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Missionary Herald
Mar. 1838

Indians West of the Rocky Mountains.

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER OF MR.
GRAY, DATED JAN. 10, 1838.

Reinforcement of the Mission.

THE return of Mr. Gray from the mission on the waters of the Columbia river, in company with a delegation of Flat Head Indians, who were unhappily murdered by a band of hostile Indians before reaching the frontiers of Missouri, was mentioned at page 476 of the last volume. The object of Mr. Gray, in leaving the field of his labors, as well as that of the Indians who commenced the journey with him, was to obtain additional missionaries and teachers, whom he hoped that his statements relative to those remote but interesting tribes, together with the earnestness of some of their own number who had come so far to present their claim, would enable him to secure. His expectation was to return and conduct the party to their contemplated field of labor in the course of the ensuing spring.

In view of the statements made by Mr. Gray, in addition to those of Mr. Spalding relative to his reception among the Nez Percés, the Committee have voted to send four missionaries and teachers to accompany Mr. G. on his return. The state of the treasury would not permit them to send a larger reinforcement; nor would they, indeed, have felt themselves justified in incurring the expense required even for this, had not the circumstances of the case appeared peculiarly urgent. The persons composing this party are expected to start from the western frontier of the State of Missouri about the end of April, and to proceed on horses across the prairies and mountains, about 2,000 miles to Wallawalla.

But this company, though as large as the present state of the funds of the Board will permit, will be very far from supplying all the tribes which are not only open to religious teachers, but strongly desirous of obtaining them: There seems not to be any good reason to doubt, that, in almost any of the tribes mentioned below, missionaries, teachers, and other lay assistants would find a confiding and docile people and an interesting field of labor and usefulness. Probably the present time is the most favorable for introducing a knowledge of Christianity and the useful arts among these tribes. A few years more may bring them under other influences, which shall speedily accomplish the work of debasement and ruin.