

JOHN McLOUGHLIN

Placed between his conscience and his alleged duty to a soulless corporation, whose only purpose was money-making, and whose rights to the territory, based as they were on the extravagant charter of Charles II, had constantly been denied even by Englishmen themselves, he did not hesitate. He had been twenty-one years at his post and had poured millions into the treasury of the Hudson Bay Company, but all that counted for nothing. In 1842 his resignation was accepted, and from his almost regal power he descended not only into poverty and neglect, but into antagonism with the people among whom his lot had been cast. They persisted in regarding him as a British subject, as responsible for the murder of the missionaries, and as a legitimate object for racial and religious antipathy.

It is noteworthy that the fall of McLoughlin pulled down the pillars on the Hudson Bay Company itself. It was the first step in the dissolution of the great corporation. For when the boundary lines were fixed, the activities of the Hudson Bay Company were shut out of Oregon and confined to British North America. In 1859 its trade monopoly was abolished by England and in 1869 it "surrendered to the Queen's Most Gracious Majesty all the rights of government, and other rights, liberties and franchises, powers and authorities, granted or purported to be granted to the said government and company by the said recited Letters Patent of His Late Majesty King Charles II." Thus passed away the great company to which Charles II had granted a large part of the world.

McLoughlin was now by his own deliberate act shorn of all his former honors and power. Foreseeing the annexation of Oregon, he had staked out a claim at what is at present Oregon City. But the Methodist Mission societies set about wresting it from him to add it to their own possessions. He was denounced as a British subject, with no right to the property, and was charged with working all the while for the benefit of the Hudson Bay Company. To rob him of his rights, all the