

LATEST FROM THE ARMY.

FT. WATERS, May 14, 1848.

Yesterday afternoon the detachment reached this place, after a fatiguing march of eleven days, and are encamped in and around the fort. We found much difficulty in crossing the streams on our route, having to ferry the baggage and ourselves in small canoes, and swim our horses and oxen.

After crossing DeShutes, a detachment of 40 men, with three days' rations, were sent to scour the country up John Days' river, and bring in cattle if any could be found. They were out five days, finding nothing but a few Indians, and consequently two days without provisions—suffering every thing, during that time, that hunger could inflict.

At our first camp on this side of John Days' river, we were met by three of the principal men of the Nez Perce nation. Their object was to offer the services of a number of their men to assist us in the war, and have the Americans appoint them a Chief in the place of Ellis, who, they informed us, requested them, when dying, to remain at peace with the whites.—We received them in a friendly manner, and next morning, Col. Lee left the detachment and came on to the Fort with them, where they are yet detained, in council with the officers. There are also two Cayuse chiefs, viz: Tawatoe and Sticcas, and one Spokane and one Peluche chief, all wishing peace.

The fact is, all the Indians in the upper country are much alarmed at the presence of so large a force as we now have in the field.

Teloquoit, and the murderers, are scattered along the Columbia, between here and Fort Colville, and we yet have hopes of getting their stock and part of them, at least. It is said that Tamsuckie is close by the Fort, hid, and that the Nez Percés know his whereabouts. Five Crows has had his arm amputated by the Indians, and has returned to his place on the Umatilla, to die.

This morning Col. Lee, for some reason inexplicable to be, declined, in presence of the whole army, to take the chief command; and consequently, Waters is our Colonel. Lee was then elected Lieutenant Colonel.

I need not describe to you the appearance of the Fort, or its comforts to a fatigued soldier—but one of our boys remarked this morning that he would prefer purgatory to that place, as much as he would a decent coffee house, to it. Fleas and dust, exposed to the scorching rays of the sun, and a continual noise and uproar, may give you some idea of its beauties. It is not a very desirable thing to have a situation as a soldier in the service of O. T., which abbreviation our men interpret 'Old Tom,' and curse the territory roundly by that name.

An amusing little incident occurred on the road which I had almost forgotten to mention. The day we reached the branch of the Umatilla, our company had been guarding the wagons and did not reach camp until about 11 o'clock at night. In one of the wagons was a small box filled with butter and cheese, intended for the use of the chief Officer and his Staff. It became evident, from the sly grimaces and exceeding good humor of the men, next morning, that something had transpired that pleased them—but the cause was not discovered until the gentlemen sent their servant for a plate of butter, when lo! the bird had flown.—It was passed over good naturedly, and we gave to the little rivulet the name of Butter Creek.

We shall move from here in three days at furthest, and, I suppose, with about 350 or 400 men. There are now at this place, as near as can be ascertained, 471 men. The rugged country over which we have to pass, precludes the possibility of taking either of the cannon with us; but they will be needed at the Fort.

Our route, I understand, is in the direction of Spaulding's Mission. Walker and Eels write that Teloquoit is treating with the Ponderays, and they believe we will have that nation to fight. Let 'em come.

The man referred to in my last letter as having been killed by a fall from a horse, was named Borden, from Yamhill county.

A young man by the name of Ford died the day before we reached the Fort. The men now are generally healthy. The days here are excessively hot, and the nights very cold.

JUAN.

FT. WATERS, May 14, '48.

DEAR SIR—The recruits, under command of Col. Lee, left Ft. Wascopam on the 3d of May for this post—were detained one day at DeShutes river, in consequence of high wind, but on the next day all crossed over, and on the following day arrived at John Day's river, which we found quite full, but were not detained long as Indians were ready with their canoes to assist in crossing, and on the 13th inst., we reached this place, finding every thing moving on in something like military order.

Col. Lee, on his arrival at this place, and after conversing with Lieut. Col. Waters, became satisfied that he was willing, at least, if not desirous of taking command of the Regiment. Col. Lee immediately gave up the command to him. Objections were made to this, as many had come with the expectation that he (Lee) would be their commander. He told us that before he accepted the appointment of Colonel, if Lt. Col. Waters wished the command, he would resign—that he only did himself, as well as Col. Waters, justice, in thus acting. Major Magoone, according to the custom of promotion in the regular service, became entitled to the office of Lieut. Colonel, which he refused to accept, provided the services of Col. Lee could not be had in that capacity. The Major then called for an expression of the Regiment, and desired that all who were in favor of Lee would pass over the ditch, which was near, when a "perfect rush" was made, with yells, and throwing of hats into the air, until not a man scarcely remained.

Col. Waters is an unassuming man—will not act hastily—is ever ready to consult upon all important matters—and, on the whole, I think will give general satisfaction.

A number of the Nez Percés are here, and wish to have another chief appointed in the place of Ellis.—Some of their young men wish to join the army.

Several of the Spokans also, are here, who offer assistance. They say the murderers are in the Pelouche country—that they know where they are at this time. You will, no doubt, have communications from many friends, and consequently get all the news.

B. F. Burch will probably be Adjutant under the new arrangement. The appointment has been offered to him, and he is now acting in that capacity.

Yours, Respectfully, J. S. R.

G. L. CURRY, Esq.

FOR THE FREE PRESS.

MR. EDITOR—Permit me, sir, through the medium of your paper, to offer a sentiment to the citizens of Oregon. There has been a great deal said upon the subject of PROHIBITION of the manufacture and vending of ardent spirits; but not one word as to the mode of carrying it into effect. Now, sir, I am well assured, that if there was some plan proposed, by which the conscientious scruples of many of our good citizens could be removed, as regards the power of the people, under our Federal Constitution, to legislate against the manufacture, vending, etc., of ardent spirits, that there would be an overwhelming majority of votes cast at the ensuing election in favor of prohibition. Now, sir, the plan which I wish to suggest is this, (let the result of the popular vote be as it will,)—that the people instruct the Legislature to enact a law compelling every person, who may wish to manufacture, or vend, ardent spirits in any way whatever, (except for sacramental, medical, or mechanical purposes,) to pay into the territorial treasury a sum not less than two thousand dollars, annually, and to affix just such penalties for every violation, as an absolute prohibitory law would require. The above plan would certainly not infringe upon the natural or constitutional rights of any man, but in my humble opinion, would be much more apt to effect the much desired object. More upon this subject, anon.

H.