

ORIGIN OF THE CHINOOK JARGON.

In the preface to the "Chinook Dictionary," etc., by Father Demers and others, is a statement concerning the origin of the Chinook Jargon, as follows:—

"The Chinook Jargon was invented by the Hudson Bay Company traders, who were mostly French-Canadians. Having to trade with the numerous tribes inhabiting the countries west of the Rocky Mountains, it was necessary to have a language understood by all. Hence the idea of composing the Chinook Jargon. Fort Vancouver being the principal post, the traders of the twenty-nine forts belonging to the Company on the western slope, and the Indians from every part of that immense country had to come to Vancouver for the trading season. They used to learn the Chinook (Jargon), and then teach it to others. In this manner it became universally known.

"The two first missionaries to Oregon, Rev. F. N. Blanchet, afterwards Archbishop of Portland, Oregon, and his worthy companion, Rev. Mod. Demers, afterwards first Bishop of Victoria, B. C., arrived from Canada at Vancouver on the 24th of November, 1838. They had to instruct numerous tribes of Indians, and the wives and children of the whites, who spoke only the Chinook. The two missionaries set to work to learn it; and in a few weeks Father Demers had mastered it, and began to preach. He composed a vocabulary, which was very useful to other missionaries. He composed several canticles, which the Indians learned, and sang with taste and delight. He also translated all the Christian prayers into the same language.

"Such is the origin of the Chinook Jargon, which enabled the two first missionaries in the country to do a great deal of good among the Indians and half-breeds."—*Rev. L. N. St. Onge, in Demers' Chinook Dictionary.*

The above is completed by the following extract from Dr. Geo. Gibbs' preface to his Chinook Dictionary, published by the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, D. C., in March, 1863.

"The origin of this Jargon—a conventional language, similar to the Lingua Franca of the Mediterranean, the Negro-English-Dutch of Surinam, the Pigeon-English of China, and several other mixed tongues—dates back to the fur *droquers* of the last century. Those mariners, whose enterprise in the fifteen years preceding 1800 explored the intricacies of the north-west coast of America, picked up at their general rendezvous, Nootka Sound, various native words useful in barter, and thence transplanted them, with additions from the English, to the shores of Oregon. Even before their day, the coasting trade and warlike expeditions of the northern tribes, themselves a seafaring race, had opened up a partial understanding of each other's speech, for when, in 1792, Vancouver's officers visited Gray's Harbour, they found that the natives, though speaking a different language, understood many words of the Nootka.

"On the arrival of Lewis and Clarke at the mouth of the Columbia, in 1806, the new language, from the sentences given by them, had evidently attained some form. It was with the arrival of Astor's party, however, that the Jargon received its principal impulse.