prepare them for it by telling any of them he met coming from the Indian shop, that it seemed to him he was drunk, and the officer would inquire of the trader if he had given him liquor, who, of course, answered, 'no.' But when the proper time

came, the officer in charge met the principal Indian chief coming out of the Indian shop, and told him he appeared drunk, when the chief denied having had any liquor. At the same time, he dropped the bottle of liquor that the Indian trader had given him, which the officer took up, and while he was scolding the Indian trader for giving 'lum' to the Indians, the chief slunk off—and on the morrow, sent for the Indian trader and expressed his sorrow that he had been the cause of his getting a scolding. This gave him a good pretext for refusing to give 'lum' to any other Indians in future—and thus the issuing of liquor to Indians was stopped at Vancouver without disturbance—and the Indians laid the blame of it to the principal Indian chief, for allowing his bottle of 'lum' to fall to the ground before the officer in charge. It also deprived the Indian chief of the means of doing mischief, if so inclined,—and, as he was the most influential man among them; this was an important consideration; for at that time, the Indians about Vancouver were at least five times as numerous as at present, and there were not above 200 white men on the Columbia and New Caledonia, and only about 60 in the establishment at Vancouver, and the Indians along the banks of the Columbia were so turbulent that it required a party of 60 armed men to travel safely between Vancouver and Walla Walla.

Even, Spring 1829, when Sir George Simpson went up the Columbia, the Indians at the Dalles were so turbulent that when the boats were loaded, and the people about to embark, the Indians made a rush to seize the boats, and were only stopped by Dr. Tod taking aim at the chief, who immediately called to his people to stop. It was afterwards found that every gun of the party was wet except Dr. T.'s, (because he carried it) though two men had been left to guard them while the remainder of the men were carrying the boats and baggage over the portage. In the same neglectful manner, which, in such cases, is criminal, in 1825, the H. B. Company sent a vessel, the William and Ann, Capt. Hanwell, to discover the mouth of Frazier's river. She had a crew of about 40 men. Two sentries were kept constantly on each side of the deck while she was at anchor—yet on examining their eight cannon, after leaving Frazier's river, they found every one of them had been unloaded by the Indians—which shows how difficult it is to get people, unaccustomed to it, to keep a vigilant watch. But to return to our subject. By taking every care to afford them no opportunity to pilfer—by prudent and firm management—the Indians were brought to have that regard and respect for the whites that, since 1832, any two whites could safely travel between Vancouver and Walla Walla, and since 1834, between Vancouver and Fort Hall—and thus they did these poor people an immensity of good, and also facilitated the settling of the whites in the country, and consequently the introduction of civilization.

A.

FOR THE FREE PRESS.

MR. EDITOR.—I see by reference to the "Free Press" of April 15th, a letter over the signature of H. J. G. Maxon, in which he refers to me, together with others, as having left the army without leave. To use his own language, he says—"We have ascertained that JESSE GAGE, R. JENKINS, and WILLIAM SIMMONS have left here without leave—send the boys back if you can, and save them from disgrace." It is only necessary for me to here state, that I was on my way to the valley with Col. Gilliam when the fatal accident of his death occurred. The Colonel intended visiting the valley to stimulate the citizens to prosecute the war with more