

They readily close when they think their customers indifferent, for fear of a competitor among themselves, and are not in the habit of forming a combination, as they show little or no confidence in each other, and are rather disposed to rivalry. As far as our observations went, the chiefs have little authority among them.

Having seen the other parties all off, or ready to start, our party for the Columbia river also set out. It was a strange cavalcade, for most of us were but sorry horsemen, and we had every variety of accoutrements, from the saddle and bridle to the bare back and halter. We were eight in number: Messrs. Drayton, Waldron, and myself, two servants, two Indians, and a Canadian guide, with four pack-horses. All the horses and the guide were kindly furnished us by the gentlemen at the fort, to carry us as far as Cowlitz Farms, about sixty miles distant, where we intended taking canoes.

Our Indians, though partially clothed in worn-out European clothing, still showed their free and easy carriage on horseback: the few ribands and cock's feathers that were stuck in their caps gave them a flaunting kind of air; and they manifested a species of self-esteem that was not unpleasing, and betokened an independence and want of care, in good keeping with their mode of life. These savages should never be seen but on horseback, in which position they are really men, and inspire a certain degree of respect. When dismounted, all these qualities vanish, and the Indian becomes the lazy, lounging creature, insensible to any excitement but his low gambling propensities. They have a peculiar knack in managing their horses, and this, too, without any apparent means of controlling them, for their only bridle is a single cord fastened to the lower jaw; with this they contrive to govern the most refractory animals, without the aid of whip or spur, and will urge to speed an animal that has become all but lifeless under our guidance. They practise great cruelty to their horses, and pay no regard whatever to the state of their backs. In travelling in this country, all scruples and feelings in respect to sore backs, jaded, lamed, or half-starved horses, must be laid aside; and my advice is, keep away from your horses until they are saddled, and leave this to your guides who own them.

The direction of our route was nearly south over the plain, passing occasionally a pretty lawn, and groves of oak and ash trees. At the distance of nine miles we reached the river Nisqually, whose channel is sunk three hundred feet below the plain, between almost perpendicular banks. The ravine is about half a mile wide, and is filled with a large growth of timber, which is occasionally uprooted by the torrents that pass down, on the melting of the snows of the mountains. The