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## MACLAURIES' TRAVELS THROUGH AMERICA: A PIRATED ACCOUNT OF SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE'S VOYAGES

A successful effort in any line usually brings into being a swarm of hungry imitations. When Dickens took the world by storm with his "Pickwick Papers," piracies and imitations at once sprang into existence on every hand. Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" called forth a dozen imitations, whose only virtue was their unconscious but sincere witness to the merit of a work whose attractive quality appealed to, but quite eluded, them. In all these cases though the idea was stolen the language, at any rate, was the sole property of the imitator.

But the book of which I am writing is, I believe, unique (or nearly so) in that while professing to be an account of an exploration by one person it is in reality merely the adaptation of the story of another. Differing from the imitations in the preceding paragraph mentioned, it has not even the merit of using its own language: a great deal of its phraseology is taken verbatim from the book that is being pilfered. It is merely barefaced theft, clumsily hidden by transparent alterations. And now let Mr. Maclauries' book appear.

In the Seattle Public Library there is a volume; "Journal / of / Travels / Through / the North-West Continent / of / America. / [Price One Shilling.] Its title page is as follows: A / Narrative or / Journal / of / Voyages and Travels, / Through / the North-West Continent / of / America; / in / The Years 1789 and 1793, / by / Mr. Maclauries. / London: / Printer for / J. Lee, No. 12, King Street, Covent Garden. / J. Smeeton, Printer, 148 St. Martin's Lane, / Charing Cross. / 1802. The Library of Congress, I am informed, also possesses a copy. The book is very rare: these are the only copies of which I am aware. It contains ninety-one pages, each 7½ inches by 4 inches.

Naturally such a work attracts the attention of the student of the history of the Northwest Coast, and he approaches it as one

discovering a reference book of great value. The first shock he receives is when on opening it he examines the frontispiece, the one and only illustration. The most cursory glance at it shows a tropic scene in combination with a northerly one. In the center of the picture is, presumably, Mr. Maclauries in heavy surtout, musket in hand, large fur cap on head, in the act of giving a string of beads to a kneeling savage. Three of Maclauries' voyageurs are lined up in military posture with musket at shoulder apparently in readiness to defend him against treachery; a fourth is seated in the foreground keeping a keen eye upon the acts of the natives. Mr. Maclauries and all his men have their packs on their backs, in regular marching order. But the strangest part of the picture is the Indians; they are distinctly negroid; he who is kneeling to receive the beads is absolute African; and all are clad in white cloth worn togawise. The background with its palm trees is in keeping with the negroes, if not with the traders. The picture is, however, entitled "The meeting of the Guide and his relations." The guide, who from his distinctly European face—a really pretty one—the reader would otherwise take for Mr. Maclauries must be but an extremely distant relative of the natives—he is so plainly European and they so plainly African.

The next matter to excite attention is of course the alleged voyages by the mysterious Mr. Maclauries through the "Northwest Continent of America" in 1789 and 1793. The only person known to have made such voyages is Alexander Mackenzie. A very little examination shows that this rare book is nothing but a pirated, condensed account of the two voyages of Sir Alexander Mackenzie: to the Arctic in 1789 and to the Pacific in 1793. Mackenzie's *Voyages* appeared in 1801; this forged narrative in 1802.

A comparison of the opening paragraphs will show this. Mackenzie wrote: "Wednesday, 3rd June, 1789":

"We embarked at nine o'clock in the morning, at Fort Chepewyan, on the South side of the Lake of the Hills, in latitude 58.40. North, and longitude 110.30. West from Greenwich, and compass has sixteen degrees variation East, in a canoe made of birch bark. The crew consisted of four Canadians, two of whom were attended by their wives, and a German; we were accompanied also by an Indian, who had acquired the title of English Chief, and his two wives, in a small canoe, with two young Indians; his followers in another small canoe. These men were engaged to serve us in the two-fold capacity of interpreters and hunters. This Indian was one

of the followers of the chief who conducted Mr. Hearne to the copper-mine river, and has since been a principal leader of his countrymen who were in the habit of carrying furs to Churchill Factory, Hudson's Bay, and till of late very much attached to the interest of that company. These circumstances procured him the appellation of the English Chief."

The spurious account by the imaginary "Mr. Maclauries" runs in this wise:

"Mr. Maclauries embarked in a canoe on Wednesday the third of June 1789, at nine o'clock in the morning, at Fort Chepewyan, on the south side of the Lake of the hills, in latitude 58.40 N. Longitude 110.30 W. the crew consisted of four Canadians, two of whom were attended by their wives and a German; they were accompanied also by an Indian, who had acquired the title of English chief, and his two wives, in a small canoe, with two young Indians, his followers, in another small canoe. These men were engaged to serve in the double capacity of interpreters and hunters."

It will thus be seen that Mr. Maclauries is indeed Alexander Mackenzie. The voyage to the Arctic which in Mackenzie's account occupies 119 quarto pages, is reduced in the Maclauries version to 23 duodecimo pages. All of Mackenzie's courses and distances and the most of his remarks upon the fur-trade and the customs of the Indians are omitted. One of the oddest matters noted in the failure to reproduce the proper names correctly; this occurs so frequently that it cannot be mere accident: for example "Le Roux" becomes "L'Heureux"; "Deguthee Dinees" are changed into "Deguthee Diners"; "Quarrellers" are altered to "Quarreters;" "Portage des Noyés" (Portage of the drowned) becomes Portage des Koyês—an absolutely nonsensical name.

Lastly Mackenzie ends his first voyage thus:

"Saturday 12th September, 1789. . . We arrived at Chepewyan fort by three o'clock in the afternoon, where we found Mr. Macleod, with five men, busily employed in building a new house. Here then we concluded this voyage, which had occupied the considerable space of one hundred and two days."

Now let us see how the imaginary Mr. Maclauries concludes his alleged first voyage:

"On the 12th, about three in the afternoon, they arrived at Chepewyan Fort, from whence they had originally took their departure, and thus concluded their first voyage, which had occupied no less than one hundred and two days in the performance."

Mackenzie's delightfully, "plain, unvarnished tale" is written in the first person; but "Mr. Maclauries" speaks to us in the third person.

Passing now to the voyage of 1793 to the Pacific Ocean let us compare the first words of Mackenzie with those of "Maclauries,," Mackenzie writes:

"October 10, 1792. Having made every necessary preparation, I left Fort Chepewyan, to proceed up the Peace River. I had resolved to go as far as our most distant settlement, which would occupy the remaining part of the season, it being the route by which I proposed to attempt my next discovery, across the mountains from the source of that river; for whatever distance I could reach this fall, would be a proportionate advancement of my voyage."

Observe now the close parallel of thought in Mr. Maclauries veracious story:

"Mr. Maclauries again took his departure after making every necessary preparation, from Fort Chepewyan on the 10th of October 1792, for the purpose of proceeding up the Peace River. He resolved to go as far as the most distant settlement, which would occupy the remaining part of the season, it being the route by which he proposed to attempt his next discovery across the mountains from the source of that river."

Mackenzie tells the story of the first crossing of the main body of North America in 290 quarto pages; but Mr. Maclauries reduces it to 66 duodecimo pages. It takes on Mackenzie's pen about 78,000 words—the pioneer account—but "Mr. Maclauries" following the route cuts it down to about 25,000. This reduction is accomplished by eliminating all of Mackenzie's details of the route followed in navigating the rivers, and most of his historical references as well as those dealing with the customs of the Indians and the scenery. In consequence the story is reduced to the barest skeleton, lacking much of the human interest. In this part the same strange alterations of names occurs. "Roderick Mackenzie" is changed to "Roderic Maclauries;" "Alexander Mackay," his tried companion on the expedition and who was lost on Astor's vessel, the *Tonquin*, is now "Mr. Macklay;" the "Nascud Denee" became "Naseud Dence", while the word "Nagailas", Mackenzie's name for the Carrier Indians, is reproduced as "Nejaitas." These are merely samples to show the vagaries of this plagiarist.

Even though the reader knows that Mr. Maclauries is a fictitious name and his voyage a myth, and that the book is merely a plagiarism of Sir Alexander Mackenzie's "Voyages", yet it causes a feeling of indignation that the unknown hack writer who copied it had so poor a sense of the human interest that he omitted any reference to Mackenzie's (or Maclauries) finding the two half-pence, of England and the state of Massachusetts respectively; of Mackenzie's failure to wind his watch on 7th, July, 1793; of the incident of Macubah and Bensins, who the Indians said had struck them and fired at them; and lastly of Mackenzie's well-known inscription on the Rock, then painted with vermilion and grease but now by the action of the Historic Sites of the Monuments Board of Canada cut in and filled with red cement.

Mackenzie's return voyage from the Pacific to Fort Fork fills in his account about 60 pages, quarto, but "Mr. Maclauries" only occupies  $2\frac{1}{2}$  pages, duodecimo. The plagiarist seems to have tired of his work for he ends his story on 14th August as though "Mr. Maclauries" had then reached Fort Fork, from which he had set out in the preceding May, when in reality Mackenzie on that day was on the Bad River, and did not terminate his voyage until ten days later.

In concluding this short item I wish to add that it would be a pleasure to learn whether there are any other copies of this pirated, plagiarized "voyage" of "Mr. Maclauries" in the libraries of this continent.

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