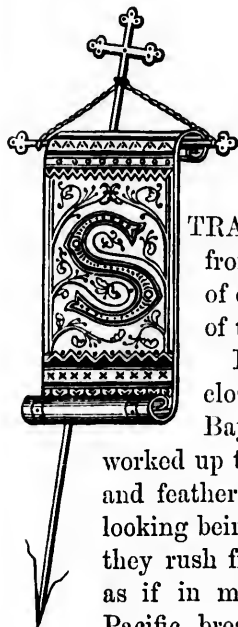


J. J. Holman
STRANGER THAN FICTION.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER I.

A VENTURE OF FAITH.



STRANGE and weird beyond expression was the scene from which, as from a starting point, commences a series of events wholly without parallel in the Missionary annals of the Church.*

Issuing from a populous Indian settlement, built in close proximity to one of the trading forts of the Hudson's Bay Company, pours forth a motley crowd, all apparently worked up to the highest pitch of excitement. Decked with paint and feathers, and hideous masks, and headed by two unearthly-looking beings, stark naked, and covered thickly over with paint, they rush from their camp to the neighbouring beach. There, as if in mockery of the peaceful sound of the waves of the Pacific, breaking gently on the shore, the horrid too-too of the



A BLOCK HOUSE FORT OF AN INLAND POST OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY.

* The writer is much indebted to the courtesy of the Secretaries of the Church Missionary Society for the facilities which they have kindly afforded him of consulting all the printed and MS. records of the work described in the following pages; and also to the Rev. R. Doolan, for some time a fellow-labourer with Mr. Duncan, for his kindness in correcting the proofs and supplying information on various points.