

## JOHN McLOUGHLIN

up the river to convey provisions to save them from starvation, and when they swarmed around the fort he gave them plentiful food and good shelter, lands to settle on, and seed to plant and implements to cultivate their farms, and even money, much of which was never returned. By many of his beneficiaries he was rewarded only with bitter hatred. But his large heart would have prompted such benignity and bounty no matter who were the recipients. Moreover, independently of the humanity of the act, it was the most politic course that could be pursued. Had he done otherwise, and allowed that multitude of human beings to perish in the wilderness, as the company of which he was the representative insisted he should do, not only would he and the Hudson Bay Company have been branded with eternal infamy, but the very first act of that famishing throng, who were well armed, would have been to attack the fort and slaughter its inmates. McLoughlin's prudence as well as his humanity averted such a disaster. He welcomed and helped them, though, as Bancroft points out, the Protestant mission through which they passed not only gave them no assistance, but contrived to secure some of their cattle. It will be of interest to know that John C. Fremont and Kit Carson were in Fort Vancouver when their destitute fellow-countrymen arrived.

In the following year the number of immigrants was no less than 1,400, and in 1845, 3,000 arrived. In both instances the sufferings and destitution endured in that six months' journey were even greater than in that of 1843, yet each time saw a repetition of the same magnificent generosity on the part of the factor of Vancouver.