

# The Daily Astorian.

Vol. XIV.

Astoria, Oregon, Tuesday Morning, April 5, 1881.

No. 80.

## Did Dr. Whitman Save Oregon?

In THE DAILY ASTORIAN of Sunday, March 6th, is a four column article under the heading "Did Dr. Whitman Save Oregon?" over the signature of F. F. Victor, whom we believe to be a woman possessed of a peculiar talent. She admitting or presuming the signature to be correct, in the commencement of her four column article says:

When I published my article with the above title in the Californian, I expected some notice to be taken of it; in fact, I was rather glad Mr. Clarke had furnished me an occasion for pointing out the truth to those who think, as I do, that a love of truth is above a devotion to an idea, whether it is religious or political.

This fact as stated in the commencement of her effort shows that she seeks notoriety. In our first article, in answer to a portion of her effort at notoriety; we reviewed it to the following statement and charge against the 37th chapter of Gray's History of Oregon, in the following words:

But what I now propose to show, since I have been fairly challenged, is that the thirty-seventh chapter of Gray's History of Oregon is a tissue of fictions. To begin with, he represents that the Red river emigration brought out by Governor Simpson, was in 1842. It was in 1841. (See Sir George Simpson's Narrative, Vol. 1, page 89.)

I can think of but one idea at this moment that expresses a fact in this reference, and that is Quibble number one. Suppose we admit that Gov. Simpson started his emigration as per his book in 1841, and suppose another fact, that it did not arrive in Oregon till in the fall of 1842, which is a positive fact easily proven, what then? Is Simpson or Gray mistaken and both writing a tissue of fiction? Mrs. Victor continues:

Next he represents himself as being at Waiilatpu, September, 1842; he was in the Willamette valley, (see chapter twenty-nine of Gray's History, page 211, and Hines' Oregon and Its Institutions, page 154), where he had gone on account of difficulties they had become fully satisfied would ultimately destroy the mission or drive it from the country.

Here is Quibble number two fully proven by both Hines and Gray himself, and Gray must now come squarely up to the scratch and admit that in September of 1842 he was in the Willamette valley, which can be fully proven by living witnesses, and the two books quoted. But unfortunately for Mrs. Victor's Quibble she did not have his good wife and eldest son and two little daughters with him, consequently he had to retrace his steps, back to Waiilatpu to Dr. Whitman's mission, where he had left them on the 1st of September, 1842, to go to the Willamette valley to learn what business or labor he could engage in to supply his wife and little family with bread and clothing. The Methodist missionaries concluded that themselves and all the white settlers in the valley wanted a school house for the white and half-breed children and contributed liberally for the school building and employed W. H. Gray as their agent. Gray returned to his family on the 21st of September, 1842. Dr. Whitman and Lovejoy left for Washington before W. H. Gray was ready to move to the Willamette. I hope Mrs. Victor and all for whom she writes and quotes treaties and history will not forget these explanations, for they are quite fresh upon my mind and my wife's journal, though thirty-nine years have passed since that time. There is another little item in Mrs. Victor's statement and quotation which her reading of history, and I will add of treaties, that she cannot or will not understand, nor truthfully quote.

She says, in order to prove that I was not at Dr. Whitman's at the time Dr. Whitman started for Washington, after referring to chapter and page of our books, "where he, Gray," "had gone on account of difficulties, they," (referring to Rogers, Smith and Gray), "had become fully satisfied would ultimately destroy the mission or drive it from the country." To be as brief as possible, I will ask if our conclusions were not correct? If the facts since developed has not proved them correct? But from the labored effort she has made to prove that white is black, and black is white and not to prove myself as captious and as

much of a finished quibbler as Mrs. Victor is, I will admit that Rev. A. B. Smith was dissatisfied with his missionary position, and location from the time he arrived in the country. That his correspondence with the prudential committee of the board was not favorable to the continuance of the mission. That he used his influence with Mr. Rodgers and W. H. Gray to have them leave the service of the mission. Also that the Jesuit missionaries were actively working in the same direction, in connection with the Hudson Bay company and Indians, not only to divide and destroy the American missions but the American settlements in Oregon. The same as Mrs. Victor is working to destroy the character and the good name of the dead, and of the living. It occurs to me that she might find a better use for her time, talent and pen. Permit me to quote another passage from her long diatribe. She says:

Just at this critical moment, Doctor Whitman being naturally averse to giving up his improvements at Waiilatpu, there arrived in the fall of 1842, the first Oregon immigration—a company of "one hundred and eleven persons, some forty-two families"—according to Gray, under the leadership of Dr. White. This opportune arrival solved, to Doctor Whitman's mind, the knotty problem. American immigration overland had set in. Now, he could have assistance and moral support, with social intercourse; and now the mission could be made self-supporting for all the travel over that route would have to purchase supplies, which he could furnish. He saw his opportunity, and grasped it.

This is Mrs. F. F. Victor's portrait of a man that Oregon will yet honor for his unparalleled effort to save it from becoming a British territory; she would have us believe that all his efforts were supreme selfishness, that he was ready to take every advantage of the incoming immigrant to support his mission. So far as Mrs. Victor is concerned she is determined to make people believe by her false quotations and erroneous inferences that she is correct in her conclusions, but unfortunately for her, as the Walla-walla Statesman says of her reply to Mr. Clarke, "she proves too much."

Let us look at another paragraph about the person whom Mrs. Victor says in this same diatribe that, "from all I can learn of Dr. Whitman, he was a manly man, and held in esteem by all classes." She says:

He knew the order would come in the spring to quit Waiilatpu. This he was determined not to do. All that agreeable and patriotic fiction of Mr. Gray's, about being at the fort and hearing of the Red river emigration, must fall to the ground, for instead of starting for the states in twenty-four hours after hearing of their arrival at Colville, he had a whole year in which to get ready, and it is not probable would have thought of going, but for the arrival of Dr. White's party, and the prospect it opened up—for these immigrants assured him that others would follow, in large numbers, the succeeding year.

The order to abandon the mission, I confess is now to me, and in looking at Mrs. Victor's proof I find she quotes from the Missionary Herald of 1843. This explains to me a remark found in an article in the Willamette Farmer of Sept. 24, 1880.

And of his after visit to the officers of the American board at Boston, who objected to his journey and its object but lived afterwards to be proud of their share in the good he accomplished.

And if Mrs. Victor has quoted correctly, it does not add to my respect for the board that made the order.

I have positive living testimony that the Boston board and Mrs. Victor are both mistaken as to the time of Dr. Whitman's starting to return to Oregon. In April, 1843, he was met in St. Louis, in the early part of May he was with the emigration assisting them in getting ready for the journey, and was with the immigration from Westport to the Grand Ronde, and regarded as their most reliable pilot during the whole journey, notwithstanding they had employed Capt. Gant to pilot them to fort Hall.

But we must investigate Mrs. Victor's sophism a little more before we close this discussion. She continues:

Taking in the whole prospect opened up by the arrival of Dr. White's party, and having no time to lose, Dr.

Whitman called a meeting of the missionaries, at which he announced his determination to go east and lay the case before the board in person. Under date of April 1st, 1847, Dr. Whitman said: "I pointed out to our mission the arrangements of the papists to settle in our vicinity, and that it only required that these arrangements should be completed to close our operations." It is said that he met with opposition from the other members—but of that I know nothing, and do not wish to go outside of that which can be proven. At all events, he started for the states early in October (I think the 3d), having persuaded Mr. Lovejoy to accompany him.

First there was no such meeting of the mission called at the time Mrs. Victor refers to. Second, under date April 1st, 1847, three years and four months after he started to go to Washington the letter Mrs. Victor refers to was written. I am fully aware that during the summer, or autumn of 1842 before the arrival of the Red river settlers, that the mission was terribly annoyed by the Jesuits interference with the Indians, and that there had been a meeting of the members of the mission at the Doctors' station, between the 9th and 15th of July, 1842, at which meeting my decision to become a settler in the Willamette, was reluctantly approved. I remained at the station in charge of the mill and farm till the first day of September, 1842, went to the Methodist mission by the trail north of Mount Hood on horseback, engaged myself as agent to build the Oregon institute, returned up country, reached the Whitman station September 21, 1842. No news of the Red river immigrants had then reached any person at the Doctors' station, nor the American settlers in the valley. Mr. Lovejoy and a few of the Dr. White immigration were then at and about the station recruiting their animals having left their wagons before reaching the Blue mountains, or at fort Hall.

Passing over many erroneous statements of Mrs. Victor's pretended proofs by which she is attempting to convince her readers that she has produced conclusive arguments to show the incorrectness of Mr. Gray's statements concerning the instrumentality of Dr. Whitman in raising the emigrating company of 1843, she says: Now it will be observed that in this declaration of the motive of Doctor Whitman's visit, it is asserted that an emigration had already begun; that Doctor Whitman was not certain of taking back with him any "Christian families," and that he did not set out on his return until June. Those assertions, of course, it must be allowed, upset Mr. Gray's statement concerning the instrumentality of Doctor Whitman in raising the emigrating company of 1843. That emigration was a month on its way, with wagons and stock, before he left his old home to return to Waiilatpu.

On reading the above statement I addressed a note to Hon. John Hobson, of Astoria, requesting him to answer the following questions: First. Please inform me, what time and when did you first meet Dr. Marcus Whitman? His answer: We met and talked with Dr. Whitman first in St. Louis in April, 1843, and there bought teams for the trip. We met him again at Weston or Westport in the early part of May. While at the rendezvous at Weston he assisted us in purchasing additional teams. He was then stopping at the agency awaiting the immigration to start for Oregon, and was with us and at our camp at various times and places. Was at the crossings of Platte and two crossings on the Snake river, and remained with us until we reached the Grand Ronde, and there procured an Indian guide for us over the Blue mountains.

Second. About how long was he in or about your place of stopping or camping before your company started upon the journey to Oregon? I saw him about every day while camping at Weston.

Third. Did Dr. Whitman to your knowledge use any influence or argument to get persons to come to Oregon? He induced us and others to come to Oregon while at St. Louis. We were on the way to Wisconsin.

Fourth. Was he of any particular service in piloting the immigration of that year as a pilot or as a physician? He assisted us and piloted in all the difficult places, and assured us we could

get our wagons through to Oregon. Fifth. Did he demand or receive any sums of money for his services as a pilot? He did not demand or ask for anything, neither did we pay him for any services. No one was asked or paid anything. I know that we left two of my sisters with him, and I returned for them the following July, and there was no charge made for keeping them.

Signed, JOHN HOBSON. The next witness we will examine is "Recollections of an Old Pioneer," Hon. Peter H. Burnett, page 101. He says: I kept a concise journal of the trip as far as Walla-walla, and have it now before me. On the 18th of May the immigration at the rendezvous held a meeting and appointed a committee to see Dr. Whitman.

On the 20th I attended the meeting at Big Springs, where I met Colonel John Thornton, Colonel Bartleson, Mr. Rickman, and Dr. Whitman. William Martin and Daniel Mathew were appointed a committee to engage Capt. John Gant as our pilot as far as fort Hall, he was accordingly employed; and it was agreed in camp that we should start on Monday morning, May 22.

We, at this point in this discussion, will give one other witness to show the character of Dr. Whitman before he entered upon his mission, as also the ignorance of Mrs. Victor as to the character of the man she attempts to slander: DR. WHITMAN, DUTIE CO., CAL., JUNE 14, 1880.

MY DEAR SIR: Your favor dated April 24th, my 61st birthday, reached me on my return from New York to San Francisco, and I was pleased to hear from you. While in New York, and after writing you, I found your history and read it with much avidity. By your letter I was much gratified to learn steps were being taken to erect a monument to the memory of Dr. Marcus Whitman, who, with others, fell in the autumn of 1847, at his missionary post in Oregon, a victim to savage brutality. I knew him well and greatly respected him, many years before he entered upon the duties of teaching and seeking to christianize the Indians of the upper Columbia river. It fell to my official lot in 1850, to preside over the court which tried and committed five of the Indian chiefs who were the principals in this fiendish murder; and naturally enough, I am deeply moved that something is about to be done to perpetuate the memory of one of the best men, whose tireless energies were unselfishly directed toward and employed, until worn out and terminated by beastly assassination, in the interest of a one of humanity, christianity and civilization. Such a man, bearing as he did his high type of benevolence and disinterestedness, honors, and is a blessing to any age or country, and the only wonder is that a character so good and great has so long been left without other commemoration than in the perishable memories of the earliest pioneers of Oregon, most of whom are already voiceless in the grave. In this tardy effort at perpetuity of the virtues and worth of one of the noblest men who ever lived either a band of christian missionaries or the vanguard of civilization, I beg not merely to raise my voice, but if allowed shall gladly contribute, and with a grateful heart, as much as anybody else. Concluding, will add that it will always gratify me to hear from you. Letters can be sent to my address at San Francisco or here, Durham, Butte county, California. Very truly your friend,

O. C. PRATT. Judge Pratt's letter has already been published in THE ASTORIAN, but as the character of a dead man has been assailed in so wanton a manner by Mrs. Victor, I must ask for its republishing in this controversy. In my next article I propose to meet Mrs. Victor with Hon. Jesse Applegate, and investigate her allusions and quotations from him. Respectfully, etc.

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