Umatilla to Walla Walla
The death of the Snow

No 28

Gen. Howard's notes – Umatilla to Walla Walla – to Walla Walla – the dust and the drive

From Umatilla to Wallula nothing strikes you so very the uniformity of the scenery. The same rolling prairie, with little ~~town~~ life to arrest your attention – the currents in the river now rapid now slow – as the banks approach each other or recede – The same Mount Hood, covered with snow, which you see to ~~the east~~ ~~the north~~ of you at Portland, now behold to the ~~east~~ west of you – which in sight all the time. It never seems to diminish in size as you recede from it – but often appears to lift itself up till you can see below the snow-line – a huge pyramid, which appears upon a dark lava-colored mountain, with its capes in the clouds.

We reach Wallula by 5 P.M. (15th of Sept.) There is never to meet us a spring-wagon (commonly denominated an ambulance) – built like an old fashioned stage with leather springs – drawn by 4 horses having a soldier driver, who had doubtless helped himself to a few drinks. He informed Capt. Sladen at once (I presumed from his cover of Wallula hospitality) that we could not go through to Walla Walla that night, and that we must stay here till morning ~~at Wallula~~. I am inclined to obstinacy, always, prima facie, impatient at delay and further at this time it was very important for me to take the very next stage from Walla Walla

for Safawai, else I should be driven to use part of the Sabbath on my return trip. This I had been steadily planning not to do. In war, when necessity pressed, we marched & fought on Sunday. I never liked it and made up my mind that in peace it must be a very urgent call would induce me to journey on that day. I replied, much to the surprise of the driver that we would go as far as we could that night. We took a traveller into the wagon with us and set out. For a few miles we crossed & recrossed the crooked Walla Walla creek (or river). The road pretty good. But soon the dust began to appear often some two feet deep, the ground rough under it like ice under water broken into fragments with an occasional fragment gone. Dust so fine that it hesitates to settle at all except on your face, apparel & other clothing. It fills your eyes & your mouth if you open it. Often hides your lead horses from view. I began to understand as night approached why the 30 miles could not be made before dark. And after realizing what the driver called "Check-holes" — a hole on one side or the other or the bottom of the dust. I understood why we could not push on after dark. The sky overhead above the dust was without a cloud & we had one good hour of moon light before the moon set. The last few miles some of us walked

ahead of the horses to guide them & keep the carriage in the deepest track. Before we stopped for the night we heard a peculiar puffing sound - the driver says that Bullgine is coming - sure enough a little engine - was running on at the rate of six or seven miles an hour drawing a freight train - over the narrow gauge road - that had frequently crossed our track. This road has been ridiculed as "Dr Baker's folly". He tried the experiment of a narrow gauge with the old fashioned strap rail you notice often at coal mines & saw mills, laid down for a tramway for short distances. Dr Baker has more than half of his road completed & is of his own motion changing the strap for a better rail. At Tonchet (the people accent the first syllable) we find two houses & the depot - one of them is for public entertainment. The house consists of four rooms below & about as many above, all of rough boards, no windows - just a temporary shelter, and scarcely any furniture - our host from Pennsylvania was a young man. His speech showed culture. A fine looking young woman came to the table & took the face. Here you notice how much good people from the East deny themselves the ordinary conveniences & comforts of life to get a start in a new country. Such were my reflections as I peeped at the stars through the cracks between the

weather-board of my windowless room. The morning sun found us en route as he showed a hazy appearance above the horizon - several valleys began to appear - of considerable breadth - ~~fences~~ farms with fences - extensive wheat fields - orchards loaded with fruit - The cultivation as we approached the city of Walla-Walla was not confined to the rich valleys but the hill sides showed signs of it - the ploughed fields. The large straw-colored squares from which grain had been taken gave evidence that there was good soil & sufficient moisture to warrant the putting in of crops.

Walla Walla Valley

We came to Fort Walla-Walla a mile before reaching the town. Colonel Perry of the cavalry, the commanding officer of the post & his ~~charming~~ excellent wife gave me kindest welcome. First you are sent to your room & bath-tub; and by the time you are presentable, there is the nicest breakfast for you. May I tell a secret? Mrs Perry, a very fair young lady in society in the city of New York - Now with a grace & ease your commencement man ~~has~~ fashion ~~wife~~ & position she gets an excellent breakfast herself. I have always insisted that it is position economy as well as joy for a young man to get a good wife while he is young.'

There is no hospitality ~~for~~ more generous & hearty than that you meet in the Army at a frontier post - and none more cordial than at Col. Perry's pleasant home. I will not speak further of this post till my return from Lapwai. Col. Stone the Quartermaster arranges with the Stage proprietor to put us thro." to Lapwai & being so back to Walla Walla before Sunday the distance is upwards of 80 miles and it is now wednesday. Between 12 & 1 P.M. (Sept. 16th) the proprietor himself Mr Mattis - mounts his box behind his good horses & Capt. Sladen & I the only passengers speed away - not minding the leathern springs nor the "occasional" check holes" nor a few mouthsful of dust: for these inconveniences do not now compare with those from Wallula to Walla Walla. How easy it is to endure evils which are ever growing less: but is wonderfully trying when they are constantly on the increase! Who would have believed after passing so much desert - dust & waste - our ~~should~~ would come upon these rich farms we now are passing? The houses are moderate, but often good & painted, but the barns are large & commodious - and large stacks of grain are outside

10 sets ~~wagon Harness~~ complete
~~Bridle Bits~~.

of the Cows — wherever orchards are planted the trees often have to be propped up to prevent being broken by the too abundant fruit.

The Indians
Waitsburg — why named.

We begin to meet parties of Indians riding & driving ponies, parties made up of men women & children. These are from the Umatillas, the Nez Perces & the Spokanes. Nobody seems afraid of them. Nobody goes armed. How quiet & orderly everything! How very different the feeling of the people you meet & talk with from those in Arizona! We come soon to a pretty village where there are water power and good mills. The town is called Waitsburg. I am beside the stage proprietor. "Why Waitsburg" he says "Mr Wait settled here. He came from the East to Oregon — when population became too abundant for him he came into this valley: and soon there was too many here, he pushes on to start a new town, Lostwood called Dayton. He is a good man we ought to send him a delegate to Congress, but he is not very popular, being opposed to strong drink". I imagine my curiosity to see a roaring frontiersman, running away from population & settlements, opposed to strong

Dayton. Hunt's Hotel. Temperance. Profanity & fidelity

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Arrived! TP We arrived at Dayton before dark, and put up at the Hunts Hotel. What a contrast this with the public house at Fouchet! Mr Hunt aided by his little daughter - keeps a temperance house - He has a good sized building with plenty of comfortable rooms - small separate tables in dining hall - whatever you want is called by the little daughter through the basement into the kitchen - and after your table is furnished to your satisfaction she sits at your side to entertain you & see that your plate is properly supplemented. At 2 a.m. of the 14th with Sam. Waiting for driver we sat out in the darkness. The horses will not keep the road. The driver swears fearfully. I begin to wonder what will become of us & whether or not I shall get an opportunity to demonstrate to this Samuel that swearing is as bad as lying. By daylight I climb upon the box by his side. If I were writing a book I could give you King's history - a boy in Northern Ny. - a young man at the Mines in California, a rancher with mesmeric - mesmeric cheats - robbs him of everything which he is carrying back - Then the hundreds of shifts he made among the rapids of "mere" to keep his head above water. Small vices like gambling on horses & drinking loading him down.

He was tender hearted – his mother had taught him well. closed to forever while I was with him. No man could be more careful in driving or more faithful in looking after his horses. Now promised to let me know when he got married that I might send him a family Bible, and really ~~I believe~~ if he gets this young widow he will turn attention to & settles down & believe he will "turn over a new leaf." # Oh. What a country – this. Valley after valley over hill after hill – across the mountains – on the top, the expanse seemed boundless, then we commenced a tremendous descent of about miles to the Snake river bottom – the valley is quite narrow & rough – the road way is cut into ~~the side of~~ the hill-side – once I saw two wagons approaching & wondered how we could pass – above, hundreds of feet, too steep for a man to stand up except by holding on to the trees & below, hundreds of feet equally steep. The widest place for passing was selected – the front wagons did slide, but the horses clung to the roadside & soon brought ~~them~~ me wagons back – As the hindmost cleared a purse let fearing off with his sliding wagon he looked up to our stage driver with a laugh & said "What would you do down here"? No fear! pluck & good nature get one over this & other extreme difficulties. We crossed the Snake River twice. A wire rope stretched across, a pulley runs on it with ~~rope~~ so

Narrow passing. – Cheerful Pluck – Snake river crossing Lewiston

arranged as to let the current carry ~~over~~ the flat ferry-boat, stage & all, across. Then four miles of the stonniest, roughest road - then comes the "Clear Water" ~~Lewis~~ river & Lewistown beyond. This town was named for Lewis of the old firm of Lewis & Clark, who crossed the plains among the first of Explorers, before Astor's friend Hunt & his party had spent some ten months in doing the same. As I am beaten by jolts and made ~~[illegible]~~ aching ~~many~~ ~~[illegible]~~ nerves - descrying a raft of plank and a man ~~[illegible]~~ sitting quietly upon it with his dinner - spread by his side I almost envy ~~envied~~ him the ease with which he journeys ~~journeyed~~. We followed up the river under shelter of the ~~high~~ mountains high & steep upon our left - the rapid river upon our right, just room enough to pass, till we came to the other ferry. Beyond the river there is a curious looking table land ~~beyond the river~~ near the town, it seems at first sight like an extension fort with a parapet - We cross the river into Lewistown - quite a frontier village - like Umatilla, during mining excitements it was once much larger, when times were flush. but it still has, has respectable hotels and a dozen or twenty stores. not to mention the liquor saloons - some pleasant houses & gardens in the suburbs and perhaps 800 inhabitants - including French - Germans, Chinese half breeds &c. Port Lapwai is 12 miles from town

Lapwai. Indian Farmer. Nez Perces.

and we wonder how we shall get home before dark. Good fortune favors us. The farmer on the Pawnee reserve is in town & goes within a half mile of the Mission post. They asks to go with us. ~~He has a~~ a little veiled lady who has a pleasant voice, and a young ~~man~~ lad of 14 yrs. I found they were the daughter & son of ~~the~~ our former missionary to Chicago, Mr Martin. She is now a teacher - aiding her father, among the Iowa Pawnees. Very kindly the farmer offers to take us along. From these good people in a journey moderately taken of twelve miles we learn much concerning the Nez. Perces not in books. Before my return I paid a visit to the Agency, meeting the Agent, Mr Monteith, his brother & his father. ~~His brother looks me from the fort~~ & find here excellent people, well disposed, advocating the cause of the Indians - but I confess to a feeling of disappointment at the apparent results of these many years of christian labor. May I say it too few children trained for Christ - too few grown people converted to God! I am told that matters at Kamiah, the upper sub-agency 85 miles north are more lively - more developed - more christian families, more children at school, &c - but it is not of the present working but of the neglected past that I feel to complain - If what Bishop Whipple says is true that "missions among the Indians are more remunerative than among any other heathen people" - surely we not to have greater results among these

Indians who have always been at peace with us!
The mission was planted by the American Board in 1836 = and was continued by ~~the~~ self-denying men for some eleven years - The difficulties with other Indians caused a suspension from 1847 till Gen Grant's peace policy called the Presbyterian church of the Pacific coast to take hold in 1871: I may say there are now at one time six hundred names on the church rolls among a population of some 4000, and this seems a large proportion compared with many other agencies - and it may be I do injustice to most activities - for surely Dr Lindsley's picture of these good people is a pleasant one as indicated in the following extract from his report: "

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In the Cerrolorine contests between Great Britain & the United States the Chez Perces remained true to the latter.
In the Whitman massacre they took no part, but preserved the lives of the Americans who were among them. It is affirmed that they have more than once prevented Indian outbreaks by opposing alliances for the extermination of the whites; and when at last they were unable to restrain the frenzy of the other tribes, they lent sufficient aid to our countrymen, joined our ranks as volunteers, rescued some of our soldiers, and saved many lives - "

Excellent as these Indians appear to have been, I hope the new policy may bring them forward more rapidly in all that pertains to a Christian civilization.

Fort Lapwai — the little Paradise

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After ascending to the table land we ~~proceed~~ and proceeded ~~Proceeding~~ along a level stretch of country. The view in every direction is magnificent — for rolling prairie land — for mountains ~~peaks~~ bordering the valleys, & charming valleys this country in Idaho is unsurpassed — At last we descend ~~a long~~ the ~~winding~~ hill, cross a logy bridge, round a smooth grassy promontory-like mountain — "Thunder hill" I believe — when turning to the right we behold a picture ~~that~~ a mile away, make us cry out with delight. The little valley opened out towards the west. The sun not yet ~~below the~~ too low to shine brightened up the whole ~~of~~ space — touching the hill tops & mountains with bright lights. The garrison post with its white buildings carefully arranged, ~~with~~ and the foliage of its few trees not yet gone — the post did look like a beautiful paradisical village snuggled away in a valley filled with glory

(insert fig a)

Dr Lindsley in looking upon the same picture from (no. a) near the same point says: "Yonder is the Garrison and white buildings glistening in the sunlight thro. the shade of trees. It is called Hot Springs. Around it extends the plain, covered with verdure cut into by the creek which now looks like a stream of silver. The valley is bounded on one side by hills which slope to their summits, on the other by precipitous rocky ridges, crowned with gentle acclivities. On the meadows horses & cattle are grazing. Near the garrison soldiers are engaged in athletic sports."

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(a) (b) (c)

Seemingly paradise snuggled in here among the mountains of Idaho, that they exhibit a fair epitome of the interior life on the army frontier. There is no breastwork or intrenchment or anything to entitle it to the name of fort. Post is the better. Conceive of a level space on the left bank of a mountain stream, Lapwai Creek, some 300 yards square, neatly fenced in. Two or three story-&-half houses, frame buildings with shingle roofs - long enough ~~[illegible]~~ for two sets of quarters with a porch ~~along~~ across the entire front of each, along one ~~the~~ side of the square opposite the creek. Opposite one ~~the~~ "men's quarters" two frame buildings each 90 x 30 feet. The adjutants office. ~~in~~ quartermaster's & commissary depot are on one flank. The guard house on the other ~~flank~~ facing inwards. The Hospital, laundresses' quarters & stables are arranged without the square - the hospital near the officers line - and the others near the creek. With two companies & some ladies not always arranged for in quarters, there is at Lapwai a shortness in supply so that Lieut Theller temporarily in command occupied a vacant set of quarters near the creek ~~of quarters~~ belonging to the Post Trader - a little one story house of apparently three small rooms & a kitchen. It would never be right to expose the wealth of one of these little homes, but owing to limited pay & transportation, it cannot be

Headquarters Department of the Columbia,

Portland, Oregon, 1871.

in a superabundance of this world's goods - yet by the indescribable tact, & by a delicate genius, the lady transforms trunk boxes, firkins &c into the nicest lounges, washstands & tables - and by a curious collocation or arrangement of little things, pictures, brackets, leaves & grasses &c. &c. makes the poorest specimen of a room as cozy and homelike as can be. Just how it is done nobody can tell, but the effect is produced. I asked Mrs Shelton if she enjoyed this kind of life - she said "very much - Japan is a very pleasant post." Now is not this right? Are the creature comforts you enjoy in & near the large cities the only ones? With a few that love & honor you around you may you not be even more contented here than where you must spend many weary hours in trying to conform to the frankfurtian formalities & exactions of a large society? At anyrate, the officers & their families at Nagasaki seemed as bright & happy as we do at Portland - as sunshiny as their own beautiful valley in Idaho. By riding nearly all night friday and all day saturday Capt Sladen & I made our journey back to Walla Walla. ~~At the~~ The next day is Sunday. By special invitation of Col. & Mrs Perry I attend the Episcopal Church, but with some twinges of conscience, as my own household of faith is not large here & Mr Chamberlain, the good pastor, needs all possible encouragement. I did, however, enjoy the service of Mr Wells: Away from the city adornements, there is always

Return to Walla Walla - The Churches - Mr Chamberlain.

always something fresh & cheering & tasteful in an Episcopal church - plain & simple & yet not barren & forbidding. This one is very wholesome, cleanly & well lighted and the service was inspiriting throughout.

In the afternoon I sent Mr Chancellor & his family - We had but one service. I had the pleasure of listening to him the next evening at my reception - He is a wonderfully incisive thinker & speaker - holding his audience in breathless attention even while telling the people things they did not much relish. The Poet of Walla Walla. - Home - the reception

The few companies, three of cavalry & two of infantry, were inspected the next day - Walla Walla, post, is ~~now~~ finely located to inspire the numerous Indian tribes in this region with proper respect - Colville & Spokane are in the light of its outposts. The Indians are intelligent enough to know within what ease they can be reached from this center - Walla-Walla is a wide awake, enterprizing little city - in the midst of fertile hills & valleys - I shall never forget the reception I had from the people at their house here - Tables were arranged with substantials, & luxurious fruit of largest size & flowers tastefully displayed - A fine healthy people, robust men & beautiful ladies came in to greet me - The editor of a democratic paper ~~st~~ detailed pleasantly my pedigree & civil history - Speeches were made by judges, ministers ~~officers~~ and other citizens - One seldom sees a happier

occasion - and yet something unusual in this country, I hear. There was no wine or strong drink - and therefore none of the unpleasant consequences that often accompany festival such a feast. By the kindness of Capt. Harris I was able to return through the deep dust to Wallula in a two horse spring wagon - with the wind ahead the clouds of dust are behind you & harmless. The steamers come down the Columbia so rapidly that we had much waiting at landings stations to fill out the time - and noticed the immense amount of wheat brought down & transferred and the equally large quantities of merchandise of all kinds in store to go up by the returning steamers. The Pacific Coast may need more of population, but it has already a healthy wide awake, energetic people! Thursday night found us at Portland amongst the children clapping hands at their papas' return.

Yours truly
O. O. Howard

Portland, Oregon, Nov. 19th 1874.

To|
Rev. Lyman Abbott
Editor, Christian Weekly -