

P R E F A C E .

THE "Jargon" so much in use all over the North Pacific coast among both whites and Indians, as a verbal medium of communicating with each other, was originally invented by the "Hudson's Bay Company," in order to facilitate the progress of their commerce with Indians, of which there are more than fifty tribes in Oregon and Washington, and as many more in British Columbia; and while there is general similarity of language among them, leading one to suppose that at some remote period they all talked one tongue, yet each tribe has at this time, a dialect of its own, differing in many respects from all the others; and as it was impossible for the traders to learn all the languages, and yet it was necessary to have some medium of conversing with each tribe, the "Chinook Jargon" was gradually formed and introduced among them, and is now universally used by all these tribes in their intercourse with the whites.

The "Jargon" is founded on the language of the "Chinook" Indians, and the bulk of it is composed of words from their dialect, to which is added a great many French words, and a few English ones; there is, besides, a great many "Nez Perce" words, and a few from many of the other tribes.

In writing this "Dictionary," I shall append notes, critical and explanatory, for the purpose of showing how this "Jargon" was formed.