

passes, beset by a thousand perils, to plant far-distant Astoria.

With the coming of peace in 1815, English fur-traders were forbidden the country, and American interests, represented by Astor's great company, were at last dominant in this great field of commerce. New and improved methods were introduced, and the American Fur Company soon had a firm hold upon the western country; nevertheless, the great corporation never succeeded in ridding itself of the necessity of employing the Creole and mixed-blood *voyageurs*, *engagés*, and interpreters, and was obliged to shape its policy so as to accommodate this great army of easy-going subordinates.

The fur trade of Mackinac was in its heyday about the year 1820. Gradually, with the inrush of settlement and the consequent cutting of the timber, the commerce of the forest waned, until about 1840 it was practically at an end, and the halcyon days of Mackinac were o'er. For years it was prominent as the site of a Protestant mission to the modernized Indians of Michigan and Wisconsin;¹ finally, even this special interest was removed to new seats of influence, nearer the vanishing tribes, and Mackinac became resigned to the hum-drum of modern life—a sort of Malta, now but spasmodically garrisoned; a fishing station for the Chicago trade; a port of call for vessels passing her door; a resort for summer tourists; a scene which the historical novelist may dress to his fancy; a shrine at which the historical pilgrim may worship, thankful, indeed, that in what many think the Sahara of American history are left a few romantic oases like unto this.

¹For an account of this experiment, see Williams's *The Old Mission Church of Mackinac Island* (Detroit, 1895).