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DR. JOHN M'LOUGHLIN AND OLD OREGON

OPENING CHAPTERS OF MRS. EVA EMERY DYE'S ROMANCE—PUBLISHED SERIALLY

CHAPTER I.

An American on the Columbia.

1832.

SIXTY years ago, on a green terrace sloping up from the north bank of the Columbia, not far from the mouth of the Willamette, lay old Fort Vancouver. It might be likened to the Dutch stockade at New Amsterdam, or to a rude stronghold of Central Europe in the middle ages, with a little village clustered under its guns.

Fort Vancouver was fortified in primitive fashion. There was a stout palisade of fir posts, 20 feet high, sharpened at both ends and drive into the ground. There were thick double-ribbed and rivited gates in front and rear, ornamented with brass padlocks and ponderous keys. A grim old three-storied log tower formed a bastion at the northwest corner, bristling with portholes and cannon. Some rough-hewn stores, magazines and workshops were ranged inside the enclosure, with an open court in the middle where the Indians brought their game and peltries. Directly opposite the main entrance stood the Governor's residence, a somewhat pretentious two-story structure of heavy timber, mortised Canadian fashion and painted white. Here Dr. John McLoughlin, governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, west of the Rocky Mountains, and his chief aide, Douglas, afterward knighted Sir James, first governor of British Columbia, dispensed hospitality after the fashion of Saxon thanes or lairds of a Highland castle.

One autumn evening in 1832, a salute was fired at the gates of Fort Vancouver. "Some belated trapper," said the traders in the hall. Guests were luxuries too rare to be anticipated in the far-away Oregon wild. At a word from Governor McLoughlin the porter unlocked the gate and 11 strangers entered, clad all in leather, dripping with rain, and garnished with as many weapons as Robin Hood in Sherwood Forest. Dr. McLoughlin fixed a keen eye upon the wayfarers as Bruce ushered them into the hall.

"Wyeth is my name," said the tall, wiry leader. "Nathaniel J. Wyeth, from Boston; on a trading trip to the Columbia."

"Bless me!" cried the amazed McLoughlin, extending his hand. "Bless me, 'tis a marvelous journey. Few could survive it. Welcome to Fort Vancouver."

Not since Astor's defeat in 1812 had any American tried to trap or trade in Oregon. Unmolested for 20 years, the British fur-traders had reared their palisades and filled their forts with furs. That the young republic on the Atlantic shore might stretch their fingers westward, that a highway might be found across the mountains—these were vague contingencies!

Despite his travel-worn garb, Dr. McLoughlin recognized an honest man in the tall, blonde trader from Yankee-land. He and his followers were assigned to quarters among the fur-trading knights at Fort Vancouver. All Winter Captain Wyeth lived at the fort, studying methods and evolving plans for future action. All Winter Captain Wyeth watched for a ship that never came. In March he started back on the long journey overland to Boston. The ship had been lost at sea. A second was dispatched and the Yankee Captain reappeared on the Columbia.

Within sound of the morning guns of Fort Vancouver, Captain Wyeth set up a log fort, palisaded like that of his rival, on the beautiful island of Wapato, at the mouth of the Willamette River. Out of that ship, the "May Dacre," he brought goats, sheep, pigs, chickens, Hawaiians. The flitting forms of "the Bostons," as the Indians called them, in their leather pantaloons and white wool hats, was a constant menace to the occupants of the British fur fort. It brought a breath of that old battle when Hudson's Bay and Northwesters fought in the North. While they treated the frank and manly Bostonian with politeness, with kindness, and even generosity, they watched him like eagles and shadowed him like spirits. He built Fort Hall on the Snake; they set up Fort Boise to draw away his trade. Did he send his men to trap or buy beaver, the Hudson's Bay men were there before him, behind him, around him. They put up the value of furs to a ruinous figure. They sold Indian goods at 50 per cent less than he could afford. Out of an annual fund put by for the purpose they harassed him on every hand. "Competition is war, war to the knife, fierce and deadly," but in this case, as usual, it was "concealed under gentlemanly foils and masks and padded gloves."

Neighborly offices passed between the forts. Governor McLoughlin sent over presents of fresh vegetables. Wyeth paddled over on rainy nights to join the jolly boys in Bachelors' Hall. Many and many an hour he discussed history and government with Dr. McLoughlin. But underlying all their intercourses was the discovery of each other's plans—friendship and strategy. Wyeth concealed his schemes. Nevertheless, whenever his men were hauling their boats down to the water the ever-present Hudson's Bay men were already launched and met the Indians first.

An unprecedented rainy Winter came upon the Columbia. Heavy mists enveloped the hills; the clouds came down among the trees; drip, drip, drip went the rain, surpassing the deluge of 40 days and 40 nights. Soft chinooks blew up from the sea, snow slid down from the Cascade tips, the very Columbia conspired, creeping at dead of night into Wyeth's fort and soaking his precious bales. In spite of calm and cool philosophy, Captain Wyeth saw his inevitable disadvantage against the hereditary power of the Hudson's Bay Company, with its hundreds of employes in practice for generation. Bankruptcy shook its finger in his face. His handsome fortune and the credit of Boston merchants were invested. Still the fish refused to tangle themselves in his nets. The Blackfeet killed his trappers, stole his furs. Out of 200 men, 100 had been killed or had deserted to the rival. Even the superstitious Indians refused to trade, because, they said, long ago a Boston ship brought the deadly fever that killed all the people on Wapato.

Once Wyeth referred to Dr. McLoughlin's hereditary influence with the Indians.

"My hereditary influence?" echoed the doctor. "Bless you, Mr. Wyeth, bless you. I had no hereditary influence! I made the Indians fear me. I compelled obedience. I studied justice. I cultivated confidence. It takes time, Mr. Wyeth, it takes time."

"True, doctor, but you have a great corporation behind you, with unlimited capital. Your servants have intermarried with the tribes to hold the trade. Our policies are diametrically opposed. Yours is to perpetuate savagism, to keep Oregon as a game preserve, a great English hunting park. Mine would be to fill it with a civilized people."

"How can they get here, Mr. Wyeth? Even India is not so far. Oregon is the very end of the world, a whole year's voyage around Cape Horn or Good Hope. Shut off by rock-ribbed mountains, deserts, savages, the ocean, how can they get here?"

"Overland from the United States," answered the Bostonian.

Dr. McLoughlin laughed incredulously. "When you have leveled the mountains, cultivated the desert, annihilated distance, then, and not before. Besides, the United States is too young, too sparsely settled. Look at her miles of unoccupied Mississippi Valley. No, no, no, Mr. Wyeth, if Oregon is ever colonized it will be by sea, from England. We shall not live to see it, but our children may."

The doctor's ruddy face was thoughtful. He knew the secret of Wyeth's discontent. It pained him to feel that Captain Wyeth attributed in any way his failure to the company. The doctor fidgeted with his cane. He spoke this thought.

"What more can I do for you, Mr. Wyeth—consistently with my duty to my company? Have I not treated you kindly? Have I not given your men work when your own plans failed? As for civilization, was I not glad to engage your lad, Solomon Smith, to teach our boys and girls? Did I not hail with joy your good missionary, Jason Lee, and help to establish him in the Valley?"

Wyeth was silent. He could find no fault with Dr. McLoughlin; and yet Dr. McLoughlin had ruined him. The doctor walked up to him. He had a very affectionate, winning manner. McLoughlin, one of the most urbane gentlemen in the world, moreover really liked Captain Wyeth, and was sorry to see him driven to the wall. He took his hand as a father would.

"Business is business, Mr. Wyeth. I like your open, manly way. I find you fair in contracts. I believe you to be a gentleman and an honest man. You support morality and encourage industry. If you—will come over to us—Wyeth, yourself to the fort—join us—then I, myself, will forward your credentials to the house in London by the next express. What say you?"

The sturdy Bostonian reflected, then simply answered: "I cannot join you, doctor."

"Then I regret that I can do nothing for you," answered the doctor, suddenly stiff and distant and yet with sadness in his eye. "You see my duty to my company forbids it."

Wyeth looked into the benevolent face. Slowly he added: "But—I will sell."

So Nathaniel J. Wyeth sold to the Hudson's Bay Company for what it was willing to give, and left the country in defeat.

But, though he left, an important man remained. That man was Jason Lee, the missionary.

Long ago, when Lewis and Clark entered the Flathead country, the high chief looked in their pale faces and said: "They are chilled. See how cold their cheeks are; build fires, bring robes."

Before the blazing fires, wrapped in soft buffalo robes, the white men's cheeks grew red. Perspiration burst from every pore. The robes slipped off, but the solicitous Indians kept putting them back. General Clark then arose and spoke to the kind-hearted Flatheads of a great people toward the rising sun. "They worship the Great Spirit," he said. "He has made them strong and brave and rich."

"Does he give them wigwams and much buffalo?" asked the Flatheads.

"Yes," answered the General.

Lewis and Clark smoked the pipe of friendship and passed on. The Nez Perces Flatheads talked around their fires. A Hudson's Bay trader came.

"Do you know about the Great Spirit?" inquired the childlike Flatheads.

"Yes; you can learn about him at our school at Red River."

The chief sent three sons to the distant Red River. When they returned they taught their people a rudimentary form of worship.

A great religious movement passed among the Nez Perces Flatheads and on up into the Shushwap country on the Fraser. Old traders record it in their memoirs. By and by an American trapper came.

"Do you know about the Great Spirit?" still inquired the childlike Flatheads.

"Yes," answered the trapper, "there is a book that tells about him."

"Where can we find the book?" insisted the Flatheads.

"Oh, away off in a distant city where the traders go."

The Indians held a council and decided to send for the white man's wonderful book.

After a long and weary wandering two Indians entered the frontier city of St. Louis and asked for General Clark. There was much wa-wa (talk-talk) and inquiry for the book. The people gathered and curiously eyed these representatives of a tribe a thousand miles beyond the farthest that had ever appeared in the streets of St. Louis. Shawnees, Pawnees, Arapahoes, Sioux, had come, but never before a Flathead, never before anybody inquiring for a book of the Great Spirit.

General Clark was interested in Indians, in furs, in lands, in wars and treaties. He banqueted these Indian ambassadors. He sent them with his servant to see the lions of the city. They visited cathedrals and shops and shows, but found no book. At last, tired and disappointed, they turned back and sought the way to their own country.

"Is it true that those Indians came all that distance for a book of the Great Spirit?" said Catlin, the Indian artist.

"They came for that and nothing else," said General Clark.

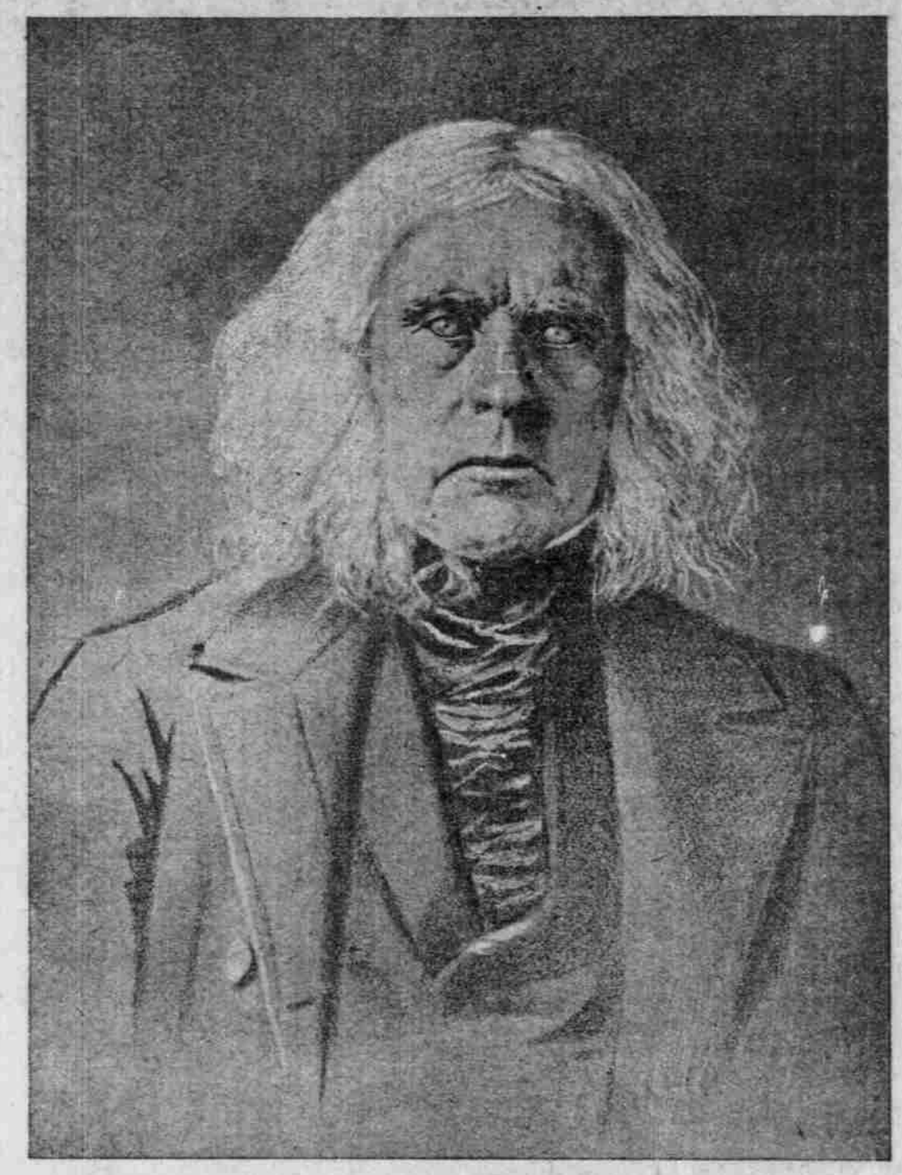
A young clerk in one of the St. Louis furrooms wrote to his friends in the East. It found its way into the papers. The Macedonian cry swept like a trumpet summons through the churches.

"Who will carry the book to the Great Spirit to the Flatheads?"

The chief luminary of the Methodist conference answered: "I know but one man—Jason Lee."

Like the voice of God, Jason Lee heard the Nez Perces call—he thrilled. In a day he tore himself from the entreaty of friends to enter upon a journey that was not ended in a year. With his nephew, Daniel Lee, and two other assistants, he accompanied Wyeth on that second trip in 1834. So came the missionary to the realm of the king of the Columbia. And that tall, angular Puritan, born just over the Canadian border, was just the man Dr. McLoughlin wanted for his settlement at Champoeg. The doctor set his plate beside his own, and before them all discussed the question of location.

"You have no call to go up there among the Flatheads, Mr. Lee, where we cannot protect you. We have plenty of Indians right here. Above the Falls of the Willamette there lies a beautiful valley. Besides the Indians there is a settlement of French Canadians, with their Indian wives and half-breed children. Those Canadians are your own countrymen, Mr. Lee, far from the advantages of school and church. Then, too, I can assist you here with my boats and my influence. Up there in the Flathead country you will be far cut off from a base of supplies and from communication with the civilized world."



DR. JOHN M'LOUGHLIN.

These arguments impressed the missionary. Of course, Dr. McLoughlin wanted his people at Champoeg instructed. Still more he wanted the mission a dependency of the fort.

Lee went up the Willamette and found a valley fair as the happy land of Rasselas, set between the hills. "I will build here," he said. Out of Wyeth's ship, the May Dacre, Lee unloaded his supplies, and for a trifle engaged Indian canoemen to transport them to the site of the future mission.

"I warn you against these missionaries," said John Dunn, a clerk in the Indian shop at Fort Vancouver. "I warn you. Look out for them. They are very meek and humble now; but the time will come when they will rise up to question your authority here, and even your right to Vancouver itself."

"Tut, tut, tut!" laughed the liberal doctor. "Do you grudge the poor Indian a chance? For my part, I think the missionaries show a very good spirit in coming to this neglected Coast."

CHAPTER II.

The Coming of the Whitmans.

1836.

WHEN Wyeth was returning defeated to the states he met a vision in the mountains, a beautiful woman with golden hair and snowy brow, riding like Joan of old to conquest—Narcissa Whitman. With her rode Eliza Spalding, a slender, dark-eyed devotee, who back in the States had knelt in a lonely wayside inn to consecrate her heart to Oregon. Two brides were on that wonderful journey, farther than flew the imperial eagles of Rome, to their lifework on the Columbia.

Two brides!—there is a romance about modern missions that the apostolic fathers never knew—two missionary brides were the first white women to cross the continent.

Two grooms, knights-errant, rode at their sides—Marcus Whitman, a young physician, strong, resolute, with fire in his deep blue eyes and courage imprinted on every feature to the tips of his auburn curls, he, too, had heard of the Flathead messengers for the white man's Book of the Great Spirit; Henry Spalding, a youth, long, lank, prematurely wrinkled and sharp featured with thought—he, too, was fired with apostolic ardor. While yet a student in a village academy, Henry Spalding had bent the knee and begged the hand of Narcissa Prentice. To him and to every other suitor the beautiful girl said no, until young Dr. Whitman came riding like Lochinvar out of the West.

It was the Sabbath when Dr. Whitman reached his native village in Central New York from his first exploring tour to the Rocky Mountains. In the midst of the sermon, he whom they thought thousands of miles away, walked into church, followed by two tall, blanketed Indians.

"Marcus!" cried his mother, rising from her pew and stretching forth her arms. "Marcus!" echoed the heart of a maid in the village choir. In a few days there was a wedding at the old-fashioned house of Judge Prentice. There was a missionary farewell at the village church. Long after, it was a tradition in that village that when the choir broke down in sobs, the sweet soprano of Narcissa Whitman, the missionary bride, carried the farewell hymn alone, like a skylark to the sky:

Scenes of sacred peace and pleasure,
Holy days and Sabbath bell,
Richest, brightest, sweetest treasure,
Can I say a last farewell?

They started. Cincinnati was a village in the woods; Chicago unknown; St. Louis, the end of the West. Oregon was foreign land in 1836.

"You can never get the women through," said Catlin, the Indian artist, at Pittsburg. "They will both be kidnaped," said old trappers on the borders. "They are white squaws, white as snow," was the word that flew from tribe to tribe, as under the convoy of the American Fur Company, they entered the great, wild land of the West. For miles the enraptured Indians followed in silent admiration.

"This is the end of the wagon route," said the fur-traders, stopping their train of carts at Fort Laramie, on the Platte. "We always pack our mules from this point over the mountains."

"But we must take a wagon on account of the women," said Dr. Whitman. "Did not Bonneville take carts over to Green River? Did not Ashley haul a cannon to Great Salt Lake?"

"Yes," admitted the traders, "and then Bridger tried it, but they all gave it up—left their carts in the mountains. Bonneville had no end of trouble—if he hadn't had a blacksmith along for constant repairs he never could have got through. The fact is, it is not considered practicable."

Dr. Whitman had crossed those Alps before. If Bonneville took a wagon across, he could. "I know we can do it—I can almost see a road," said the dauntless doctor, with that positive assurance that always won half his battles.

"Go ahead, then," laughed the traders, "good wheel route to Green River will double our profits. We will gladly send a man with you to help explore a way."

With the doctor's wagon and a fur-trader's cart the little company pushed on, leaving Fort Laramie, the last outpost of civilized man, on the foothills at their rear. Dr. Whitman made a wagon route his special object of study. With now a tip-up and now a turnover, and now a long detour among the ragged pines, he followed the way of the Great South Pass through the heart of the Rocky Mountains. Mr. Spalding brought the cows; W. H. Gray, an assistant, drove the packhorses. In smooth mountain meadows the women rode in the wagon; in shelving, rough defiles they mounted their horses, cheering their husbands over this barrier ridge of the world, supposed to forever shut the East from the West.

The magical word flew over the mountains—hundreds of Nez Perces, Flatheads, Snakes and Bannocks came out to meet them.

Two Nez Perces chiefs went up on the heights to escort them down. There, on the summit of the continent, the flag was unfurled. Under its starry folds, facing the west, the little band knelt, and like Columbus, took possession in the name of God.

Themoment the two brides alighted at the trader's rendezvous on Green River, scores of Indian women pressed to grasp their hands and kiss their cheeks. A handful of bronzed mountaineers, so long in the wilds they had forgotten the looks of a white woman, pulled off their caps in memory of their mothers.

"Thar!" said Joe Meek, an American trapper, "thar are immigrants that the Hudson's Bay Company cannot drive out."

"You must leave your wagon here," said everybody at the rendezvous—everybody but the Indians. They followed with wonder the musical chick-a-chick clattering over the rocks. They waved their arms toward the hills, they chattered and jabbered and put their shoulders to the wheels.

"We can take it through," said Dr. Whitman. The Indians went ahead and helped him hunt the road that afterward became the great overland route to the West. Night after night, late and tired, the doctor came puffing into camp.

The wagon stuck in the creeks, it upset on the steep hillsides, and then the axletree broke.

"Leave it, Marcus," said Mrs. Whitman, reining up her beautiful bay. "Let us have no more trouble with it."

But no, the doctor made a cart of the back wheels and lashed on the forewheels. "I shall take it through, Narcissa, in some shape or other," he said.

"You can get it no farther," said the Hudson's Bay men at the cottonwood stockade of Fort Hall—the fort that Wyeth had sold to McLoughlin.

But the doctor went ahead and swam the deep, swift Snake. Cart and mules turned upside down and were almost lost, but with the iron grip the doctor brought them out on the other side and safe to Fort Boise. Then all rose up. "'Tis a crazy scheme to take the wagon on," they cried. "The season is late, the animals are failing, the wagon is a source of delay, the route in crossing the Blue Mountains is said to be utterly impassable for it."

"I will send for it by and by," said the determined missionary, stowing the battered vehicle away in a shed at old Fort Boise under the care of Monsieur Payette, the clerk in charge.

Over the scorched plains of the Snake, with a brigade of Hudson's Bay traders, into the cool groves of the Blue Mountains they rode. Tom McKay's excellent hunters brought down for them the elk and the antelope. On the last day of August, 1836, three days ahead of their party, Dr. and Mrs. Whitman galloped up to the gates of old Fort Walla Walla. Heralds had gone before, a watch was on the ramparts, the gates were open. Monsieur Pierre Pambrun, the courtly chief factor, assisted from her steed the pioneer of all white women across the hills to the River of the West. That night the wearied travelers slept in the west bastion, full of portholes and filled with firearms. A great cannon, always loaded, stood behind the door. The water swished by the walls. The wind howled down the Columbia, shaking the driftwood donjon till their voices were lost in the racket. A courier rode post to Fort Vancouver.

"They come," said Dr. McLoughlin, "not as traders, but as allies, to teach our Indians peace and industry."

Seated in the fur-traders' boats with Chief Factor Pambrun and his voyagers, the Americans glided down the Columbia, beyond the drifting sand, past the log huts of the Walla Walla fishermen, who, from point to point, stood sweeping their nets in the foaming waters, on into the high dark dikes that shut in the tortuous river. Here they entered on elder, grander Hudson, lacking only castles on the cliffs to give a human touch. But there were castles arrested mid-air from the volcanic throat of St. Helen's, in ages long gone by, columns upon columns crowned with towers, columns swelled like the bastions of ancient citadels—basaltic bluffs, turreted with the pinnacles and shafts and domes that guard this gateway of the floods.

Where the Columbia breaks through the Cascade range, they looked where never white women looked before, on the dark foundations of the hills planted deep in the turbulent water, and rising hundreds of feet in the heavens. The whitecaps rolled as at sea. A gale came up from the west, and the little boats rose and fell like sea-gulls on the surges. Mount Hood, visible for miles, grew to life size. St. Helens reared her graceful, tapering cone above the distant firs. Within the curving inlets vast amphitheaters with columnar tiers of seats outdid the Roman Coliseum. On every headland grim promontories frowned like forts of some Titanic age.

The second day they reached the foaming Dalles. In three days, hark! the roaring Cascades dashed their billows on the rocks. From shore to shore a rapidly declining, irregular sheet of snow-white foam slid to the level below. Grander rose the mountains, 4000 and 5000 feet on either hand, cut by livid gashes of ravine exposing the ribs of mother earth. Not a lip moved, not a word was spoken as the French-Iroquois boatman stood at his post and with a skillful dip turned the flying canoe from the point of some projecting rock, while on every side seethed and yawned the great green caves of water. Should a heart fail or a cheek blanch now? No, each face was as immobile as the naked Indian on yonder rock that stood like a statue cut in bronze spearing the passing salmon.

At the portages bow the Indians wondered to see the men helping the women over the rough places. Why, they did not even have to carry the baggage!

Fort Vancouver was ready. The flags were flying. Two ships lay in the river, the "Nereid," a man-of-war just from London, and bound for the Northwest Coast with bales of Indian goods, and the barque "Columbia," about to sail on her return voyage with furs and peltries. The stirring song of the voyageurs rang over the terraced plain. The stately McLoughlin and the knightly Douglas stood on the shore to welcome these guests whose coming would unfold a world of change. It was an historic time. Mighty men and lovely women stood there, who had trod a continent bearing the cross, farther than rode the Hun of old, farther than the Helvetian, farther than even the Celt to the verge of Europe. It was a scene to shine on canvas and live in story, like the landing of the Pilgrims, like the march of Constantine, like Augustine in England, like Paul on the hills of Greece. Governor McLoughlin offered his arm to Mrs. Whitman, black Douglas assisted Mrs. Spalding, and all passed into the fort.

It was a welcome rest after the long days on the plains and the mountains, after the camps in dust and sand, after the suns and frost and fatigue. It seemed like a dream to find this roomy old stronghold in the wilderness. Primeval Indians paddled and chanted along the streams. The long, low halls, the echoing floors, the roaring, wide-mouthed chimneys, the weapons of the chase and elkskin armor on the wall, all told that the fur-traders perpetuated a storied past.

What a change was the bounteous board from buffalo beef and mountain bread, flour and water fried in tallow. The best cooks of Canada waited on the fur-trader. Carving was carried to perfection at Fort Vancouver. Salmon, ducks, geese and venison, the choice of an epicure, was daily fare. And fruit—through the postern gate they walked in the garden musky with odors of peaches and pears, slender-limbed apple-trees broken with their golden weights, and rows of plum and fig trees crimsoned in the sun. Between the neat squares the old Scotch gardener had graveled his walks and lined them with strawberry vines, and at the far end stood the grape-grown Summer-house where Rae had wooed his Eloise.

But Dr. Whitman could not rest. Whatever he ought to do, that he must do without delay.

In its great westward sweep to the sea the Columbia narrows at The Dalles into a chasm that a fiend might leap. Here the salmon crowded in such prodigious numbers in their journey from the sea that from time immemorial it had been a famous fishing spot. In the Summer season thousands of Indians gathered there and hung enormous baskets from the rocks. The leaping salmon landed in the baskets in schools and shoals, and the watchful Indians hauled up tons and tons a day. It was like a great fair when the tribes of the interior came down to trade for salmon at The Dalles.

"Here," said Whitman, "is a strategic point. Here will I locate my mission."

"No," said Dr. McLoughlin, "the Dalles Indians are fishing Indians, treacherous and unreliable. Go up among the hunting Indians of the Walla Walla. Do you know that the English troopers are recruited from the fox-hunters of England? The Indians of the chase are the troopers of this continent. They can do anything."

"But can they be tamed?" asked Dr. Whitman.

"The possibilities of those horse Indians cannot be measured," answered Dr. McLoughlin. "They are in a state of nature, uncorrupted, strong and brave and free. These canoe Indians are in the process of decay."

"But how can I locate so far from my base of supplies?" hesitated the missionary.

"I will send your goods in my boats for a trifle. Every Summer our brigades go up the Columbia with supplies for the interior. Your credit shall always be good. Our stations at Fort Walla Walla and Fort Colvile are open to your orders."

While their husbands were gone, looking at the upper country, Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding remained guests at Fort Vancouver. In a day their love unlocked the hearts of Madame McLoughlin and her stately daughter, Eloise, and the charming Mrs. Douglas. The trader's children crowded about the delicate Mrs. Spalding like bees around a honeysuckle. She could draw, she could paint, and spin, and weave, and knit, and they watched her fingers with curious eagerness. Far back on the plains she had cemented a lasting friendship with the Indian women by her quick intuition of their wants and her readiness in learning Nez Perce, but to Mrs. Whitman the men bowed down as at a shrine before a golden goddess. The silken cape that encircled her soft, white neck seemed like the fluttering of wings, her golden hair like an aureole of light. When she sang—40 years after—tears leaped to the eyes of the old fur-traders at the memory of the prima donna of Fort Vancouver. Quickly the children and the voyageurs caught from her lips the plaintive, "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night," to vie henceforth with their French chansons in the forest.

At Dr. McLoughlin's request Mrs. Whitman heard his daughter recite every day. Eloise had the fresh enthusiasm that has never been cloyed by schools and tasks. While the girls of New England were patiently working their samplers, this princess of the Columbia was embroidering caps and moccasins. While the girls of New England practiced formal scales in music, Eloise was picking up the tunes of voyageurs, and might often be seen in her light canoe darting across the Columbia, singing as she went the wild songs of old Canada.

If the missionary brides instructed the ladies of Fort Vancouver, they, too, were taught in the lore of lustrous sables, silky sea otter, thick brown mink and soft black beaver. Eloise could tell them that the fiery fox was a prize in China, that the Russian would give a hundred silver rubles for the sea otter, that the chinook slid down and speared as it slept on the shore, that the dappled bearskin would line the coach of an English noble, that the blue fox went to the Czar for a royal cloak, and the silver-gray to an Indian rajah.

"And do I care to wear the beautiful furs?" asked Eloise. "Oh, no; you see, I know how they get them. I know how our men face Winter and Summer in the lonely mountains. It is not play. My father says hunting the beaver is the most laborious work in the world."

Never did guests more regretted leave the halls of Fort Vancouver. Had it been possible, they would have been detained permanently, but Winter rains were setting in, sure sign that storms were whirling around Mount Hood. They must reembark for the upper country. Many a token of beads and embroidery was placed in their hands by the skilled ladies of the fort as Whitman and Spalding bore away their brides to the distant mission.

Dr. Whitman had planted his mission among the knightly Cayuses, the imperial tribe of Oregon, who in the long ago ruled to the mouth of the Columbia, and whose herds now covered the plains from the foothills of Mount Hood to the borders of the Snake. It was on a green spot called by the Indians Waillatpu, the Rye Grass Meadow, that Whitman halted on the banks of the Walla Walla.

Chief Factor Pambrun had ridden out with him, both of their horses belly-deep in the rye grass, to decide upon the location. All around lay level green prairie, bathing its cottonwood edge in the winding river. Away to the east the Blue Mountains were hazy along the horizon. Far to the west were the snows of Hood, that the Indians pointed out as the mountain near which the White-Headed Eagle dwelt. Twenty-five miles to the north lay Fort Walla Walla on a narrow stretch of sand between the Columbia and the Walla Walla. On the hills around grazed the beautiful spotted horses of the Walla Walla-Cayuses. Here and there the smoke curled up from the conical skin lodges, and thickly gathered all around them were mounted Indians eagerly watching the decision of the missionary. They were clean, well-dressed, noble-looking men, those Walla Walla-Cayuses, with their eagle eyes and fine, straight noses; men that looked well worth the efforts of a Whitman or a Wesley. Yellow Serpent, Pio-pio-mox-mox, was their chief, a haughty, handsome Indian, fond of dress and parade. By the side of Yellow Serpent rode his little son, a lad of 12 years, baptized by Jason Lee with the name of a bishop of the Methodist Church, Elijah Hedding. Already Elijah had studied a year at the mission on the Willamette.

There were present also the Cayuse brothers of Elijah's mother, Tauitau and Five Crows, head men in the council, and Tiloukaikt, a great dark chief, with a voice like a brazen trumpet. As soon as the decision was made, Chief Factor Pambrun sent out two workmen from Fort Walla Walla and the Indians all turned in to help build Whitman's adobe mansion.

Spalding had set up his tabernacle 125 miles to the north at Lapwai, on the Clearwater River, a few miles from the present site of Lewiston, Idaho. Here, among the teachable Nez Perces, the patient, persevering missionary and his gifted wife accomplished a work that has never been surpassed in any age among a savage people. Like Pastor Oberlin in the hills of Alsace, Whitman and Spalding set examples of industry, and plowed and planted and sowed, and shared the harvest with their people. For a while wherever they traveled through the country hundreds of Indians followed to see the white men who brought the book of the Great Spirit, and to hear them preach at night. Spalding's Indians would sometimes spend the entire night repeating what he had taught them in the evening. Gray-haired men and chiefs became pupils of their own little children in learning to read and write.

Did the presence of those women suggest a thought to Jason Lee? No; long since he had written to the board to select and send him a suitable wife.

CHAPTER III.

The Wedding of Jason Lee.

1837.

AGAIN a salute resounded at the gates of Fort Vancouver.

"Who the devil's come at this time o' night?" grumbled the sleepy fur-traders, turning on their couches. The porter crawled out of his lodge in his nightcap. To the impatient knockers outside a heavy step sounded and a gruff voice demanded, "Who's there?"

"Strangers from the States on the brig 'Diana.'"

The great key turned, the gate swung creaking on its hinges. This time several men entered, with their wives, followed by three fair damsels, half revealed by the light of the moon. The old porter led the shadowy figures up to McLoughlin's door.

"Who is it?" inquired the doctor, in dressing-gown and moccasins, holding a candle above his head. The white locks framed an almost youthful face as he leaned, peering into the night.

"A reinforcement to Jason Lee's mission," answered the spokesman of the party.

"More missionaries?" laughed the doctor. "Well, well, surely we'll all get converted by and by. Come in, come in." He took each hand with the grasp of a friend, and turning, led into the great dining hall, where a log still smouldered on the hearth.

"Be seated, be seated." The doctor rummaged around, poking the log with his cane, and pushing up a settee. "Burris, Burris!" he called from an adjoining door. In short order the major-domo appeared with candles that cast weird flickers against the windows and the high, dark ceiling.

"And so Congress is still discussing that Maine boundary?" Dr. McLoughlin was saying, when the butler reappeared with a steaming tray. A dusky Kanaka (Hawaiian) poured the tea, while Burris retired to pile Indian blankets on the bunk-like beds of the fort.

Before daylight Dr. McLoughlin called "Money-coon!" An Indian rolled out of his blanket in the barracks.

"Get the dispatch boat. Take these papers to Jason Lee at the mission as quick as you can."

The Indian disappeared. There was a click at the boathouse door, a gleam on the river. Forty-eight hours later McLoughlin, glass in hand, described two canoes laboring up the billowy Columbia in a tempest of wind. "See, he even comes in a storm!"

All turned to banter the maiden who now was to behold her future husband. Through all that voyage Anna Maria Pitman had kept saying to herself, "I may not marry him; I may not marry him."

The little company sat, with Dr. McLoughlin in a room facing the gate, when it swung back and a tall, broad-shouldered man past 30, approached at the rate of 75 strides a minute. "See the conquering hero comes," whispered the teasing companions.

Anna Maria raised her eyes, and at a glance took in the Yankee make-up, the Puritan face, with its long, light hair, spiritual eyes, and prominent nose. Anywhere it was a face to be remembered, but to her poetic mind a certain halo glowed about that high retreating forehead. Dr. McLoughlin brought them face to face. There was a letter in Jason Lee's pocket saying, "She has been sent out on purpose for you."

"They really took me at my word!" thought the missionary. "Well, well, well! Though a lady should travel the world over to become my wife, yet I cannot marry her unless upon acquaintance I become satisfied that such a step will be conducive to our happiness. Judgment alone, under the influence of an enlightened conscience, must decide this question."

A pale pink suffused Miss Pitman's neck and brow under Jason Lee's scrutinizing gaze. They had met before in New York City, but his recollection had been, "She is not a lady that I should fancy for a wife."

There may have been inward tumult, but outwardly Jason Lee was as calm as on that thirsty day on the plains when he stopped the cows for a cup of milk

(Concluded on Page 37.)