

of his life, through untold sufferings, was to take back an American immigration that summer through the mountains to the Columbia with their wagons and teams. The route was practicable. We had taken our cattle and our families through seven years before. They had nothing to fear, but to be ready on his return. The stopping of wagons at Fort Hall was a Hudson's Bay Company scheme to prevent the settling of the country by Americans, till they could settle it with their own subjects from the Selkirk settlement. This news spread like wild-fire through Missouri, as will be seen from Zachary's statement. (The doctor pushed on to Washington, and immediately sought an interview with Secretary Webster—both being from the same state—and stated to him the object of his crossing the mountains, and laid before him the great importance of Oregon to the United States.) But Mr. Webster lay too near Cape Cod to see things in the same light with his fellow statesman, who had transferred his worldly interests to the Pacific coast. He awarded sincerity to the missionary, but could not admit for a moment that the short residence of six years could give the doctor the knowledge of the country possessed by Governor Simpson, who had almost grown up in the country, and had traveled every part of it, and represents it as one unbroken waste of sand deserts and impassable mountains, fit only for the beaver, the gray bear and the savage. Besides he had about traded it off with Governor Simpson to go into the Ashburton treaty (!) for a cod fishery in Newfoundland.

The doctor next sought through Senator Linn an interview with President Tyler, who at once appreciated his solleitude, and his timely representations of Oregon, and especially his disinterested though hazardous undertaking to cross the Rocky mountains in winter to take back a caravan of wagons. He said that although the doctor's representations of the character of the country, and the possibility of reaching it by wagon route, were in direct contradiction to those of Governor Simpson, his frozen limbs were a sufficient proof of his sincerity, and his missionary character were a sufficient guaranty for his honesty, and he would therefore as president rest upon these and act accordingly; would detail Fremont with a military force to escort the doctor's caravan through the mountains; and no more action should be had toward trading off Oregon till he could hear the results of the expedition. If the doctor could establish a wagon route through the mountains to the Columbia river, pronounced impassable by Governor Simpson and Ashburton, he would use his influence to hold on to Oregon. The great desire of the doctor's American soul, Christian withal, that is, the pledge of the president that the swapping of Oregon with England for a cod fishery should stop for the present, was attained, although at the risk of life, and through great sufferings, and unsolicited and without the promise or expectation of a dollar's reward from any source. And now, God giving him life and strength, he would do the rest, that is, connect the Missouri and Columbia rivers with a wagon track so deep and plain that neither national envy nor sectional fanaticism would ever blot it out. And when the 4th of September, 1843, saw the rear [van] of the doctor's caravan of nearly two hundred wagons, with which he started from Missouri the last of April, emerge from the western shades of the Blue mountains, the greatest work was finished ever accomplished by one man for the coast. And through that great emigration, during the whole summer, the doctor was everywhere present, an angel of mercy, ministering to the sick, helping the weary, encouraging the wavering, cheering the mothers, mending wagons, setting broken bones, hunting stray oxen, climbing precipices, now in the rear, now at the center, now at the front; in the rivers looking out fords through the quicksands, in the deserts looking out water, in the dark mountains looking out passes; at noontide or midnight, as though those thousands were his own children, and those wagons and those flocks were his own property. Although he asked