

being built at the mouth of a gully, formed by the Columbia River through high mountainous land, leading to the Pacific Ocean, it is exposed to furious gales of wind, which rush through the opening in the hills with inconceivable violence, and raise the sand in clouds so dense and continuous as frequently to render travelling impossible. I was kindly received by Mr. McBain, a clerk in the Hudson Bay Company's service, who, with five men, had charge of the Fort. The establishment is kept up solely for the purpose of trading with the Indians from the interior, as those about the Post have few or no peltries to deal in.

The Willa-Walla Indians live almost entirely upon salmon throughout the whole year. In the summer season they inhabit lodges made of mats of rushes spread on poles. Owing to the absence of trees in their vicinity, they have to depend for the small quantity of fuel which they require, upon the drift wood which they collect from the river in the spring. In the winter they dig a large circular excavation in the ground about ten or twelve feet deep, and from forty to fifty feet in circumference, and cover it over with split logs, over which they place a layer of mud collected from the river. A hole is left at one side of this roofing, only large enough for one person to enter at a time. A stick with notches reaches to the bottom of the excavation, and serves as a ladder by means of which they ascend and descend into the subterranean dwelling. Here twelve or fifteen persons burrow through the winter, having little or no occasion for fuel, their food of dried salmon being most frequently eaten uncooked, and the place being excessively warm from the numbers congregated together in so small and confined a space. They are frequently obliged, by the drifting billows of sand, to close the aperture, when the heat and stench become insupportable to all but those accustomed to it. The drifting of the sand is a frightful feature in this barren waste. Great numbers of the Indians lose their sight, and even those who have not suffered to so great an extent, have the appearance of labouring under intense inflammation of these organs. The salmon, while in the process of drying, also become filled with sand to such an extent as to wear away the teeth of the Indians, and an Indian is seldom met with over forty years of age whose teeth are not worn quite to the gums.

The day after my arrival at the Fort I procured three horses and a man, for the purpose of travelling into the interior of the country, and visited the Pavilion and Néz-perces Indians. The weather was excessively hot, and we suffered much from the want