

Incidents in the Life of Missionary Spaulding.

Much has been said and written on the Whitman massacre, of the killed and of the survivors; but few know the story of the escape of the Reverend H. H. Spaulding from certain death during that time. And a still smaller number know that his life was saved by his ten-year-old daughter, Eliza, who at that time was held a captive by the Cayuse Indians.

This story was told a few weeks ago by Eliza herself, now a woman of sixty-one, and as brave and fearless with her gray hair as at ten, when it was gold.

We met and mingled our tears at the newly-made grave of Henry Spaulding, whose death resulted from injuries he received when his home was destroyed by fire a few days before, at Almotia, Wash., March 22d, 1898.

He was her only brother and the only playmate of her childhood. He was my friend. The Reverend H. H. Spaulding and wife will be remembered as a part of that little company of missionaries, Dr. and Mrs. Whitman and Mr. W. H. Gray, at old Fort Walla Walla, now Wallula, in September, 1836.

These women were the first white women to cross the Rocky mountain. The Spauldings located among the Nez Perce Indians at Lapwai, twelve miles above Lewistown on the Clearwater.

Here Eliza Spaulding Warren was born, November 15th, 1837, and enjoys the distinction of being the first white woman born in Oregon, for the Northwest coast was all Oregon at that time.

Henry and Martha Spaulding Wigle, and a younger sister, Millie Spaulding Brown, were their other children. Mrs. Wigle will be remembered as an old friend and neighbor.

We spoke of the great dangers and privations of the early missionaries, of the long horseback rides from Lewistown and Walla Walla to Oregon City and Astoria; swimming rivers and fording swollen streams, of trips by small boat on the Columbia and Snake rivers, at all seasons of the year with insufficient clothing and food.

She will remember a long horseback ride from Lapwai to the mouth of the Columbia in company with her father and Henry to attend a meeting of missionaries, when she and Henry were eight and ten years old. Eliza rode a Cayuse pony, while Henry rode with his father, holding on behind. At the Dalles Mr. Spaulding hired an Indian who claimed to know the trail, to guide them to the head waters of Dog river, over the foot hills of Mount Hood on a direct line to Oregon City. Going down Laurel the Indian got lost; "But it would take something more than Laurel bush to lose father." The most they lost was a day of valuable time.

They returned by the Barlow route. While in the mountains Eliza was taken violently ill, and a delay of several days was made necessary. When too weak to ride alone on her own horse, her father took her on before him and holding her in his arms they pushed on.

They arrived at Lapwai at eleven o'clock at night, but with the Clearwater between them. The moon was shining, but the abrupt mountains cast heavy shadows and obscured the fording place.

Spaulding hallowed, and the Indians came running yelling that the river had raised, and that the ford was dangerous to swim. Spaulding and the children were already in the stream, the current, rapidly carrying them down. The horses were swimming. Eliza's horse was all that was above water, her father urging her to keep hold of her horse's mane and they would soon be over. Mr. Spaulding's was a big heavy horse, and every little while the water would roll over the horses back, submerging Henry, and then he would scream; and every time the horse went under, as often would Henry scream.

The Indians on the other bank were running down, carrying lights and shouting to show a good landing. When safe out on the other side Mr. Spaulding said, Eliza, "were you afraid?" She answered, "No, it was better than trotting."

For six weeks the poor sick child had "trotted" over the mountainous trails, and till midnight of that day; and it is no wonder that the easy swinging motion of the swimming horse was indeed "better than trotting."

She told me how her father had brought her down to Waulatpu and left her to go to school, which began that fatal morning, November 29th, 1847. Some days before, Mr. Spaulding and Dr. Whitman had gone over on the Umatilla, visiting among the Indians. The doctor returned to the mission before Monday, but Spaulding lengthened his visit, and to that delay he owed his life. For it certainly was the plan of the Indians to include Spaulding in the general slaughter. She remembers hearing the older people say that there seemed to be a great deal of excitement among the Indians, and that they were fearful of the consequences.

Eliza was in the school-room, when about the middle of the forenoon, some Indians came to the kitchen door and asked for the doctor and before long a great noise of pistol shots was heard. In a few minutes it was known that the doctor had been shot, and he was dragged into the dining-room still alive. Eliza not only saw him breathe his last, but when Mrs. Whitman went to the sash door and said to an Indian outside, "Are you doing this?" she saw her fall by the shot he fired through the glass.

It would be a difficult matter for any one to give a connected account of what followed, much less a child of ten. She and some of the children went up stairs, not that they were safer there than anywhere else, but child-like, felt that if they were only out of sight they were out of danger.

One man saved his wife and children by hiding them under the floor of an adjoining room, in a hole that had been dug to hold vegetables, and scarcely had he replaced them when the room was full of Indians. This proved a safe hiding place, after nightfall he ventured out, taking with him his sick wife and little children, to follow the Walla Walla river under cover of the bush-lined banks to Fort Walla Walla, thirty miles away. He urged them on by alternately carrying them and resting, until he determined to leave them and push on alone. When he reached the fort he told his story to Mr. Stanley, a gentleman who had been travelling with his guide through the Colville and Spokane country.

Said he, "Take my horse,"—a big American horse—"my Indian will go with you to help you, and here is food."

With this help he returned to find his wife and children, but it was night time when he concealed them; each bunch of brush looking like the other, and sage-brush and sand did not prove good landmarks. They dared not shout for fear of raising an Indian. They searched until they were discouraged, thinking they had already been found by Indians and murdered, or worse, taken captive, when the guide said he would try again, and he was rewarded by finding them more dead than alive. The Indian took two of the children on his horse, while the husband held his wife in his arms on Mr. Stanley's horse; and thus they made their way in safety over that long thirty miles.

But to relate this incident would be to digress from my story.

The Indians down stairs called to the children hidden above to come down, which they did, expecting to meet the fate of Mrs. Whitman. Eliza, who was the only person left that could speak the Nez Perce language, heard one of the leaders say, "We wont kill the women and children now."

Although the Indians were Cayuses the Nez Perce language was the one spoken in common between whites and Indians. The Nez Perce was Eliza's mother-tongue, and she was the only interpreter between the murderous Cayuses and the helpless women and children. But one man, the miller, was spared during the three weeks of captivity which followed.

During the week Eliza was daily expecting her father's return. One murderous Indian said to her, "I am going to kill your father." Eliza did not flinch nor shed a tear; but said, "Have you forgotten what good friends Dr. and Mrs. Whitman and my father have been to you?" Then as time passed and the dead were buried; and her father did not come—if indeed he were

still alive—she cast about in her mind how she might warn him.

Among the Indians who held them in captivity, she felt sure that she might trust one. Watching her chance she she said to him, "Go tell my father not to come here, for the Indians are waiting to kill him." Her intimation proved true, and the friendly Indian started over the trail to Umatilla, and met Spaulding, told him what had occurred at the mission, and that even then a murderous Indian was secreted a few miles on at a turn of the trail where Spaulding must pass on his way to the mission, and he would certainly be murdered. Said the Indian, "Do you see that fog-bank? Leave the trail here, hide in the fog till you reach the blue hills, follow the line of the blue hills till you come to the river, loose your tracks in the river and make for the Lapwai. This murderous Indian will wait for you till nearly night, when he will come on and in the dark will not see where you left the trail; but will go on, not seeing you. He cannot retrace his own steps until morning; by morning you will be far away."

Spaulding followed the directions. The next day the murderous Indian traced Spaulding to the river and returned, reporting that Spaulding must have been drowned. However, bands of Indians were scouring the country in every direction. One evening about dark, while going down the Whetstone canyon on the trail leading to Colville and Spokane where Ells and Walker were stationed, Spaulding heard Indians coming up the canyon on a fast trot. There was no time nor place to hide. He threw himself over his horse's side, holding on by one foot and hand, and with the other hand seized his horse by the nostrils that he might not whinney when he met the other horses, and he heard one Indian say as they trotted by "yes, that is a loose horse."

Upon another occasion his horse nearly revealed his hiding place. He had to secret himself during the day and travel by night turning his horse loose to feed. Hidden under the brow of a hill in a cave like cliff, he heard galloping horses over head and peering out he saw his horse's two ears away above him, as if claiming protection from the murderous band in pursuit. But now he had to make his way the best he could through the prickly-pear, sage brush and grass wood, having thrown away his leather boots as to small to walk in, he was also bare-foot. Sore-footed and hungry by the time he reached the Alpawai, 12 miles this side of Lewiston, on the Snake River, he was nearly ready to give himself up to the Indians there, for he was now among his own people. Spaulding believed the uprising to be general and supposed his own to be among the rest and feared that his family at Lapwai had shared the same fate as the Whitmans.

After dark he crept up outside an Indian tent in which some Indians were having prayer meeting and heard an Indian praying. The Indian was telling the Great Father that the Cayuses had murdered the Whitmans and prayed that if Spaulding were not already murdered that his life might be spared. As he said nothing of Spaulding's family, he took heart but did not make himself known, but proceeded to the river near by got into a log canoe to ferry him over. When near the middle of the stream a gust of wind caused him to dislodge his paddles and he was now at the mercy of the current, but another gust, more friendly, set him on a sandbar on the other side and he was once more safe.

When he finally reached Lapwai it was near sundown, he stopped on the high hill over looking the Missouri to make up his mind how to proceed. The scene below him was like a picture, The Indians were moving here and there in every direction, dogs were barking, horses neighing, orders from men and women and shrill shouts of children and the greatest confusion prevailed. Spaulding was too nearly perished with the six days and nights without either food or shelter to hesitate long, With difficulty he clambered down the mountain side and spoke to a "clookman" leading a horse to the river to drink. She did not recognize him but asked who he was. He replied by ges-

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