

**THE BRIDGE OF THE  
GODS: A ROMANCE  
OF INDIAN OREGON**

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The Bridge of the Gods: A Romance of Indian Oregon by F. H. Balch

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A Romance of Indian Oregon

By F. H. BALCH



CHICAGO  
A. C. McCLURG AND COMPANY  
1890

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A. D. 1890.



TO

MRS. A. E. BARRETT.



What tall and tawny men were these,  
As sombre, silent, as the trees  
They moved among! and sad some way  
With tempered sadness, ever they,  
Yet not with sorrow born of fear.  
The shadows of their destinies  
They saw approaching year by year,  
And murmured not.

\* \* \* \* \*

They turned to death as to a sleep,  
And died with eager hands held out  
To reaching hands beyond the deep;  
And died with choicest bow at hand,  
And quiver full and arrow drawn  
For use, when sweet to-morrow's dawn  
Should wake them in the Spirit Land.

JOAQUIN MILLER.

## PREFACE.

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IN attempting to present with romantic setting a truthful and realistic picture of the powerful and picturesque Indian tribes that inhabited the Oregon country two centuries ago, the author could not be indifferent to the many serious difficulties inseparable from such an enterprise. Of the literary success with which his work has been accomplished, he must of course leave others to judge; but he may without immodesty speak briefly of his preparation for his task, and of the foundation of some of the facts and legends which form the framework of his story. Indian life and character have long been a favorite study with him, and in these pages he has attempted to describe them, not from an ideal standpoint, but as he knew them in his own boyhood on the Upper Columbia. Many of the incidents related in the story have come under his personal observation; others have been told him by aged pioneers, or gleaned from old books of Northwestern travel. The every-day life of the Indians, their food, their dress, their methods of making their mats, of building their houses, of shaping their canoes, their gambling games, their religious beliefs, their legends, their subjects of conversation, the sports and pastimes of their children, — all these have been studied at first hand, and with the advantages of familiar and friendly intercourse with these people in their own homes. By constant questioning, many facts

have been gained regarding their ancestry, and the fragments of history, tradition, and legend that have come down from them. Indian antiquities have been studied through every available source of information. All the antiquarian collections in Oregon and California have been consulted, old trading-posts visited, and old pioneers and early missionaries conversed with. Nothing has been discarded as trivial or insignificant that could aid in the slightest degree in affording an insight into Indian character and customs of a by-gone age.

As to the great Confederacy of the Wauna, it may be said that Gray's "History of Oregon" tells us of an alliance of several tribes on the Upper Columbia for mutual protection and defence; and students of Northwestern history will recall the great confederacy that the Yakima war-chief Kamyakin formed against the whites in the war of 1856, when the Indian tribes were in revolt from the British Possessions to the California line. Signal-fires announcing war against the whites leaped from hill to hill, flashing out in the night, till the line of fire beginning at the wild Okanogan ended a thousand miles south, on the foot-hills of Mount Shasta. Knowing such a confederacy as this to be an historical fact, there seems nothing improbable in that part of the legend which tells us that in ancient times the Indian tribes on either side of the Cascade Range united under the great war-chief Multnomah against their hereditary foes the Shoshones. Even this would not be so extensive a confederacy as that which Kamyakin formed a hundred and fifty years later.

It may be asked if there was ever a great natural bridge over the Columbia, — a "Bridge of the Gods," such as the legend describes. The answer is emphatically, "Yes." Everywhere along the mid-Columbia the Indians tell of a great bridge that once spanned the river where the cascades now are, but where at that time the placid