

Fort Walla Walla to visit a sick man. While there the brigade for New Caledonia, fifteen bateaux, arrived at that point on their way up the Columbia, with Indian goods for the New Caledonia or Frazer river country. They were accompanied by some twenty chief factors, traders and clerks of the Hudson's Bay Company, and Bishop Demols [Demers], who had crossed the mountains from Canada in 1839 [1838], the first Catholic priest on this coast. Bishop Blanchett came at the same time.

While this great company were at dinner an express arrived from Fort Colville announcing the (to them) glad news that the colony from Red river had passed the Rocky mountains, and were near Fort Colville. An exclamation of joy burst from the whole table at first unaccountable to Dr. Whitman, till a young priest, perhaps not so discreet as the older, and not thinking there was an American at the table, sprang to his feet, and swinging his hand, exclaimed, "Hurrah for Columbia (Oregon)! America is too late; we have got the country." In an instant, as if by instinct, Dr. Whitman saw through the whole plan, clear to Washington, Fort Hall and all [i. e. the stopping of all immigrant and American wagons at Fort Hall by the Hudson's Bay Company every year to that time]. He immediately rose from the table, and asked to be excused, sprang upon his horse, and in a very short time stood with his noble "cayuse" white with foam before his door, and without stopping to dismount, he replied to our anxious inquiries with great decision and earnestness, "I am going to cross the Rocky mountains and reach Washington this winter. God carrying me through, and bring out an immigration over the mountains, or the country is lost." The events soon developed that if that whole-souled American missionary was not the "son of a prophet," he guessed right when he said, "a deep-laid scheme was about culminating, which would deprive the United States of this Oregon, and it must be broken at once or this country is lost."

We united our remonstrances with those of Sister Whitman, who was in deep agony at the idea of her husband perishing in the snows of the Rocky mountains. We told him it would be a miracle if he escaped death, either from starving, or freezing, or the savages, or the perishing of his horses, during the five months that would be required to make the only possible circuitous route, via Fort Hall, Taos, Santa Fe, and Bent's Fort. His reply was that of my angel wife six years before: "I am ready, not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem or in the snows of the Rocky mountains for the name of the Lord Jesus or my country." And taking leave of his missionary associates, his comfortable home and his weeping companion, with but little hope of seeing them again in this world, he entered upon his fearful journey the 2d [3d] of October, 1842, and reached the City of Washington the 2d of March, 1843, with his face, nose, ears, hands, feet and legs badly frozen.

On reaching the settlements, Dr. Whitman found that many of the now old Oregonians, Waldo, Applegate, Hamtree, Keyser and others, who had once made calculations to come to Oregon, had abandoned the idea, because of the representations from Washington that every attempt to take wagons and ox teams through the Rocky and Blue mountains to the Columbia had failed. Dr. Whitman saw at once what the stopping of wagons at Fort Hall every year meant. The representations purported to come from Secretary Webster, but really from Governor Simpson, who, magnifying the statements of his chief trader, Grant, at Fort Hall, declared the Americans must be going mad from their repeated fruitless attempts to take wagons and teams through the impassable regions of the Columbia, and that the women and children of those wild fanatics had been saved from a terrible death only by the repeated and philanthropic labors of Mr. Grant at Fort Hall, in furnishing them with horses. The doctor told these men as he met them that his only object in crossing the mountains in the dead of winter, at the risk