

[CHAPTER SEVENTEEN]

NARCISSA'S LONELY YEAR,
1842-1843

Narcissa was so deeply concerned with the turn of events which caused her husband on so short notice to leave for the East that at first she did not think of herself. Her hours of loneliness came later. Her immediate concerns were for the safety and comfort of her husband. Aps returned to Waiilatpu on October 4 with a note from Marcus. Narcissa that same day began a letter to her husband which she addressed in care of her parents evidently with the hope that somehow it might reach him before he started back to Oregon. She wrote: "The line you sent me to-day did me great good. I thought I was cheerful and happy before it came; but on the perusal of it, I found that it increased my happiness four-fold. I believe the Lord will preserve me from being anxious about you and I was glad to hear you say with so much confidence that you trusted in Him for safety. He will protect you, I firmly believe. Night and day shall my prayer ascend to Him in your behalf and the cause in which you have sacrificed the endearments of home, at the risk of your life, to see advancing, more to the honor and glory of God. Mr. G[ray] and family did not leave until this morn;¹ they spent the night here, which was a great relief to me. I am sorry we forgot your pencil, comb, and journal."

The next day, Narcissa added the following to her letter: "In arranging the cupboard to-day, I found that you had not taken the compass as you designed to. I fear you will suffer for the want of it; wish I could send it to you with the other things you have forgotten. I intended to have spoken to you about purchasing one or two pair of spectacles. Perhaps you will think of it." Among the Whitman relics at Whitman College is a compass, which may be the one he had forgotten to take. At the close of her entry for October 5, Narcissa wrote: "Where are you to-night, precious husband? I hope you have been prosperous to-day and are sleeping sweetly. Good night, my loved one." According to one of Lovejoy's accounts, he and Whitman camped that night in the snow in the Blue Mountains.

ATTEMPTED ASSAULT ON NARCISSA

After Gray and his family left for Fort Walla Walla on October 4, Narcissa was the only white person at Waiilatpu. John, the Hawaiian, slept in a room in the Whitman home. Late in the night of the 6th, Narcissa had a terrifying experience of which she wrote the next morning to her husband: "My Dear Husband. I got dreadfully frightened last night. About midnight I was awakened by some one trying to open my bed-room door. At first I did not know what to understand by it. I raised my head and listened awhile and then lay down again. Soon the latch was raised and the door opened a little. I sprang from the bed in a moment and closed the door again, but the ruffian pushed and pushed and tried to unlatch it, but could not succeed; finally he gained upon me until he opened the door again and, as I supposed disengaged his blanket (at the same time I was calling John) and ran as for his life. The east dining room door was open. I thought it was locked, but it appears that it was not. I fastened the door, lit a candle and went to bed trembling and cold, but could not rest until I had called John to bring his bed and sleep in the kitchen...had the ruffian persisted I do not know what I should have done." Evidently the Whitmans had an Indian war club, perhaps a souvenir in their bedroom. Of this she wrote: "I did not think of the war club, but I thought of the poker. [There was a fireplace in the bedroom.] Thanks be to our Heavenly Father. He mercifully 'delivered me from the hand of a savage man.'" The quotation which Narcissa used is reminiscent of some verses of the Psalms.

Writing to Mary Walker on November 5, about a month later, Narcissa told of the incident: "...that week husband left, a saucy Indian got into the house about midnight & tried to force himself into my bedroom. John, Mr. McKinlay's man, was sleeping in the house but not very near. But I made a great noise & called as loud as I could & he took to his heels & ran." Elijah White, in a report submitted to the Indian Bureau in Washington, has given us more details of the incident: "He [i.e., Whitman] had hardly left for the States last fall when shocking to relate, at the hour of midnight, a large Indian Chief managed to get into the house, came to the door of Mrs. Whitman's bedchamber and had succeeded in getting it partly open before she reached it. A white man [sic] sleeping in an adjoining apartment saved her from violence and ruin. The villain escaped. There was but one thing worse in this matter on the part of Doctor W.; and that was a great error, leaving his excellent lady thus unprotected in the midst of savages."²

Mungo Mevway, the half-Indian and half-Hawaiian lad, who had lived with the Whitmans from 1837 to the fall of 1841 and who then went to live with the missionaries at Tshimakain, unexpectedly arrived at Waiilatpu sometime during the night of October 6. Evidently he spent the night away from the mission house for he did not learn of the attempted assault on Narcissa until the next day. He was the first, besides John, to whom Narcissa spoke of her terrifying experience. Narcissa was haunted with the knowledge that the unknown Indian who had tried to force his way into her bedroom was living on or near the mission premises, no doubt he was from Tiloukaikt's camp. Would he return? Who was there to protect her? Since the intruder had not spoken, she could not identify his voice.

Narcissa sent Mungo to Fort Walla Walla to notify McKinlay of the incident and to ask for someone to come and stay with her. She even suggested that possibly Mrs. McKinlay might be able to do so. Mungo, who was then seventeen or eighteen years old, realized the seriousness of the situation and left early on Friday morning, the 7th, for the Fort. He found the Grays still there and also Tom McKay. The two men with McKinlay agreed that Narcissa would have to be removed to Fort Walla Walla as soon as possible. Both McKinlay and Gray wrote letters to Narcissa informing her of their decision. McKay promised to go to Waiilatpu the next day and stay with her until she could be taken to the

Fort. Mungo was able to make the return trip the same afternoon, which meant that he made a round trip of at least fifty miles that day.

The best information available as to the identity of the intruder is found in Cannon's *Waiilatpu*; he wrote that "the Indian who attempted the assault upon Mrs. Whitman was a second chief of Tiloukait's village named Tamsucky."³ Cannon also identified Tamsucky as Feathercap. McKay arrived at Waiilatpu on Saturday and, after talking with Narcissa, got in touch with Tiloukaikt and members of his band. Of this Narcissa wrote to her husband: "In talking to Mr. McKay and Feathercap about it, I told them I should leave and go below [probably a reference to the Willamette Valley]—I could not stay and be treated so. I told them I came near beating him with the war club; they said it would have been good if I had done so and laid him flat so that they all might see who he was." If indeed Feathercap (alias Tamsucky) was the guilty party, he showed amazing effrontery; he pretended innocence and gave assurances to Narcissa that "there will be no further danger."

Narcissa's letter to Marcus, which she had started on October 4, became a journal with almost daily entries. On Saturday evening, the 8th, she noted: "The Indians say more Americans are coming." Here is evidence that the increasing Oregon immigration was beginning to give the Cayuses concern. On Sunday, Narcissa tried to carry on with some of the usual religious duties. Ellis from the Nez Perces happened to be at Waiilatpu that day, and since he had been a student at the Red River Mission school and had a fair knowledge of the main doctrines of Christianity, Narcissa asked him to take charge of the usual Sunday service for that day. That evening Narcissa wrote in her journal-letter: "Ellis ...was their minister today. This afternoon I had a Bible class in English with him, John, and Mungo, besides the time I spent with the children. He [Ellis] read and appeared to understand very well."

Narcissa was not in good health when Marcus left for the East; we find a number of references in her letters to this fact. Following the strain of the confrontation which had taken place with the natives in September, the Special Mission meeting, the departure of her husband for the East, and then the frightening experience of the attempted assault, Narcissa suffered a nervous relapse. McKinlay had learned from Mungo that she should not be able to make the trip to Fort Walla Walla on horseback: so he put a "trundlebed" in a wagon when he drove out

to Waiilatpu on the following Monday to get her [Letter 118]. Narcissa, with the three half-breed children, made the trip to the Fort the next day. On the evening of Wednesday, October 12, Narcissa added a note in her letter to Marcus: "The Indians did not like my leaving very well—seemed to regret the cause. I felt strongly to prefer to stay there if it could be considered prudent, but the care and anxiety was wearing upon me too much. Good night, beloved husband."

Although McKinlay provided the best accommodations possible at the Fort, Narcissa suffered for want of the conveniences and comforts of her home at Waiilatpu, primitive as it was when judged by modern standards. Her room was cold, as it had no stove, and the bedding was damp. A week passed before a stove was made available; it is possible that this was brought in from Waiilatpu. On the 14th, a second letter arrived from Marcus and on the 17th, Narcissa added the following to her journal-letter: "I undertook to write to you last Friday, but was too sick to do it and had to give it up. Took a powder of quinine and calomel that night—the next day and yesterday could scarcely go or lie in bed. I suffered much from the lack of conveniences of our dear home, ...for I have been sick ever since I have been here."

On October 22 Narcissa began another letter to her husband in the hope that somehow it could be carried East in time to reach him before he started back to Oregon. In this she wrote: "Almost three long weeks have passed since we exchanged the parting kiss, and many, very many, long weeks are yet to come before we shall be permitted, if ever in this world, to greet each other again ...I follow you night and day, and shall through the whole journey, in my imagination and prayers." Here we see revealed Narcissa's growing sense of loneliness. Stage by stage, she retraced the Oregon Trail in her mind—the Blue Mountains, Fort Boise, Fort Hall, South Pass, Fort Laramie, the Platte River, and finally Westport. She worked out what she felt would be his schedule, only to learn months later how wrong she had been. Finally, in her imagination, she pictured him back in the homes of their loved ones in New York State. "How will you feel, dear husband," she wrote, "when you seat yourself in Sister Julia's house, or with our mothers, and not see the windows filled with Indians, and the doors also; will you not feel lost?"

In this letter of October 22, she made the following reference to the motive which had taken Marcus from her side: "Stay as long as it is

necessary to accomplish all your heart's desire respecting the interest of this country, so dear to us both—our home ...Read this letter, my husband, and then give it to my mother—perhaps she would like once more to peep into one of the sacred chambers of her daughter's heart—it may comfort her, seeing she can not see her face again in the flesh." This letter, and that begun on October 4, had to go by sea around Cape Horn and hence did not reach their destination until long after Whitman had left for Oregon.⁴ We can only imagine the alarm that members of their families felt when they read of the attempted assault on Narcissa and of her ill health.

THE SPALDINGS IN TROUBLE WITH THE INDIANS

Before Whitman left for Boston, he sent word to Spalding asking him to take care of a number of items at Waiilatpu. This Spalding promised to do [Letter 122]. In Narcissa's letter of October 22 to her husband, she wrote that Spalding had experienced "considerable trouble with the Indians which prevented his coming last week." Although Narcissa did not give details, Dr. White in his report, to which reference has been made, wrote that Mrs. Spalding had been "grossly insulted," and that a disgruntled Indian had "presented his loaded gun, cocked at the breast of Mr. Spalding, abused and menaced as far as possible without shooting him."

Spalding finally was able to leave Lapwai and arrived at Fort Walla Walla on October 21 where he saw Narcissa. He then rode out to Waiilatpu. About a week later, a messenger arrived from Lapwai with a note from his wife, written in a trembling hand. She told of having suffered a severe hemorrhage. The realization that she was alone and ill, without anyone to help her except some friendly Nez Perces, caused Spalding to faint before he had finished reading the note. After recovering, he made immediate preparations to leave for Lapwai. He gave some hasty directions regarding matters at Waiilatpu, selected four of his strongest horses, and with an Indian companion set out for his home. The two left Waiilatpu about nine o'clock at night when it was raining. They stopped once during the night to give their horses a short rest and by daybreak found that they had covered sixty-five miles. They arrived at Lapwai before sundown on the second day of their journey having made the 120 mile trip in nineteen hours.⁵ This set a record in the annals of

the Oregon Mission. To Spalding's great relief, he found Eliza alive and resting as comfortably as could be expected.

NARCISSA AT WASKOPUM

When the Rev, and Mrs. H. K. W. Perkins, Methodist missionaries stationed as Waskopum, also known as The Dalles, learned of Narcissa's situation, they extended an urgent invitation for her to spend the winter with them. After making arrangements to leave David Maim with Mrs. McKinlay, Narcissa and the two little girls left Walla Walla on a Hudson's Bay boat on October 27. The trip down the Columbia to Waskopum took two days. She was warmly greeted by the Perkins couple and also by the Rev, and Mrs. Daniel Lee and Mr. and Mrs. Henry B. Brewer, who were also stationed there [Letter 122]. The Methodist mission at Waskopum was the first branch to be established by the Oregon Methodists outside of the Willamette Valley. The buildings were located about one mile from the south bank of the Columbia River.⁶

In a letter to Mary Walker dated November 5, 1842, from Waskopum, Narcissa wrote: "Since I have been here, it has been difficult for me some of the time to walk & even to move my limbs without groaning. With quiet & rest I expect to be better. Without it I shall be worse. We both felt I was in a way to be better when the Doct. left but I have had so much to excite me, besides care & exposure, that I have not gained but failed since." Writing to her parents on February 7 of the following year, Narcissa returned to the subject of her illness: "My health is very poor; this increases the trial, because, in consequence I have too many gloomy and depressing hours, and evil forebodings, in which I have not strength of mind to rise above." One of her difficulties was her failing eyesight. "My eyes are almost gone," she wrote, "my poor health affects them materially and writing is very injurious to me. I can neither read, write or sew without spectacles, and most of the time, and sometimes with them, I suffer considerable pain."

This letter of February 1843 contains a sad note: the lack of home mail. "September 1840 is my last date from home," Narcissa wrote. "I am expecting to hear soon when the ship comes in." Probably she was here referring to the expected arrival of one of the Company's ships at Fort Vancouver. We know from Narcissa's extant letters that she was most faithful in writing to members of her family. We cannot understand why they did not write more often to her in return.

THE GRISTMILL BURNED AT WAIILATPU

During the latter part of November 1842, Narcissa received a letter from McKinlay which told of the burning of the gristmill at Waiilatpu together with about two hundred bushels of wheat and corn, and also some lumber and flour [Letters 121 & 124]. McKinlay felt that the fire had been deliberately set. Perhaps some later information reached Narcissa for in her letter of March 4, 1843, she intimated that the fire had been accidentally caused by a son of Feathercap (Tamsucky). She wrote: "Wap-tash-tak-mahl⁷ [Feathercap] says his heart is very sore. He does not know how you will think of him when you come to hear of the burning of the Mill—after leaving him in charge of the property. He weeps like a child about it ... He has beat his son severely." Two references in this quotation are worthy of comment. The first relates to Feathercap weeping. Other references in Whitman letters also reveal this Indian as being highly emotional, often subject to weeping. The second reference is to the son who was beaten, evidently because he had caused the fire. A son of Tamsucky, called Waie-Cat, figures in the Whitman massacre. Possibly he is the one involved in the fire incident. If so, he would have been then about fifteen years old.

According to a letter Narcissa wrote on February 7, 1843, her husband had intended to enclose the mill with adobes before he had to leave for the East, but was unable to do so. The part that was burned consisted of the platform which supported the machinery, the frame, the roof, and some nearby granaries. "The sensible part of the Cayuses feel the loss deeply," she wrote, "and they will feel it still more when they want their wheat ground next fall. We hope it will be a good lesson to them and be the one means of making them a better people."

On November 1, 1842, Mr. and Mrs. Littlejohn and William Geiger, Jr., arrived at Waskopum en route to Waiilatpu. Their services had been secured by Gray. Littlejohn had become disillusioned with the possibility of carrying on any independent missionary work in Old Oregon. Therefore, he and his wife had decided to make the overland trip back to the States in the spring of 1843 if they could find some party going that way. On the basis of that hope, they were willing to spend the winter at Waiilatpu. Geiger, whom Narcissa had known at Angelica, New York, and who had arrived in Oregon in the fall of 1839, agreed to take charge of the mission premises at Waiilatpu until Whitman returned. He proved to be a faithful man.

THE LAWS OF THE NEZ PERCES

When Dr. White learned of the attempted assault on Mrs. Whitman and of how Spalding's life had been threatened, he felt that it was his duty to go at once to Waiilatpu and to Lapwai to see what steps could be taken to give the missionaries greater protection. White was aware of the wording of the passports given by the Secretary of War to the missionaries when they went out to Old Oregon in 1836. These documents not only granted them permission to dwell in the Indian country but also called upon "officers of the Army of the United States" and "Indian Agents" to give such protection to them as circumstances might require. White made reference to this when he wrote his official report: "...their passport signed by the Secretary of War made it my imperative duty to protect them in their persons at least from outrage."⁸ White felt that this gave him the legal right to take whatever action he felt necessary to protect the lives and property of American citizens in territory which still came under the provisions of the Joint Occupation Treaty of 1818.

Since the Hudson's Bay Company declined to provide river transportation to Fort Walla Walla, White had to make his own arrangements. He hired six men to go with him who "were armed in the best manner, a sufficient number to command respect and secure the object of our undertaking." Perhaps these six also served as boatmen. White also secured the services of Tom McKay, who happened to be in the Willamette Valley at the time, and Cornelius Rogers, both of whom could serve as interpreters. Included in the party, perhaps as one of the armed men, was the half-breed, Baptiste Dorion, son of the Iowa Indian woman who figures as a heroine in Washington Irving's *Astoria*.⁹ White and his party of eight or nine met set out for Fort Walla Walla on November 15. Buffeted by strong winds, they were unable to reach The Dalles before November 24. The weather was rainy and bitterly cold. McKay called their experience a "voyage of misery."¹⁰

Dr. White found Narcissa at the Methodist mission at The Dalles. Of his visit with her, he wrote: "Her noble and intellectual mind and spirit were much depressed and her health suffering ... Our visit encouraged me." Since travel by boat had been so difficult, White decided to continue his journey by land. Having secured horses, the party rode to Fort Walla Walla where they arrived on the 30th. Littlejohn and Geiger, who were still at The Dalles when White arrived, accompanied

him to the Fort and then on to Waiilatpu. Mrs. Littlejohn remained at the Methodist mission.

In company with McKinlay, the White party rode out to Waiilatpu on December 1, where White was “shocked and pained at beholding the sad work of savage destruction.” His reference was to the burned mill and granary. Even though the premises had remained unprotected for several weeks, except for the possible presence of John, the Hawaiian, there appeared to have been no looting of the mission houses. To White’s disappointment, only a few Cayuses were in the vicinity of Waiilatpu when he arrived. Evidently embarrassed over the burning of the mill, most of Tiloukaikt’s band had fled. White left word that he would return to Waiilatpu after his visit to Lapwai, at which time he wanted to meet with the chiefs of the whole Cayuse tribe.

Spalding was delighted when he heard that White intended visiting Lapwai. He summoned all of the principal men of the tribe who lived within easy riding distance of the mission to assemble at Lapwai. White wrote: “Seldom was a visit of an Indian Agt. more desired and proper.” White had to wait two days after arriving at Lapwai before the Nez Perce chiefs could assemble. During this interval, White inspected the mission premises. Regarding the school, he wrote that he “was happily surprised and greatly interested at seeing such numbers so far advanced and so eagerly pursuing after knowledge.” He visited the farms being cultivated by the natives and again was deeply impressed with the progress the Nez Percés were making. Among the twenty-two chiefs who assembled at Lapwai was the venerable Hohots Ilprip (literally Red Grizzly Bear), also known as Bloody Chief, who was at least ninety years old and who remembered Lewis and Clark. Also present was Five Crows from the Cayuse tribe.

After many speeches by White, McKinlay, McKay, Rogers, and Spalding on the one hand and Bloody Chief, Five Crows, and others, including perhaps Timothy and Joseph, on the other, the Nez Percés were ready to accept White’s suggestions. The first related to the adoption of the following code of eleven Articles which White, no doubt with Spalding’s collaboration, had compiled:

Art. 1. Whoever wilfully takes life shall be hung.

Art. 2. Whoever burns a dwelling-house shall be hung.

- Art. 3. Whoever burns an out-building shall be imprisoned six months, receive fifty lashes, and pay all damages.
- Art. 4. Whoever carelessly burns a house, or any property, shall pay damages.
- Art. 5. If anyone enter a dwelling, without permission of the occupant, the chiefs shall punish him as they think proper. Public rooms are excepted.
- Art. 6. If any one steal he shall pay back twofold; and if it be the value of a beaver skin or less, he shall receive twenty-five lashes; and if the value is over a beaver skin, he shall pay back twofold, and receive fifty lashes.
- Art. 7. If any one take a horse and ride it, without permission, or take any article and use it, without liberty, he shall pay for the use of it, and receive from twenty to fifty lashes, as the chief shall direct.
- Art. 8. If any one enter a field, and injure the crops, or throw down the fence, so that cattle or horses go in and do damage, he shall pay all damages, and receive twenty-five lashes for every offense.
- Art. 9. Those only may keep dogs who travel or live among the game; if a dog kill a lamb, calf, or any domestic animal, the owner shall pay the damage, and kill the dog.
- Art. 10. If an Indian raise a gun or other weapon against a white man, it shall be reported to the chiefs, and they shall punish him. If a white person do the same to an Indian, it shall be reported to Dr. White, and he shall redress it.
- Art. 11. If any Indian break these laws, he shall be punished by his chiefs, if a white man break them, he shall be reported to the agent, and be punished at his instance.¹¹

Each of these laws proposed by Dr. White grew out of definite situations previously faced by either the Whitmans or the Spaldings or by both. The burning of the mill and granaries at Waiilatpu is reflected in Articles 2, 3, and 4. A reaction to the attempted assault on Mrs.

Whitman is seen in Article 5. The confrontation between Whitman and the Cayuses which took place at Waiilatpu in September 1841, when some of Gray's horses were taken without his permission and turned into Whitman's gardens, may have inspired Articles 7 and 8. According to White's report, the Indians at the Lapwai council themselves suggested Article 9 which referred to the keeping of dogs which killed domestic animals. Since the lives of both Whitman and Spalding had been threatened, Articles 1 and 10 were logical.

White stated that the suggested laws were presented "one by one, leaving them as free to reject as accept." It should be pointed out, however, that this code of laws had not been requested by the natives. It was urged upon them by the show of authority by Dr. White, acting as the first United States Indian Agent for Oregon, and with the enthusiastic endorsement of Spalding. No doubt the presence of a Hudson's Bay official, Archibald McKinlay, who evidently supported the proposed code of laws, carried great weight. As has been stated, Simpson had advised McLoughlin to notify all "gentlemen" in charge of the various Company's posts in Oregon to have nothing to do with Dr. White. The very fact that McKinlay, Chief Trader at Fort Walla Walla, was willing to accompany Dr. White to Lapwai indicates that his concern about the increasing lawlessness among the Indians was greater than his fear of incurring the censure of his superiors. Evidently McKinlay felt that this plan of White's to introduce a code of laws among the natives was worth trying. Also present at the Lapwai meeting were Tom McKay and Cornelius Rogers, both of whom spoke in favor of the Nez Perces adopting the laws. Since each was held in high regard by the Indians, their words carried weight.

In an atmosphere of good fellowship, the Nez Perce chiefs agreed to accept the laws. This was the first time that any tribe in Old Oregon voluntarily agreed to accept the white man's system of jurisprudence. The experiment, however, was doomed to failure from the very beginning, as a great gulf separated the white man's concept of a sovereign state and the red man's primitive tribal structure. The code of laws called for sanctions. Here was a glaring weakness, for there were no courts, no police, and no law enforcement agencies among the Indians. Article 3 called for imprisonment, but there were no jails. Hanging was not an Indian method of punishment, and the fact that this was mentioned in Articles 1 and 2 leaves the impression that Dr. White wanted to warn

the Indians that this might be the penalty which could be inflicted by white men if circumstances warranted it. Article II gives the semblance of impartiality in claiming that the laws applied to the white men as well as to the red. This was impossible of fulfillment, as Dr. White had no authority whatever over the white American population of Oregon. The only sanction stated in the code which could have been used was the lash, as the Indians had already accepted this as a form of punishment.

ELLIS MADE FIRST HIGH CHIEF OF THE NEZ PERCES

After the chiefs agreed to accept the code of laws, Dr. White requested that one of their number be selected as Head or High Chief. This was an innovation, for the Nez Perces never had had a chief who exercised authority over other chiefs. Asa B. Smith, in his letter to Greene of February 6, 1840, explained that the Nez Perces had three kinds of chiefs: (1) the war chiefs who won their rank through prowess in battle; (2) chiefs who attained a position of influence through “making feasts & feeding the people;” and (3) the “tobacco chiefs” who won followers by distributing tobacco which they had gotten from the white men. Smith summarized: “The power of the chiefs amounts to very little & the people do that which is right in their own eyes.”¹²

When Dr. White insisted that the Nez Perces have a High Chief, the first reaction of the council was that he should appoint one of their number. This he refused to do; he called on them to make their own selection. He pointed out the importance of some one having central authority who would act as a spokesman and an intermediary for the tribe. Dr. White gave the chiefs two hours to make their decision; meanwhile he and the other white men withdrew from the council. Describing the meeting in his report to the Indian Bureau, White wrote: “They seemed some puzzled and wished to know if it were proper to counsel with Messrs. McKay & Rogers.” White granted this request. After several hours of deliberation, the choice was narrowed to two—Apashwakait, also known as Meipay or Looking Glass, and Ellis. The former had been a leader in opposing Smith at Kamiah in October 1840. The latter was a grandson of Bloody Chief and had the distinction of having been a student at the Red River Mission school for about four years, 1830–34. Of him White wrote: “...a sensible man of thirty-two, reading, speaking & writing the English language tolerably well; has a fine small planta-

tion, a few sheep some neat [cattle] stock and no less than eleven hundred head of horses." Ellis was chosen to the great displeasure of Apashwakaikt [Letter 122]. The fact that Ellis could speak English and was sympathetic to the missionaries, even though he had not openly professed Christianity, made him the evident choice by both White and Spalding.

After the conclusion of all business came the festivities. Dr. White paid for an ox which was butchered and the meat barbecued. Of the feast, White wrote: "Our ox was fat, and cooked and served up in a manner reminding me of the days of yore; we ate beef, corn, and peas to our fill, and in good cheer took the pipe, when Rev. Mr. Spalding, Messrs. McKinlay, Rogers, and McKay, wished a song from our boatmen; it was no sooner given than returned by the Indians and repeated again, again & again in high cheer."

After spending about sixteen days at Lapwai, the White party started back to Waiilatpu on December 20. There they met some, but not all, of the Cayuse chiefs. White wrote: "Learning what the Nez Perces had done, gave them great concern and anxiety." Even though one of their number, Five Crows, had been at Lapwai and evidently approved of what the Nez Perces had done, the other chiefs were hesitant to accept the code of laws. White agreed to return in the spring and resume negotiations, when he hoped that all of the Cayuse chiefs would be present. Favored with good traveling conditions on their return trip, White and his party reached Waskopum on December 25.

While at Waiilatpu, either before going to Lapwai or afterwards, the half-breed Dorion spread rumors of a coming large emigration of Americans. No doubt he had overheard some of Dr. White's conversations.

In a letter to her husband dated March 4, 1843, Narcissa wrote: "They [i.e., the Cayuses] say they have been told by Dorion that the Kaiuses are all to be cut off. They do not like such threats. It is also said that they have heard that you have gone home and are coming back next fall with fifty men to fight them." A few days later, Narcissa touched on this same subject when writing to a brother: "They have heard many unwise remarks which have been made by designing persons, especially a half-breed that came up with the agent last fall. Such as troops are coming into the river [i.e., the Columbia] this spring and are coming up with Dr. White to fight them [Letter 126]."

The Cayuses had reason to be fearful and suspicious. The Oregon Trail cut across their homeland. They had heard of the probability of a large immigration of white people entering Oregon in 1843. Why had Dr. Whitman gone East so suddenly? Was he more interested in the white man's welfare than he was in theirs? With such fears and suspicions in their minds, it was easy for them to believe the wild rumors spread abroad by Baptiste Dorion, who could always claim that he had overheard some remarks made by Dr. White. In February 1876, more than thirty years after he had crossed the Rockies with Whitman in the winter of 1842–43, Lovejoy, looking back on the events which led up to the massacre, said: "The Indians were very hostile to the Doctor for leaving them, and without doubt, owing to his absence, the seeds of assassination were sown by those haughty Cayuse Indians."

Following the departure of Dr. White and his party, Spalding immediately made preparations for the printing of the *Laws of the Nez Perces* on the mission press. An eight-page booklet appeared with the imprint date of 1842, the fifth item to be printed at Lapwai.¹³ Dr. White's name was phonetically spelled as "Taka Hwait." Spalding's great satisfaction in having such a code of laws adopted by the Nez Perces is reflected in a letter he wrote to Greene on February 26, 1843: "Thus far the laws promise much good to the nation and an important aid to the Mission. I have printed the laws & introduced them into the school. They were soon committed to memory by hundreds. I send you a copy." When I first had opportunity to examine the files of the Oregon Mission of the American Board in Boston in 1935, I had the thrill of finding that rare Lapwai item attached to Spalding's letter.

THE WINTER OF 1842–43

Narcissa spent the winter of 1842–43 with her new Methodist friends at Waskopum. Her few letters written during those months bear frequent references to her continued ill health. Sometimes she was confined to her room, unable even to wait upon herself. In one letter she referred to having a "blister" put on her side and being bled [Letter 129a]. A side-light into the religious customs of that day is found in Narcissa's letter of April 11, 1843 to Mary Walker: "I did attend the Christmas party, a week longer [i.e., later] than was expected. It became a New Years party and a very pleasant one it was." This is the only reference to Christmas found

in any of the Whitman letters. The Congregationalists and Presbyterians of that generation, true to the Puritan aspect of their heritage, did not observe Christmas which they considered to be a Roman Catholic custom. The Methodists, on the other hand, who had come out of the Anglican Church, celebrated the day. Thus the Methodist missionaries at The Dalles observed the day, which was a new experience for Narcissa. An examination of the diaries and letters of the members of the Oregon Mission of the American Board show that they occasionally observed Thanksgiving, which was not then a national holiday but just a New England custom, and also New Years and the Fourth of July.¹⁴

A tragic accident took place on February 1, 1843: a canoe carrying Cornelius Rogers, his wife, and four others was swept over Willamette Falls at what is now Oregon City. All were drowned. George Abernethy, a member of the Methodist Mission who later served as the first Governor of Oregon, 1845–49, sent word of the accident to Narcissa in a letter dated February 4. She forwarded the letter to her husband in care of Secretary Greene with the instruction that if he had started back by the time the letter arrived, it should then be forwarded to Augustus Whitman [Letter 122]. Greene, perhaps knowing that the letter would not reach Marcus at his brother's home, kept it in the Board's files. In all probability Whitman did not learn of the tragedy until he returned to Oregon. Rogers' death was a great loss not only to the missionary work in Oregon but also to the general public, as he had become proficient in the Nez Perce language and his services as an interpreter were increasingly in demand.

Narcissa's letter to Mary Walker of April 11, 1843, told of the drowning of Leverett, the twenty-two-month old son of the Littlejohns in the millrace at Lapwai on March 29. The Littlejohns had gone to Lapwai the previous January where Littlejohn was employed by Spalding. Although the Spaldings had built a fence around their house, the little boy managed to find a hole through which he crawled. Unobserved, he scampered across the field to the millrace where he was drowned. Spalding conducted the funeral service, taking the text used for the service held for Alice Clarissa on June 26, 1839. The similarity between the loss of the Littlejohn boy and her own daughter, both very near the same age at the time of death, struck home to Narcissa. "How easy it is for the Lord to take away our comforts," she wrote to Mary, "yes, and our lives too."

In this letter to Mary Walker, Narcissa passed on some news she had received from McKinlay. The Cayuses continued to be aroused by the rumors originating with Dorion that the white men intended to wage war on them. According to McKinlay, the Cayuses believed that Dr. White was to visit them that spring “with an armed force to take away their lands & compel them to adopt & enforce laws to regulate their own people & redress the wrongs of the Whites.” Tom McKay had attended a meeting of some of the Cayuse chiefs when they reacted in anger to the implication that “If you do not protect the white, we will compel you to [do so].” Narcissa commented: “They call it threatening language & say that war is declared & they are making preparations accordingly.” She told that Five Crows took some of Spalding’s booklets giving the code of laws and gave them to the Cayuses. Of this Narcissa wrote: “A few received them while others threw them away with disdain.”

RESTLESSNESS AMONG THE CAYUSES

Narcissa wrote a long letter to her husband on March 29, 1843, in which she reviewed the excitement which stirred the Cayuses. The letter, sent in care of the American Board, arrived long after Dr. Whitman had left for Old Oregon, thus he never got to read it. The fact that the Nez Perces had adopted the code of laws and had selected a Head Chief while the Cayuses had not, had become a focal point of trouble. Narcissa explained: “The principal cause of the excitement is; the Kayuses do not wish to be *forced* to adopt the laws recommended by the Agent. They say the laws in themselves are good, they do not object to them—but do not wish to be compelled to adopt (and) enforce them.” The Cayuses had come to believe that the white man was trying to force the laws upon them in order to subjugate them. This, the Cayuses believed, was “a deep-laid scheme . . .to destroy them and take possession of their country.”¹⁵ They accused the Nez Perces of being too willing to accept the laws. The absence of Whitman at that critical time left the Cayuses with no one to whom they could turn for advice. The Nez Perces had Spalding; without his enthusiastic endorsement, perhaps they would not have adopted the laws. We can only speculate what Whitman’s attitude would have been had he been present, but in all probability he would have urged the Cayuses to follow the example of the Nez Perces.

Narcissa in her letter of March 29 to her husband told of the seriousness of the excitement. She wrote: "Mr. Geiger writes me that 'the Indians are constantly talking about going to war with the Americans and will not believe anything else but that *you* have gone home for men to fight them.' This last is most trying to me... They have never heard a lisp from me of the object of your visit to the States, no more than what you told them before you left & one would think they had seen enough of you to know that you had not the least desire of that kind toward them. Poor creatures, they know not what to do nor whither they are hastening." The ambiguity of Narcissa's reference to "the object of your visit to the States," implies that there was some motive for his journey beyond mission business.

H. K. W. Perkins, who knew of the reports that Geiger had passed on to Narcissa, wrote to Dr. White about the same time that Narcissa was writing to Marcus and informed him of the restlessness existing among the Cayuses. Perkins stated that the Cayuses were making an effort to form a coalition of Indian tribes to fight the white men, and even a proposal to attack the 1843 Oregon immigration was being discussed. Perkins, speaking for the Methodist missionaries stationed at The Dalles, urged White to return to the upper Columbia country as soon as he could and quiet the fears of the natives.

Looking forward to Dr. White's return visit that spring, Narcissa in her letter to her husband wrote: "I have some fears as to the consequences. But perhaps you will say that they are womanish fears. I grant it. Yet I cannot help feeling a great desire that you should be present at the transaction of so important business to the people among whom we are called to spend our lives. I am requested by the Agent to be there." In this same letter, after expressing her concern, she wrote: "There are redeeming qualities in the character of the Kaiuses notwithstanding they are insolent, proud, domineering, arrogant, and ferocious."

Responding to the request of Dr. White, Narcissa with her two girls left Waskopum on Monday, April 3, and arrived at Fort Walla Walla the following Saturday noon. They stayed at the fort until April 24 before going out to Waiilatpu. Narcissa was pleased to find everything peaceful at the mission. Geiger had done exceedingly well with his farm work in anticipation of a heavy demand for farm produce when the 1843 immigration would arrive. Narcissa was also pleased to see so many of the Cay-

uses at work on their small acreages. They too anticipated selling such farm products as potatoes to the incoming whites. The one disturbing feature which grieved Narcissa was the blackened ruin of the mill.

Sometime during the spring of 1843, a chief of the Walla Walla Indians, *Peu-peu-mox-mox*, also known as Yellow Serpent, went to Fort Vancouver to see Dr. McLoughlin.¹⁶ He wanted to know what the Hudson's Bay Company would do if the Americans made war on his people and on the Cayuses. Dr. McLoughlin tried to quiet the chief's fears by telling him that there was absolutely no evidence that the Americans intended to wage such a war and that, should this be the case, the Company would remain neutral. Yellow Serpent's report did much to quiet the fears of the Cayuses.

McLoughlin was displeased when he learned that McKinlay had attended the Indian council held under Dr. White's auspices at Lapwai in December 1842. When he learned that Dr. White was planning to return to the upper country to meet with the Cayuses, he wrote McKinlay warning him that until the boundary question was settled, the Hudson's Bay Company could not "recognize Dr. White as an Indian agent." McKinlay was to treat White only as a private individual. "You cannot permit his holding Council with Indians in the Fort," he wrote, and then added a postscript: "To avoid any misapprehension, you will attend no Indian Council with Dr. White."¹⁷

DR. WHITE RETURNS TO WAILATPU

Sometime during the early part of April 1843, such alarming reports of the situation in the upper Columbia country reached Dr. White at Oregon City that he decided to leave as soon as possible for a return visit to the Cayuses. He now had no Cornelius Rogers to serve as interpreter. He turned to the Rev. Gustavus Hines,¹⁸ a member of the Methodist reenforcement which went out to Oregon on the *Lausanne* in 1838–39. Although Hines did not know the Nez Perce language spoken by the Cayuses, he did have some knowledge of the Chinook jargon which some of the Cayuses understood. Possibly White also expected Mrs. Whitman to help as an interpreter.

Judging by the excitement aroused by Dr. White's first visit to the upper Columbia country, Narcissa was skeptical of any good coming out

of a second visit. Writing to a brother on April 14, she said: "The agent is quite ignorant of Indian character and especially of the character of the Kaiuses. Husband's presence is needed very much at this juncture. A great loss is sustained by his going to the States, I mean a present loss to the station and Indians, but hope and expect a greater good will be accomplished by it. There was no other way for us to do. We felt that we could not remain as we were without more help, and we are so far off that to send by letter and get returns was too slow a way for the present emergency." Here Narcissa indicated that her husband's primary motive for his journey East was to strengthen the mission.

On his first visit to the upper Columbia country, White had had a bodyguard of six men. For his second visit, he hired twice as many, "mostly French Canadians," according to Hines. Evidently the rumor-spreading Dorion was not included. White, Hines, and the twelve men left for Waiilatpu in at least two canoes on April 29. Some Indians were hired to help paddle the canoes. The party arrived at The Dalles on May 4; here, evidently for the first time, Dr. White was made aware of the main weakness inherent in his code of laws—that of enforcement. When White had visited the Methodist mission at Waskopum during the previous December, he had persuaded the natives to accept the code of laws and to select a High Chief. After trying to live according to the laws for four months, the chiefs found that offenders condemned to be whipped often resisted even to the point of using a knife. The chiefs did not know what to do in such situations and asked White for advice. He had no good answer for their problem.

Perkins joined the White party when it left The Dalles for the over-land trip to Waiilatpu. When White arrived at the mission station on May 9, he was given a cordial welcome by Mrs. Whitman and Geiger. However, he found the Cayuses still in a state of excitement. In his report to the Secretary of War dated November 15, 1843, White wrote: "The Indians flocked around me, and inquired after my party, and could not be persuaded for some time but that I had a large party concealed somewhere near, and only waited to get them convened to open a fire upon them, and cut them all off at a blow. On convincing them of my defenceless condition and pacific intentions, they were quite astounded ...I actually found them suffering more from fear of war from the whites, than the whites from the Indians."¹⁹

When White asked the chiefs to assemble, they asked for a delay, saying that they wanted Ellis and some of the Nez Perces to be present for the council. While waiting for the Nez Perces to arrive, White and his party visited the fields being cultivated by the Cayuses. Hines estimated that "about sixty of the Kayuses had commenced cultivating the ground." Some had even erected fences around their fields. Feathercap (Tamsucky) acted as guide for the white men and of him Hines wrote: "Of all the Indians I have seen, he has a countenance the most savage."²⁰

WHITE'S RETURN VISIT TO LAPWAI

Finding that nothing could be accomplished at Waiilatpu for the time being, White decided to go to Lapwai. He hoped to see Ellis, whose cooperation was needed in persuading the Cayuses to adopt the laws. White and his party arrived at Lapwai on Saturday, May 13, and again Spalding was delighted to welcome the Indian Agent.

Spalding at once decided to take advantage of the presence of Dr. White and the Rev. Gustavus Hines to receive nine Nez Perces into the membership of the First Presbyterian Church of Oregon. Spalding had wanted to do this as early as December 1841, but at that time Dr. Whitman had objected, not because the natives were not ready for church membership but because of personal pique Whitman bore toward Spalding.²¹ Now, Dr. Whitman was not present, nor was there an A. B. Smith or a W. H. Gray to object. Nine Nez Perces, four men and five women, were made members of the Mission Church on Sunday, May 14, including Asenath, wife of Joseph, and Tamar, wife of Timothy. This brought the total membership to eleven. After listing the names of the converts, Spalding wrote in the record book: "The Lord's Supper was administered. Rev. Mr. Hines of the Methodist Mission assisted the pastor. Present also Rev. Mr. Perkins ...Elijah White, M.D... & Mr. Littlejohn & wife & Mrs. Spalding." Spalding's joy overflowed. "The Lord be thanked," he wrote. "To him be all the praise for these trophies of his victorious grace. Truly this is a glorious day..."

In a report regarding his work which Spalding submitted to Dr. White, he claimed that during the winter of 1842-43 and the following spring, his Sunday congregations numbered between two and five hundred.²² Of all the Protestant missionaries who served in Old Oregon, no one had greater success in evangelizing and civilizing the natives than Henry H. Spalding.

On May 18, during the absence of Dr. White and his party, Narcissa wrote a long letter to her husband in which she brought him up-to-date regarding developments at Waiilatpu. The excitement among the natives had subsided after Dr. White had assured them that the United States had no intention of waging war against them. Narcissa bemoaned the fact that such important decisions had to be made by the natives during her husband's absence. "They seem to be and to feel 'like sheep without a shepherd'," she wrote. Narcissa also reported that in the expectation of a large immigration coming in the fall of 1843, Spalding and Geiger had made arrangements to send a pack train to Fort Hall with about 1,000 pounds of flour and other provisions which could be sold to those in need. No doubt this flour had been ground in Spalding's mill. The pack train was placed in care of some trusted Nez Perces. Narcissa took advantage of its departure to send this letter of May 18 with the hope that her husband would get it at Fort Hall. Either the original or a copy was sent to the American Board in Boston.

THE CAYUSES FINALLY ACCEPT THE LAWS

Dr. White and his party returned to Waiilatpu on Friday, May 19, together with Chief Ellis and some four or five hundred Nez Perces. Ellis may have served as the interpreter for the council. The big day came when the Cayuses and the Walla Wallas were present, as Dr. White described the meeting, "in mass." One by one the laws were read and explained. Hines gives the following account: "Yellow Serpent then rose and said: 'I have a message to you. Where are these laws from? Are they from God or from the earth? ...I think they are from the earth because, from what I know of white men, they do not honor these laws.'" In answer, White explained that all laws establishing a moral order in society came from God and were binding on all men. "Yellow Serpent was pleased with the explanation," wrote Hines, "and said that it was according to the instructions he had received from others, and he was very glad to learn that it was so, because many of his people had been angry with him when he had whipped them for crime, and had told him that God would send him to hell for it, and he was glad to know that it was pleasing to God."²³

After the council had met for five or six days, the Cayuses and Walla Wallas finally agreed to follow the example of the Nez Perces and accept the code of laws. Five Crows was made Head Chief of the Cayuses. The

meeting was followed by a great feast; Dr. White paid for two oxen which were butchered for the occasion. Contrary to Indian tradition, White invited the native women to join in the feasting. This, no doubt, was to their joy.²⁴ Having successfully accomplished his objectives, Dr. White started back to the Willamette Valley on Saturday, May 17. With the adoption of the white man's laws, a new era had begun for the Nez Percés and the Cayuses, but troubled days lay ahead. The adoption of the laws by the Indians was tantamount to the surrender of their independence. A realization of this basic fact is one reason why the Cayuses had been so suspicious and so hesitant to give their consent.

Following the selection of Five Crows as Head Chief of the Cayuse nation, Spalding took steps to receive him into the Mission church. Again, there was no one to object. The record books carries the following entry: "June 16, 1843, on profession of his faith in Jesus Christ, Hezekiah [Five Crows] was admitted to the First Presbyterian Church of Oregon, having been examined as to the grounds of his hope some 18 months before ...Has spent two winters in our school at this place." Spalding's exultation on this important addition to the church's membership is seen in what he then wrote: "Go on thou King Immanuel, conquering & to conquer till all these kings & queens shall become nursing fathers & mothers in this little church which is now in the wilderness."²⁵ Years later when Spalding returned to the Nez Percés in his old age, he used that same record book to list the names of his new converts. Also at that time, he went back to the earlier entries and added certain notes. After Hezekiah's name, he wrote: "Now dead, 1872." Of the twenty-one natives who became members of the Mission church during the years 1838–47, Hezekiah or Five Crows was the only Cayuse. He will enter our story again.

THE SUMMER OF 1843

Although Narcissa was in better health during the spring of 1843 than she had been during the previous winter, Dr. White, as a physician, strongly advised her to go to Fort Vancouver and place herself under the care of Dr. Forbes Barclay, the Company's physician. This she decided to do. Leaving Mary Ann Bridger and David Malin with Mrs. Littlejohn at Lapwai, Narcissa with Helen Mar Meek left Fort Walla Walla on June 1 for Vancouver. Undoubtedly the reason she took Helen with her was that

she knew that the child's father, Joe Meek, was then in the Willamette Valley and felt that perhaps they could get together.

Narcissa made the trip down the Columbia in one of the boats of the Hudson's Bay Company's brigade. Of that experience, she wrote: "I had a very fatiguing journey down; came near drowning in the portage once. One of the boats upset, but no lives lost. The boat I was in just escaped capsizing. We arrived here just before sunset, Sabbath [June 4]; displeased with myself and every one around me because of the profanation of the holy day of the Lord" [Letter 137]. This was the first time that Narcissa had been to Fort Vancouver since the mission party left in the late fall of 1836. After an examination of her physical condition, Dr. Barclay advised her to remain under his care for at least a month. We can rest assured that Dr. McLoughlin urged her to stay. There is no evidence of any lack of cordiality between either Marcus or Narcissa Whitman and Dr. McLoughlin after he joined the Roman Catholic Church in November 1842; however, Narcissa no longer made such kindly references to him as when they first met.

In a letter to her father dated April 12, 1844, Narcissa said that Dr. Barclay had "discovered an enlargement of the right ovary," for which he prescribed "iodine to remove it." Although Narcissa did not then know it, she was suffering from "a tumor near the umbilicus" which her husband discovered when he returned in the fall of 1843. In telling her father of her condition, Narcissa wrote that she felt her health was much improved by Dr. Barclay's treatment but "had it not been for the other difficulty of the aorta which was not at that time discovered although it existed, I might have recovered my health. But the medicine I took to cure one tumor was an injury to the other."

Narcissa remained at Fort Vancouver for about two months, or until the end of July, when she accepted an invitation to be a guest in the home of Mr. and Mrs. George Abernethy of Oregon City. She also spent some time with the Rev. and Mrs. Alvin F. Waller and was delighted to discover that Mr. Waller had once ridden a Methodist circuit out of Friendship in Allegany County, New York, and had met her father. A dispute between Dr. McLoughlin and the Methodist Mission, in which Waller was a central figure, was then in its early stages.

Shortly before Narcissa arrived at Oregon City, the Methodists had conducted a camp meeting, at Tualatin Plains, about thirty-five

miles distant, with Jason Lee, Gustavus Hines, and H. K. W. Perkins in charge. On Sunday, July 16, Jason Lee led a revival service; nineteen professed conversion, among whom was Joe Meek. In an emotional outburst, Joe cried out: "Tell everybody you see that Joseph Meek, that old Rocky Mountain sinner, has turned to the Lord."²⁶ There is evidence that although he may have become a Christian, he did not give up his drinking.

Although Narcissa was not present for the July camp meeting, she did attend one held in August which she described as being "a precious season" for her soul. The experience brought back memories of her youth in the church at Prattsburg. In her letter to her father, she wrote: "To witness again the anxious tear and hear the deep-felt inquiry, 'What must I do to be saved?' as I once used to, filled me with joy inexpressible." It is possible that she saw Meek at this August meeting and that he was then able to see his little girl, Helen Mar.

After spending about three weeks with the Abernethys and the Wallers, Narcissa went to Fort George, the former Astoria, to say good-by to the Rev. and Mrs. Daniel Lee and some other Methodist missionaries who were about to sail for the States. The Methodist Mission in Oregon was gradually being dissolved. While at the Fort, Narcissa was entertained in the home of James Birnie, resident trader in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company's post located there. On Sunday, August 13, Narcissa attended a religious service in which both of the Lees, Jason and Daniel, took part. This was the last of many services in which uncle and nephew had joined. Narcissa had the unique pleasure of spending several nights aboard the ship, *Diamond*, on which passage had been booked for the departing missionaries, before she sailed. In her letter to her father, Narcissa reported: "I went down to the mouth of the Columbia river to see them depart and to get a view of the Pacific ocean" [Letter 149].

After the ship sailed on August 15, Narcissa returned to the Willamette Valley. She then spent several weeks in the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Gray, who were living at Oregon City. Sometime during the middle of September, the welcome news reached her of the coming that fall of a large party of immigrants who had with them about 140 wagons. She learned that her husband was with that party and the very thought of seeing him soon caused her great joy. Narcissa made immediate plans to

return to Waiilatpu. She and Helen Mar Meek left Oregon City during the last week of September in company with Jason Lee, who was bound for Waskopum. The trip up the river was most uncomfortable, for it rained. As a result of exposure, Narcissa caught a severe cold. They reached Waskopum on Saturday evening, October 7. To Narcissa's great disappointment, Marcus was not there, even though most of the 1843 immigration had already passed on their way down the river.

Narcissa later learned that her husband had been called to Lapwai because the Spaldings were seriously ill with scarlet fever. After returning to Waiilatpu, he then had to leave for Tshimakain to attend Mrs. Eells, who was expecting her second child. As a result, Whitman was unable to go to Waskopum for his wife until the latter part of October. In her letter of April 12, 1844, to her father, Narcissa wrote: "It was a joyful and happy meeting and caused our hearts to overflow with love and gratitude to the Author of all our mercies, for permitting us to see each other's faces again in the flesh." By October 28, the Whitmans were at Fort Walla Walla on their way back to Waiilatpu. Days and weeks passed before each had opportunity to learn of all the experiences which had come to the other during the year of separation. It is easy to imagine Narcissa eagerly inquiring: "Now tell me, dear husband, all that has happened to you."

"ADAPTED TO A DIFFERENT DESTINY"

Although Narcissa was overjoyed to be with Marcus again, the prospect of going back to the isolation of Waiilatpu filled her with dread. In her letter of April 12, 1844, to her father, she wrote: "I turned my face with my husband toward this dark spot, and dark, indeed, it seemed to be to me when compared with the scenes, social and religious which I had so recently been enjoying with so much zest."

Nearly two years after Marcus and Narcissa Whitman had lost their lives in the massacre of November 1847, Jane Prentiss wrote to the Rev. H. K. W. Perkins and asked why the Indians had committed the atrocity. Perkins replied on October 19, 1849, and in a kindly and sympathetic manner tried to explain the background of the massacre from the Indians' point of view. Although, as explained in my introduction to the Perkins letter [Appendix 6], we cannot accept the explanation that Perkins gives as being the real cause for the massacre, his letter does throw light on the Whitman's relationships with the natives.

Perkins, relying on his memories of Narcissa when she was living with the Methodist missionaries at Waskopum, described her as being ill, lonely, and discouraged. He wrote: “Mrs. Whitman was not adapted to savage but *civilized* life. She would have done honor to her sex in a polished & exalted sphere, but never in the low drudgery of Indian toil. The natives esteemed her as proud, haughty, as *far above them*. No doubt she really seemed so. It was her *misfortune*, not her *fault*. She was adapted to a different destiny. She wanted something exalted—communion with *mind*. She longed for society, refined society... I think her stay with us including her visit to the Willamette the pleasantest portion of her Oregon life ...She loved company, society, excitement & ought always to have enjoyed it. The self-denial that took her away from it was suicidal.”²⁷

Before accepting the opinions of Perkins, it is well to point out some qualifying circumstances. Perkins never met Narcissa during the first six years of her residence at Waiilatpu, and he could not, therefore, judge her attitude towards the natives during that time. No doubt Narcissa did crave the companionship of the Americans in the Willamette Valley, both missionary and non-missionary. Yet the fact that she was willing to return to Waiilatpu with her husband, when her heart cried out for a different environment, is to her everlasting credit.

With the gradual improvement of her health, with a household which grew to nearly twenty, and an ever increasing number of immigrants living for varying periods of time on the mission premises, Waiilatpu no longer was the “dark spot” in Narcissa’s thinking, but a hub of activity. As will be told, Narcissa regained her love for Waiilatpu.

CHAPTER 17 FOOTNOTES

- ¹ E. C. Ross, Myron Eells, and W. H. Gray, *The Whitman Controversy* (Pamphlet), Portland, 1885, p. 36, states that Gray left Waiilatpu on Oct. 15. Gray was mistaken in his recollection of the date.
- ² Allen, *Ten Years in Oregon*, p. 177. All references in this chapter to Dr. White's reports concerning his visits to Waiilatpu and Lapwai in 1843 are from this book.
- ³ *Op. cit.*, p. 67. One of the survivors of the Whitman massacre told Cannon that the Indian who attempted the assault was Tamsucky.
- ⁴ The original letters which Narcissa wrote to her husband, and which he never saw, were later sent to the Oregon Historical Society. See Appendix I. Letter 119, once in Coll. O., is now in Coll. Y.
- ⁵ Drury, *Spalding*, p. 291.
- ⁶ A painting of the Methodist Mission at Waskopum by W. H. Tappan, 1849, is in Coll. O. A reproduction is in Drury, *F.W.W.*, I:168.
- ⁷ See Chap. Eleven, fn. 29. Wap-tash-tak-mahl is mentioned in Whitman letters 100 & 112. See also, Bagley, *Early Catholic Missions*, p. 120.
- ⁸ See Chapter Eight, "Official Government Permit to Reside in Oregon." Allen, *Ten Years in Oregon*, p. 177.
- ⁹ See Chapter Eleven, "Madame Dorion."
- ¹⁰ Allen, *Ten Years in Oregon*, p. 179.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 189-90, but Art. 4 is there omitted. Gray, *Oregon*, p. 228.
- ¹² Drury, *Spalding and Smith*, p. 139.
- ¹³ See Howard M. Ballou, "History of the Oregon Mission Press," *O.H.Q.*, XXIII (1922): 39-52; 95-110.
- ¹⁴ Cyrus Walker, in his reminiscences published in the *Pacific Homestead*, December 21, 1911, said: "As for me in earlier years, I knew no Christmas ... as I remember, Christmas was not once named." See index to Drury, *F.W.W.*, II, for further references to the non-observance of the day by the American Board missionaries.
- ¹⁵ Hines, *Wild Life in Oregon*, p. 143.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 165. L. V. McWhorter, *Hear Ye My Chiefs*, Caldwell, Idaho, 1952, p. 94, claims that "Peopeo Moxmox" should be translated "Yellow Bird." Oliver Frank, a full-blooded Nez Perce from Kamiah, Idaho, has informed me that Peopeo is difficult to translate into English. The meaning is nebulous but in general refers to something that is threatening such as a serpent or a large bird. Moxmox means yellow. Contemporary documents call this chief Yellow Serpent.
- ¹⁷ McLoughlin's *Fort Vancouver Letters, 2nd Series, 1839-1844*, II:261.
- ¹⁸ Hines, *Wild Life in Oregon*, supplements White's account of the adoption of the code of laws by the Nez Percés and Cayuses as found in Allen, *Ten Years in Oregon*.
- ¹⁹ Allen, *Ten Years in Oregon*, p. 214.
- ²⁰ Hines, *Wild Life in Oregon*, p. 166.
- ²¹ See Chapter Sixteen, "More Disagreements Within the Mission."

²² Allen, *Ten Years in Oregon*, p. 203. Spalding's report to Dr. White was written during Whitman's absence in the East. The report shows Spalding's ignorance of the native religion. He does not understand that a "wakin" (p. 207) or "wayakin" is an individual's guardian spirit obtained by a young person in his spirit quest.

²³ Hines, *Wild Life in Oregon*, pp. 177 ff.

²⁴ Allen, *Ten Years in Oregon*, p. 215.

²⁵ *Minutes of the Synod of Washington*, 1936, p. 291. According to Spalding's records, he welcomed a Nez Perce into the church on May 14, 1843, who was also called Hezekiah. The Cayuse Hezekiah was received about a month later.

²⁶ *O.H.Q.*, XXIII (1922):326.

²⁷ The words italicized are underlined in the original in Coll. W.