

In 1804, within 100 miles upward from the mouth of the Columbia, there were no less than eight Indian tribes, with an average population of nearly a thousand persons to each tribe. In 1834, nothing remained but the remnants of these tribes, including less than four hundred Indians. Two thirds of all the tribes ever known in Oregon are utterly extinct, and the names of many are scarcely remembered.

The Multonomahs, who formerly occupied the Wappatoo islands, and the country around the mouth of the Wallamette, and who numbered 3,000 souls, are all dead, and their villages reduced to desolation. The once numerous Clatsops have lost their national existence, the few who survive seeking a shelter amongst the Chenooks, who are also reduced to less than one fourth of their former numbers.

All the remaining Indians below Vancouver live in the most brutal, sottish, and degraded manner; addicted to the grossest intemperance, and associating with the whites in such manner that there can scarcely be found among them a full-blooded Indian child. Rum and other intoxicating liquors are used as the besom of destruction among the miserable victims of the white man's cruelty. While I was on board one of the company's vessels, at the mouth of the Columbia, I saw the captain dealing out rum by the bucket to the chief of the Chenooks, in return for wild game. I saw the chief, with his family of eight persons, intoxicated on the shore.

Such has been the result of the intercourse between the untutored children of the wild and the inhabitants of civilized and Christian communities.

In concluding this imperfect letter, I ought, in justice to myself, to state that it was not disappointment in regard to the natural advantages of Oregon which prevented my forming a permanent connexion with that region; but I was impelled by a determination to do all in my power, by constant effort in the United States, to lead our Government to extend over Oregon that paternal care which alone is needed to render it the very nucleus of emigration, and the most attractive portion of our national domain.

Having, by the hardships and exposures of a lonely and long-continued adventure of life, been deprived in a great degree of the use of my eyes, my health broken down, and my constitution shattered, I have, of course, since my return, found my exertions restricted and impaired, but by no means terminated. It is consoling to me, in the midst of poverty and suffering, to believe that my fellow-citizens and my country are at last beginning to appreciate the value of the objects and measures for which I have sacrificed my possessions, my health, and the best portion of my life. It is also a matter of congratulation to me that some of those whom my persuasion induced to emigrate to Oregon have there found prosperous settlements, and are now asking Congress to accept them and protect them as citizens; and that I have, therefore, been instrumental in planting the seed of American empire in a soil where it shall take root, and spring up and flourish like the luxuriant productions there scattered by the bounty of nature.

I have the honor to be, dear sir, yours, with the highest consideration and respect,

HALL J. KELLEY.

Hon. CALEB CUSHING.