

The shores of these islands are covered with trees, consisting of ash, poplars, pines, and oaks, while the centre is generally prairie, and lower than the banks: they are principally composed of sand. During the rise of the river in May and June, the islands are covered with water, that filters through the banks that are not overflowed. This influx renders them unfit for grain crops, as the coldness of the water invariably destroys every cultivated plant it touches.

The Company's establishment at Vancouver is upon an extensive scale, and is worthy of the vast interest of which it is the centre. The residents mess at several tables: one for the chief factor and his clerks; one for their wives (it being against the regulations of the Company for their officers and wives to take their meals together); another for the missionaries; and another for the sick and the Catholic missionaries. All is arranged in the best order, and I should think with great economy. Every thing may be had within the fort: they have an extensive apothecary shop, a bakery, blacksmiths' and coopers' shops, trade-offices for buying, others for selling, others again for keeping accounts and transacting business; shops for retail, where English manufactured articles may be purchased at as low a price, if not cheaper, than in the United States, consisting of cotton and woollen goods, ready-made clothing, ship-chandlery, earthen and iron ware, and fancy articles; in short, every thing, and of every kind and description, including all sorts of groceries, at an advance of eighty per cent. on the London prime cost. This is the established price at Vancouver, but at the other posts it is one hundred per cent., to cover the extra expenses of transportation. All these articles are of good quality, and suitable for the servants, settlers and visitors. Of the quantity on hand, some idea may be formed from the fact that all the posts west of the Rocky Mountains get their annual supplies from this depôt.

Vancouver is the head-quarters of the Northwest or Columbian Department, which also includes New Caledonia; all the returns of furs are received here, and hither all accounts are transmitted for settlement. These operations occasion a large mass of business to be transacted at this establishment. Mr. Douglass, a chief factor, and the associate of Dr. M'Laughlin, assists in this department, and takes sole charge in his absence.

Dr. M'Laughlin showed us our rooms, and told us that the bell was the signal for meals.

Towards sunset, tea-time arrived, and we obeyed the summons of the bell, when we were introduced to several of the gentlemen of the establishment: we met in a large hall, with a long table spread with