

PIONEER LAYMEN OF NORTH AMERICA

misrepresentations and tricks that the most dishonest lawyers could devise were resorted to by the very men whom he had time and again saved from starvation. The ministers hated him for his religion, and the settlers, who were directly or indirectly from New England, were only too ready to show their bigotry. Public feeling was wrought up to such a degree that a bill was introduced in the Legislature to expel all priests from Oregon; a delegate was sent to Congress to denounce McLoughlin to the General Government, and Washington heard with astonishment that the greatest benefactor of Oregon was a Benedict Arnold, a Jesuit, a Wandering Jew, a Judas Iscariot. The accusations were believed and McLoughlin's claim was disallowed.

In his own defense McLoughlin wrote:

"By British demagogues I have been represented as a traitor. For what? Because I acted as a Christian; saved American citizens, men, women and children, from the Indian tomahawk and enabled them to make farms to support their families. American demagogues have been base enough to assert that I had caused American citizens to be massacred by hundreds by the savages. I have been represented by the delegate from Oregon, the late S. R. Thurston, as doing all I could to prevent the settlement of Oregon, whereas I did all I could to promote its settlement. I could not have done more for the settlers if they had been my brothers and sisters, knowing as I did that any disturbance between us might lead to a war between Great Britain and the States. This is a treatment that I do not deserve and did not expect."

He was now nearing the end of his life, and his biographer Holman thus speaks of him:

"Worried and troubled without surcease, Dr. McLoughlin maintained his grand but kindly attitude to the last. For several years before his death he was an invalid, but his pride assisted him to persevere and to transact such business as he could, although his heart was breaking. His flesh became greatly reduced, his eyes deeply sunken. He grew so emaciated that his great frame stood out, making him look gaunt and grim. For a few weeks only before his death he was confined to his bed."