

figures of men, beasts, and birds as large as life. Simon Fraser, however, when he reached sea water, near the site of New Westminster, was greatly disappointed that any view of the main ocean should be obstructed by distant lands. He had believed all along that he was tracing the far-famed Columbia River to its entrance into the Pacific Ocean; and now that, instead of this, he had discovered an entirely new river, henceforth to be called after him but without so long a course as the Columbia, his vanity was hurt.

The Amerindians of the sea coast, opposite Vancouver Island, showed hostility to Fraser's party, as they had done farther north to Mackenzie. The Canadian *voyageurs* got alarmed, and told Fraser's assistant, John Stuart, that they had made up their minds to return by land across the Rocky Mountains. Fraser and the other officers of the expedition joined in arguing with them and recalling them to their senses. Finally each member of the party swore a solemn oath before Almighty God that they would sooner perish than forsake in distress any of the crew in the present voyage. After this ceremony was over all hands dressed in their best apparel, and each took charge of his own bundle. They therefore returned as much as possible by the Fraser River, and only took to the mountains when obliged by the rapids. They had to pass many difficult rocks, defiles, precipices, in which there was a beaten path made by the natives, and made possible by means of scaffolds, bridges, and ladders, so peculiarly constructed that it required no small degree of necessity, dexterity, and courage in strangers to undertake them. For instance, they had to ascend precipices by means of ladders composed of two long poles placed upright, with sticks tied crosswise with twigs; upon the end of these others were placed, and so on to any height; add to this that the ladders were often so slack that the smallest breeze put them in motion, swinging