

ble distance from the post. As they approached the spot they perceived a band of Assineboine Indians, eight in number (if I remember rightly) on an adjacent hill, who immediately joined them, and, delivering up their arms, encamped with them for the night. Next morning a court martial was held by the two clerks, and some of the men, to determine the punishment due to the Indians for having been found near the Company's horses, with the *supposed* intention of carrying them off. What was the decision of this mock court martial? I shudder to relate that the whole band, after having given up their arms, and partaken of their hospitality, were condemned to death, and the sentence carried into execution on the spot: all were butchered in cold blood." (*M'Lean's Notes, vol. 11, p.p. 222—3.*)

It does not appear that these ruffians were ever brought to justice. But with Indians who slay whites, no matter what the provocation, the Company's mode of proceeding is fierce retaliation, which often includes unoffending parties. One of its own servants states that the Company had "an invariable rule of avenging the murder of any of its servants—blood for blood, without trial of any kind." (*Life of Thomas Simpson, p. 427.*) A still higher authority, Governor Simpson himself, says, "whether in matters of life and death, or of petty theft, the rule of retaliation is the only standard of equity which the tribes on this coast are capable of appreciating." Conformably with a rule by which nominal Christians reduced themselves to the level of savages, in August 1840, near the mouth of the Columbia river, one Indian was hung, several others were shot, and their village was set on fire by a party in the employ of the Company, under the command of chief factor Mc. Laughlen, who led them from Fort Vancouver, thus to revenge the death of a man who had lost his life in an affray with the Indians.

To suppress drunkenness, the curse and destroyer of the Red man, and to promote "the moral and religious improvement" of the Indians, were the motives alleged for granting the exclusive license of trade in 1821, and, for its renewal in 1838. But to the Company and its agents the Indians' drunken habits and his consequent depravation are attributable, and they have been encouraged in order that his Christian customers may drive the better bargains with him.