[CHAPTER SEVEN]

MARCUS AND NARCISSA ARE MARRIED 1836

Sometime during the summer of 1835, Judge and Mrs. Prentiss with four of their children had moved from Amity to Angelica, about six miles to the north. The records of the Presbyterian Church of Angelica show that on Sunday, September 27, 1835: "Stephen Prentiss and Clarissa his wife, Narcissa, Clarissa, Harriet, R., and Edward W., their children," were received into the church.[1]

Narcissa with characteristic enthusiasm gave herself to the activities of the church, which then numbered about 135 members. She sang in the choir and taught a class of girls in the Sunday school. Included in the church's membership was William Geiger, Jr., of whom we shall hear more later.

Judge Prentiss was elected an elder in the Angelica church on January 21, 1836, and was ordained to that office on Thursday evening, February 18, just before the marriage service was conducted for his daughter Narcissa and Marcus Whitman. An indication of the interest that Stephen Prentiss took in the church is the fact that he and his pastor, the Rev. Leverett Hull, were commissioners to the Presbyterian General Assembly which met in Philadelphia in May 1836.

Writing to Sarah Hull, the wife of the pastor, in the spring of 1835, Narcissa expressed her deep concern about the proposed Oregon Mission.[2]

Narcissa referred to some "obstacles" which had arisen which threatened the founding of an Oregon Mission. She asked her friend: "What can be the obstacles which the Board of Missions speak of? Is it want of funds or missionaries? Or is it the want of faith and prayer in the churches?" Narcissa then recalled the Nez Perce appeal of 1831: "Surely the obstacles cannot be with the Indians, whom they have sent over to us and invited us to carry them the Word of Life." Out of touch with Marcus who was then on his long trek to the Rockies, Narcissa was dreaming, planning, and praying for that Oregon Mission of which she wanted to be a part. Again quoting from her letter: "I can say, notwithstanding the clouds of darkness that overshadow the future, and the obstacles that roll up before the mind like waves of the sea, that I am permitted to believe that a mission will be established there soon, at least before many years shall have passed away."

The Search for Associates

Whitman's major concern after his return from the Rockies was to find at least one married couple to go with him and Narcissa to Oregon in the spring of 1836. As previously stated, Narcissa had told Marcus about the plans of Henry and Eliza Spalding to go as missionaries to the Osage Indians. Whitman had written to Spalding to see if they would consent to a change of destination and go with him and Narcissa to Oregon. When Whitman mailed his journal to Greene from Rushville on December 17, he reported: "I received a letter yesterday from H. H. Spalding saying that he would be ready to accompany me across the mountains if the Board would approve of it."

For a time Whitman's heart was at ease as he felt that the Board would consent to a reassignment for the Spaldings. Greene had been informed that Mrs. Spalding was expecting to give birth to a child in October 1835. Whitman, however, had failed to tell him that the child was stillborn, perhaps assuming that Spalding would have passed on this information. This failure to keep Greene posted almost canceled any hope of a mission party going out to Oregon in 1836.

A letter from Greene dated December 8 reached Whitman at Rushvile after he had mailed his journal. The slowness of the mails of that day added to the complexities of the problem. Greene put the burden of finding associates on Whitman's shoulders. "Before taking measures to

obtain associates," he wrote, "you had better confer with our agent, Mr. Eddy, who may have some person in mind." The reference is to the Rev. Chauncey Eddy, to whom reference has already been made.[3] Greene then gave the names of several possible candidates, including those of the Rev, and Mrs. Oliver S. Powell, in whose home Whitman was a guest at the time he became engaged to Narcissa.

The month of December 1835 passed with the Board making no definite appointments for the Oregon Mission. Whitman was still waiting for confirmation from the Board as to a change of destination for the Spaldings.

The Prudential Committee of the Board met in Boston on January 5, and the next day Greene wrote to Whitman notifying him that the Committee had authorized him to return to Oregon with his wife, another married couple and three single men—preferably a teacher, a farmer, and a "mechanic"—if such could be found. The term "mechanic" was then used to indicate a craftsman, such as a carpenter, or even a laborer. Greene definitely stated: "But families of children cannot be taken." He added that should an Oregon Mission party be sent, the fiancées of Dunbar and Allis would accompany them to Council Bluffs and that in all probability Dr. Benedict Satterlee, who had been appointed to the Pawnee Mission, would also go along. No mention was made of Spalding in this letter.

On this same day, January 5, Whitman again wrote to Greene and again brought up the name of Spalding. He reminded Greene that Spalding had indicated his willingness to go to Oregon and also mentioned the fact that the Powells had a baby, which meant that they could not be appointed. Greene, replying on January 15, explained why nothing had been said about the Spaldings. "The same object," he wrote, "we suppose to he against Mr. and Mrs. Spalding which you mention in the case of Mr. Powell."

A week later Greene again wrote to Whitman informing him that other prospective candidates for the Oregon Mission had for various reasons withdrawn their names from consideration. Then came the following comment about Spalding: "I do not know where to look for a missionary to accompany you, unless Mr. Spaulding[4] should go. His child (as I understand he has one) will be a hinderance; and it seems to me that no person with an infant child should go to such a work."

Here, seemingly, was a modification of Greene's former statement that no couple with a child would be appointed. Then followed a most significant comment on Spalding's personality which fell like a thin shadow on things to come: "Besides I have some doubt whether his temperament will fit him for intercourse with the traders and travellers in that region." Actually, as later events proved, Spalding's problem was not to be with traders and travelers but rather with his own coworkers in the mission. Greene did have a favorable word: "As to labouriousness, self-denial, energy and perseverance, I presume few men are better qualified than he." [5]

Matters were rapidly approaching a crisis. Whitman had given the most solemn assurances to the fathers of the two Indian boys that he would bring them to the 1836 Rendezvous and he had also promised to meet Parker there at that time. The month of January was about gone with nothing definite accomplished. If there were to be an Oregon Mission established that year, the party should be on its way within a month.

Whitman's letter to Greene of January 29, in reply to Greene's letter of the 22nd, was filled with discouraging news. Whitman confessed that all his efforts to find someone to go with him and Narcissa had failed. "I wrote Mr. Eddy some time since," he stated, "and have been in constant expectation of an answer, but do not receive it. We ought to leave for St. Louis by 25th Feb. or at the furtherest the 1st March."

Whitman clarified the status of the Spaldings by writing: "Your allusion to Mr. Spalding is not correct; they lost their child by death some time since. They expect to be at Prattsburg where I can see him if desired." Whitman was still hoping that Greene would have success in finding someone, for he wrote: "I should like to know your success and intention as soon as possible."

In his letter to Whitman of the previous December 30, Greene had listed some of the qualifications needed by any who aspired to be a missionary to the Indians, including: "Much apparent zeal for the conversion of the Indians, strong professions of devotedness to the cause of Christ, and readiness to encounter hardship and danger... and such I hope you may find the finger of Providence pointing to." Replying to Whitman's letter of January 29, Greene on February 5 rather reluctantly admitted that "the finger of Providence" was point-

ing to Henry H. Spalding. One by one all other possible candidates had been eliminated. The Spaldings were already under appointment to go to the Osage Indians, but had indicated a willingness to change their destination. The need for some immediate decision prompted Greene to give a half-hearted consent, for he wrote: "I know not who will accompany you unless Mr. Spalding should." Before receiving Greene's letter, Whitman on February 6, wrote to a brother-in-law of Samuel Parker, Harley Lord, in whose Ithaca home John, one of the Nez Perce boys, was living, and said: "The present prospect is poor for going next spring. Our only other method is to have the destination of Rev. H. H. Spalding changed from the Osages to the Nez Perces." [6]

Henry Harmon Spalding

Henry Harmon Spalding was born out of wedlock in a log cabin near Wheeler, Steuben County, New York, on November 26, 1803.[7] He was therefore, nearly fifteen months younger than Marcus Whitman. Abandoned by his mother when a babe only fourteen months old and reared in a foster home, Henry had a hard time. Years later, the Rev. James Hotchkin, who was once his pastor, stated that Spalding had been "inured to hardship from infancy." [8]

Little is known of the first seventeen years of Spalding's life. In his old age, Spalding returned to Wheeler and was invited to occupy the pulpit in the Presbyterian Church on a Sunday in May 1871. Some of his old friends and neighbors were present. Great emotions swept over him as he looked into the faces of gray-haired men and women who had known him in his youth. The intervening years rolled away, and he saw himself with self-pitying eyes in his own yesterdays.

The next day he wrote to his wife, the second Mrs. Spalding, and in this letter pulled aside the veil which had shrouded those first seventeen years: "Some mates of those school days were present, grayheaded men and women. What memories! The place where I was born and the place where my unfeeling mother gave me (but 14 months old) to a stranger and saw her child no more, and the place where I was brought up by an adopted mother, and where I was kicked out, and the brook and the willow and the hill where I fished and played and tumbled with other children,... and the hills and the bottoms where I gathered chestnuts and butternuts and the road I took when he kicked me out after whipping my

mother and me, to a neighbor, sad, destitute, 17, crying, a cast off bastard wishing myself dead! What emotions!" [9]

The forlorn lad, with the odious epithet "bastard," which an infuriated foster father had shouted at him, ringing in his ears, took the road to Prattsburg. There he found shelter in the home of Ezra Rice, a schoolteacher, where he remained for the next four years, 1820–24. Of these years Spalding wrote in his diary: "[I] worked for my board and room and went to a common school which he taught." [10] His opportunities for an education were limited; he noted in his diary that when he was twenty-one he could read only with difficulty and could laboriously "write after a copy."

Henry enrolled in the newly opened Franklin Academy in Prattsburg in the summer of 1825 when he was twenty-two years old. In the autobiographical note that he wrote in the beginning of his diary, he made mention of his "bashfulness" when called upon to speak before some school audience. Using modern psychological terms, might we not call this an inferiority complex? And how could it have been otherwise when one remembers his background? He was five or six years older than his classmates. He was without doubt clad in the plainest of clothing. He was at this time living in the home of a farmer three miles from the village, where he worked for his board and room, and walked back and forth to school. He was, as he described himself, "worse than an orphan."

Henry was a student at the academy at irregular intervals from the summer of 1825 to the early fall of 1831. Sometimes he interrupted his studies in order to make some money by teaching country schools, especially during the winter months. We must admire his tenacity in his struggle for an education against great odds. He was baptized and received into the membership of the Prattsburg Presbyterian Church on October 2, 1825, when he was twenty-two. During the winter of 1828–29, Henry decided to enter the ministry. At that time Franklin Academy was prepared to give the first two years of college work, so Henry returned to the academy. With scholarship aid from the American Education Society,[11] Henry enrolled in Western Reserve College at Hudson, Ohio, in the fall of 1831. He was graduated from that institution with an A.B. degree in 1833.

Eliza Hart Spalding

Sometime during 1830, Spalding began corresponding with Eliza Hart, who at that time was living with her parents, Captain and Mrs. Levi Hart, at Holland Patent, near Utica, New York, and about 140 miles northeast of Prattsburg. Eliza was born at Kensington, later called Berlin, Connecticut, on August 11, 1807. She was, therefore, about four years younger than Henry and about eight months older than Narcissa.

Henry and Eliza had not met before they began writing to each other on the recommendation of a mutual friend. They first met in the fall of 1831 shortly before he left for college in Ohio. Another year passed with the two depending upon the mails for their courtship. Henry visited Eliza again in the fall of 1832, at which time it appears that they became engaged.

Eliza was deeply religious. She joined the Presbyterian Church of Holland Patent on August 15, 1826, when nineteen years old. William H. Gray, who went out to Oregon with the Whitman–Spalding party in 1836, wrote his impressions of Eliza as he remembered her at their first meeting: "She was above medium height, slender in form, with coarse features, dark brown hair, blue eyes, rather dark complexion, coarse voice, of a serious turn of mind, and quick in understanding language." [12]

Little is known about Eliza's youth and education. She is reported to have attended a female seminary in Clinton, New York, and to have taught school for a time.[13] She had some ability in painting and learned the common skills needed in a pioneer home of her generation including spinning and weaving. Eliza attended a school at Hudson, Ohio, 1832–33 while Henry was taking his last year of college work at Western Reserve College. The two were married in Hudson on October 13, 1833, and left soon afterwards for Lane Theological Seminary, a New School Presbyterian institution located in Walnut Hills, Cincinnati, where they spent the next two years.

Henry found Eliza to be a devoted and faithful helpmate. Since the Presbyterian Church at that time frowned upon seminary students getting married, Henry was disqualified from receiving further scholarship aid. He and Eliza opened a boarding house at Walnut Hills for other students and provided board and room for $3.00 a week. Henry bought a cow which supplied milk for their table. He also worked in a

printing establishment thus learning a trade which proved of value to him in Old Oregon.

Eliza Spalding is pictured in several fictional accounts of the Oregon Mission as being poorly educated and of a weak character. The contrary is the case. She was the best educated of the six women who were in the Oregon Mission. Confirming evidence to support this judgment is found in the following quotation from a letter Eliza wrote to a sister from Walnut Hills on March 31, 1834: "I am now pursuing Greek and Hebrew studies. I take the same lessons that Mr. S. does in the Greek Testament, and in the Hebrew Bible. I am quite pleased with these studies, but find the Greek Grammar rather perplexing. I generally attend Dr. [Lyman] Beecher's lectures on Theology, Saturdays, from the hours of ten to twelve, which are very interesting and profitable." [14] Perhaps no one in the Oregon Mission acquired the native language more quickly than she.

Spalding Appointed by the American Board

Hoping to secure a teacher's position under the Government with the Choctaw Indians, Henry decided to leave the Seminary in May 1835 at the end of his second year and one year before completing the full theological course. Due application was made for such an appointment. In the expectation of receiving favorable word, Henry and Eliza returned to Holland Patent to make preparations for leaving for their new work. Captain Hart gave the couple a light Dearborn wagon and other items valued at $120.00.[15] This is the much publicized wagon which Whitman and Spalding took with them over the Rockies and as far west as Fort Boise in 1836, but of this more will be said later.

In a letter dated March 20, 1888, to the Rev. Myron Eells,[16] the Rev. J. S. Griffin [17] wrote: "Touching the question of wagons from the East to this coast… I will say, that on the 5th day of July, 1835, in the town of Holland Patent… I worked with H. H. Spalding on the barn floor of his father-in-law, a Mr. Hart, in putting the top on a small wagon, when he was soon to leave for the west to engage in Indian Missions." [18] From this we know that this became a covered wagon.

Perrin Whitman, who saw the remains of the wagon at Fort Boise in the fall of 1843, wrote: "It had been one of the old fashioned Deerborn wagons, with wooden springs from one axle to another made out of hard

wood… The bed was of a dark brown color, and the wheels were yellow with blue stripes. It was as a light two horse wagon." [19]

Several weeks passed after Spalding sent in his application for a government appointment without any reply being received. Spalding was becoming increasingly worried as he had been so confident that the appointment would be forthcoming. During the latter part of July 1835, the Spaldings loaded their few possessions on their wagon and drove to Prattsburg. Still more days passed without any word from the government. Spalding then wrote to the American Board and offered to go to "any part of that portion of the vineyard of Christ over which the Lord has appointed you stewards." [20]

In order to hasten consideration by the Board of his application, Spalding asked several who knew him to send in testimonials. Among these was Artemas Bullard, field agent of the Presbyterian Foreign Missionary Society who, in a letter dated August 14, made the following penetrating comment: "I consider Mr. S. a man of ardent piety. His mental powers are not remarkable, though decent… Few men are willing to labor more abundantly or endure more fatigue, or make greater sacrifices than he… He can turn his hand to almost any kind of handy work. Is not remarkable for judgment and common sense, though not particularly deficient. Is sometimes too much inclined to denounce or censure those who are not as zealous and ardent as himself… On the whole I expect in his proper place he will make a good missionary. His wife is highly respected and beloved in a large circle of friends on Walnut Hill and in Cincinnati." [21]

Greene replied to Spalding's letter of application on August 14. The Board was in urgent need of men for its Indian missions and welcomed his interest. Greene advised Spalding to be ordained "as if you were appointed" and said that the Prudential Committee would act on his application at its next meeting. Spalding met with the Presbytery of Bath and, after being examined and found qualified, was ordained to the ministry on August 27, 1835. Sometime that fall, Spalding was notified that the Board had appointed him to the Boudinot station among the Osage Indians on the Neosho River in what is now eastern Kansas. The notification of their assignment came too late for the Spaldings to go to their field in the fall of 1835. Eliza was pregnant and gave birth at Prattsburg to the stillborn baby girl on October 24. Following her

confinement, Eliza was seriously ill for several weeks. Sometime during the week of December 10, Spalding received word from Whitman asking if he and his wife would be willing to change their destination from the Osage to the Nez Perce Indians. Whitman, while at Rushville, received a letter from Spalding on December 16 in which Spalding stated their willingness to go to Oregon should the Board approve.

Spalding's Unfortunate Remark

Spalding wrote to Greene from Holland Patent on December 28, 1835: "If the Board and Dr. Whitman wish me to go to the Rocky Mountains with him, I am ready. Act your pleasure." Evidently the Spaldings had returned to Eliza's parental home for a few weeks before leaving for their mission field, wherever that might be. Greene, still unaware of the death of the Spalding baby, replied on January 2: "It does not seem to me desirable that yr destination should be changed to the Rocky Mountain Indians at this time unless you strongly desire it." [22] Greene evidently felt that the Spaldings might go to the Osage Indians with an infant but should not attempt taking one with them on the long and hazardous journey over the Rockies to Oregon. Spalding was not told why the Board was reluctant to approve a change of destination for him.

The Spaldings returned to Prattsburg during the first week of February 1836 where they spent several days before leaving for their Osage Indian station. Since some of Spalding's Prattsburg friends knew that he had been under consideration to go with the Whitmans to Oregon, the questions naturally arose: Why was Whitman still looking for associates? Why were the Spaldings not going to Oregon? Circumstantial evidence suggests that Spalding was put on the defensive. His pride had been touched. Some explanation was needed, so one day in a public assembly—perhaps in a church service—he said: "I do not want to go into the same mission with Narcissa Prentiss as I question her judgment." [23] Such a statement reflected a latent feeling of resentment or possibly even of hostility on Spalding's part towards Narcissa. He could not forget that he had been a rejected suitor.

Some have wondered why Whitman ever induced Spalding to join him in the Oregon Mission project. A writer in the *American Heritage* called this a "baffling" detail and characterized Spalding as being "a man of touchy pride and smoldering resentments." [24] The most plausable

answer to this question is that Whitman had no other choice. After an extensive search for associates, with one after another possible candidate being eliminated for various reasons, Whitman had to take whomever he could find who was willing to go with him and Narcissa to Oregon. Time was running out. He had promised to return the Indian boys to their fathers and to meet Parker at the 1836 Rendezvous; and he had assured the Nez Perces that he would return with associates in 1836 and open a mission among them. Possibly Whitman had not heard of Spalding's unfortunate remark, or, if he had heard, had failed to appreciate its full significance. The fact that Narcissa was the one who first suggested Spalding's name, even though he was a rejected suitor, shows that she harbored no ill will towards him. Perhaps she felt that since Henry had married Eliza Hart, his memory of a broken romance would not be an obstacle.

"We Want You for Oregon"

Greene's letter of February 5, in which a reluctant approval was given for Whitman to see if Spalding would consent going to Oregon, reached Whitman on the 12th. Whitman felt that the urgency of the occasion called for immediate action. He decided to ride at once to Prattsburg, where he understood the Spaldings were then staying, and make a personal appeal. From circumstantial evidence, it appears that Whitman arrived in Prattsburg either on Friday afternoon, the 12th, or early the next morning. To his great disappointment, he learned that the Spaldings had left for Howard, a village about twenty miles to the southwest of Prattsburg, where Spalding had a speaking appointment on Sunday in the Presbyterian Church there.

A winter storm had laid a thick blanket of snow over the land making travel difficult. Because of the snow, Spalding had to put runners on his wagon, thus converting it into a sleigh.

Whitman set out from Prattsburg in pursuit of the Spaldings and overtook them on the road shortly before they arrived at Howard with the hail: "We want you for Oregon." [25] Whitman continued with them into the village where Spalding engaged a room in the inn.[26] There Whitman presented his plea. He reviewed the course of events and explained how Greene had been reluctant to assign them to Oregon because he thought that their child had lived.

Whitman stressed the argument of need. Unless he could find a clergyman to go with him and Narcissa, there would be no Oregon Mission founded that year.

This struck a responsive chord in the hearts of both Henry and Eliza. They were not afraid of the journey, having been satisfied by what Whitman told them regarding the feasibility of women crossing the Rockies. It is possible that Whitman referred to their wagon and urged them to take it with them. Henry was a little hesitant, because he felt that Eliza might not be physically strong enough to endure the long horseback ride, but she pluckily declared: "I like the command just as it stands, 'Go ye into all the world,' and no exceptions for poor health." [27] The three sought God's guidance in prayer.

Being assured of the willingness of the Spaldings to accompany him and Narcissa to Oregon, Whitman returned to Rushville on Monday, February 15, with a light heart. His Oregon Mission was assured! Yet in a letter that he wrote to Greene from Rushville that evening, we find a trace of apprehension: "I am willing to accompany Mr. Spalding as an associate, yet I know little of his peculiar adaptedness to that station." Whitman told Greene that the Spaldings would continue their journey to Cincinnati where they would await his arrival. He suggested that Greene write to him at that place and confirm the change of destination.

Writing to Greene from Jamestown, New York, on February 17, Spalding reviewed what had happened at Howard. "He says," Spalding wrote, "you are perfectly willing the destiny should be changed. He said all the other attempts to obtain a clergyman have failed and if I refused, the Mission to the Rocky Mountains must be abandoned, at least for the present… I felt it my duty to consent to his request." [28]

We have reason to believe that the Spaldings visited the Prentiss home in Angelica, which was about thirty miles to the west of Howard and along the route that they were following to Jamestown, New York, on their way to Pittsburgh. If so, they could have carried a letter from Marcus to Narcissa informing her of the developments and suggesting that she plan for their wedding that very week.

From a statement made by Narcissa in a letter she wrote to her father on October 10, 1840, it appears that Judge Prentiss had heard about Spalding's unfortunate remark about not wanting to go "into the same mission with Narcissa Prentiss," and had demanded an explanation.

Narcissa wrote: "This pretended settlement with father, before we started, was only an excuse, and from all we have seen and heard, both during the journey and since we have been here the same bitter feeling exists." The resentment which Henry Spalding harbored towards Narcissa Whitman was to have far-reaching consequences for the Oregon Mission of the American Board.

Their Personal Appearance

Before telling of the marriage of Marcus and Narcissa and of their departure for Oregon, it is fitting that mention should be made of the descriptions of their personal appearance which were made by their contemporaries. Until the discovery in the summer of 1968 of what appear to be authentic sketches of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman made by the Canadian artist, Paul Kane, regarding which more will be said later, we had to rely only upon these recollections of their contemporaries as to their personal appearance.

Joel Wakeman described Narcissa as follows: "She was of medium height, symmetrically formed, very graceful in her deportment and general carriage, slightly sandy complexion, a brilliant, sparkling eye, perculiarly so when engaged in animated conversation. She was not a beauty, and yet, when engaged in singing or conversation there was something in her appearance very attractive." [29] Levi Waldo, also drawing upon personal recollections, wrote: "She was a beautiful blonde, of fair form and well rounded features, dignified and stately, yet modest in her bearing, kindly and Christian in social life, honoring and gracing every station that she was called to fill." [30] In another account she was described as being "of slight build, a little above medium height, blue eyes, pretty, with beautiful blonde hair." [31] Others referred to her hair as being a golden or light colored auburn.[32] Narcissa weighed herself a few weeks after her marriage and in a letter to her sister Jane said that the scales registered 136 pounds [Letter 21]. Writing to her parents on October 9, 1844, Narcissa stated that she then weighed 167 pounds, "much higher than ever before in my life."

Several idealized portraits or sketches have been made of Narcissa, one of which by Mrs. Orville R. Allen hangs in Prentiss Hall at Whitman College. This is a lifesize study which shows her wearing a gray silk dress with flowing sleeves and a low neck line. The artist was

guided by some hazy tradition that she wore such a dress and "fluffed up her hair" once when about to greet her husband upon his return from a trip.[33] According to Matilda Sager Delaney, who spent several years as a little girl in the Whitman mission home, Narcissa never had a silk dress. The sleeves, which the artist copied from a pair which once belong to Narcissa, were the only authentic part of the portrait.[34]

When the Rev. Oliver W. Nixon published his *How Marcus Whitman Saved Oregon* [see Appendix 4], he included idealized pictures of both Marcus and Narcissa. The first and second editions of this work give an imaginary picture of Narcissa without any explanation as to how it happened to have been drawn or by whom. A different drawing appeared in the third and subsequent editions with the following caption: "No authentic picture of Mrs. Whitman is in existence. This portrait of her has been drawn under the supervision of a gentleman familiar with her appearance and with suggestions from members of her family. It is considered a good likeness of her." However, when we compared this second Nixon picture with the Kane sketch, we see only slight similarities.

W. H. Gray, in his *History of Oregon*, has given us the following description of Narcissa: "...a lady of refined feelings and commanding appearance. She had very light hair, fresh complexion, and light blue eyes. Her features were large, her form full and round. At the time she arrived in the country [i.e., Oregon], she was considered a fine, noble-looking woman, affable and free to converse with all she met. Her conversation was animated and cheerful. Firmness in her was natural, and to some, especially the Indians, it was repulsive."[35] Gray's comment about the reaction of the Indians to her firmness, is confirmed in the appraisal given her by the Rev. H. K. W. Perkins [See Appendix 6].

The first two editions of Nixon's book also carried an idealized sketch of Marcus Whitman. Incredible to relate, he is there pictured as wearing the ministerial garb of 1870. A retouched picture of Whitman appeared in the third edition with this anachronism corrected but with Whitman wearing burnsides, unknown in 1836. Under this retouched sketch, Nixon stated: "Changes have been made under the supervision of the family, who now pronounce this a very correct likeness." Since this sketch, like that of Narcissa, was drawn some thirty-five years after Whitman had been killed, it can have no claim to accuracy. It certainly has no resemblance to the recently discovered sketch by Kane believed to be of Whitman.[36]

Gray in his *Oregon*, has given us the following description of Whitman: "He was above medium height; of spare habit; peculiar hair, a portion of each being white and a dark brown, so that it might be called iron-gray; deep blue eyes, and large mouth." [37]

Two members of the 1844 Oregon emigration spent some time working for Whitman at his mission station, each of whom has given us his reminiscences. Alanson Hinman, of whom further mention will be made, wrote: "He [was]... tall, with high cheek bones and prominent eyebrows, beneath which were grave kindly eyes of gray." [38] B. F. Nichols, who as an eighteen-year-old youth spent the winter of 1844–45 at Waiilatpu, wrote in 1897: "I think he was a man that would weigh about 175 pounds, being what we would call a raw-boned man. He was muscular and sineway, with broad shoulders, neck slightly bent forward... His eyes were blue, rather dark, I think; his hair was brown, his forehead massive and broad, and his nose, though not large, was straight and prominent. His cheekbones were high and prominent, and his mouth was nearer like General Grant's than any one else I know of, denoting firmness and determination." [39] Nichols also told of seeing Whitman walk into a corral and catch a three-year-old steer by the under jaw and near horn and throw it to the ground. "Bulldogging" steers is still practiced in western rodeos and indicates skill as well as great physical strength.

Several attempts have been made in recent years to create an idealized portrait of Marcus Whitman. One of the best known is that painted by Ernest Ralph Norling; it was presented by a group of physicians and surgeons of the Pacific Northwest to Whitman College in August 1936 at the time of the Whitman Centennial celebration. This is a life-size study and pictures Whitman with a beard and clad in buckskins. The two statues which have been made of Whitman, will be described in the last chapter of this work.

Marcus and Narcissa are Married

When Marcus sent word to Narcissa of his success in persuading the Spaldings to go with them to Oregon, she immediately planned for the marriage to be performed on Thursday evening, February 18. The time was opportune as a congregational meeting of the Angelica Presbyterian Church had been called for that evening when her father

was to be ordained an elder. An audience would thus be on hand then for the wedding. Marcus had found it necessary to return to Rushville after seeing the Spaldings at Howard, but was able to arrive at Angelica by Wednesday, the 17th. Narcissa's bombazine wedding dress had already been made.[40]

According to the minute book of the Angelica church, after Judge Prentiss and two others were ordained as elders, the newly constituted session met and granted a letter of dismission "to our sister Narcissa Prentiss who is destined to the Mission beyond the Rocky Mountains." As will be stated, Narcissa presented this letter when the First Presbyterian Church of Oregon was organized on August 18, 1838.

In a letter to her parents written about two years after her marriage, Narcissa mentioned a communion service held just before her wedding. Judge Prentiss, as one of the newly-ordained elders, could have served the bread and the cup to his daughter and future son-in-law. Then came the exchange of vows when Marcus and Narcissa were made husband and wife.

According to the custom of the day, the minister then preached a sermon, which may have been addressed especially to the bridal couple. Of that sermon Narcissa later wrote: "Brother Hull, you know not how much good that sermon I heard you preach... the which you gave me, does me now in this desert land. O that I had more than one! I read it, meditate upon it in my solitary hours until the truth of it burns upon my heart and cheers my soul with its blessed promise" [Letter 37].

The dramatic events of the evening came to a climax with the singing of the following sentimental hymn[41] written by the Rev. Samuel F. Smith, the author of "America."

Yes, my native land! I love thee;

All thy scenes I love them well;

Friends, connections, happy country, Can I bid you all farewell?

Can I leave thee, can I leave thee,

Far in heathen lands to dwell?

Home!-thy joys are passing lovely

Joys no stranger-heart can tell;

Happy home!-'tis sure I love thee!

Can I–can I say–Farewell?

Can I leave thee, can I leave thee,

Far in heathen lands to dwell?

One by one members of the choir and congregation found their throats constricted with emotion and their cheeks dampened with tears. Only a few, including Narcissa, sang the next stanza:

Yes! I hasten gladly,

From the scenes I love so well;

Far away, ye billows! bear me;

Lovely native land!–farewell!

Pleased I leave thee, pleased I leave thee,

Far in heathen lands to dwell.

Muffled sobs could be heard by the time the last stanza was reached. The sentiment of the hymn was too overpowering. Narcissa in her clear soprano voice, which Wakeman described as being "as sweet and musical as a chime of bells," sang the last stanza as a solo—a dramatic event which all present that evening never forgot.

In the deserts let me labor,

On the mountains let me tell,

How he died–the blessed Saviour

To redeem a world from hell!

Let me hasten, let me hasten,

Far in heathen lands to dwell.[42]

The next day the bridal couple left for Rushville and Ithaca to get Richard and John before leaving for St. Louis. Imagination alone must supply the details of their last farewells. No doubt all were aware that the parting might be final. Narcissa, like Eliza Spalding, was never to return.

From a reference in one of Narcissa's letters [#35], we know that the Whitmans spent Sunday, February 21 in Ithaca. Samuel J. Parker, M.D., years later recalled their visit: "Dr. Whitman made addresses in the churches; and Mrs. Whitman in the Sunday schools, especially the Presby. and the Dutch Reformed Churches."[43] Undoubtedly present in the latter church was Miss Mary Augusta Dix who, almost exactly two

years later, was to marry William Henry Gray and leave at once with the 1838 reenforcement of the American Board for its Oregon Mission.

Following their visit in Ithaca, the Whitmans with at least one of the Nez Perce boys went to Rushville where final farewells had to be said again. Only a few scattered references in the Whitman letters throw light upon the events of those days. We read of Whitman speaking in the Congregational Church on Sunday, February 28. Narcissa, in her letter of March 31 to her sister Jane, wrote: "I had made for me in Brother Augustusí shoe store in Rushville, a pair of gentlemen's boots, and from him we supplied ourselves with what shoes we wanted." The women of the church presented Marcus with some shirts which he was tempted to leave behind as surplus baggage when arranging the packs before leaving the Missouri frontier. Narcissa, however, persuaded him to take them [Letter 26].

Nothing was said in any of the correspondence between the Board and the Whitmans and the Spaldings about a salary. Apparently the missionaries were content to receive traveling expenses and such funds as were needed to make their mission self-supporting. Likewise nothing was said about furloughs, retirement, or educational benefits for children. In simple faith, which many church leaders of today would call unrealistic and improvident, these devoted missionaries moved into their future, believing that the Lord would provide.

Whitman, like Spalding, made appeals for funds for the Board in a number of churches interested in their proposed mission. Writing to the Board on March 3, 1836, Whitman reported that he had received $26.00 from the Angelica church and $200.00 from the Rushville congregation. According to a financial report he submitted to the Board on September 5, the traveling expenses for himself, his wife, and the two Indian boys from Rushville to Cincinnati covering the dates March 3–18 were $185.11. Even such a modest sum might have included the cost of some supplies.

The Whitmans bade their loved ones and friends at Rushville farewell on Thursday, March 3, and started in private conveyance for Pittsburgh going by way of Elmira, New York, and Williamsport and Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. Near Williamsport, they overtook Dr. and Mrs. Benedict Satterlee and Miss Emeline Palmer, the fiancée of Samuel Allis, who were on their way to join the Pawnee Mission.[44] These

three had left Ithaca on March 1 but, because of the ill health of Mrs. Satterlee, their travels had been interrupted. The mission party, now numbering seven, spent Sunday, March 6, in Williamsport where a local doctor was called to consult with Whitman and Satterlee regarding Mrs. Satterlee's condition.

In those days the American Board did not require a physical examination of its missionary candidates. This was not due to carelessness but rather to the current lack of medical knowledge. Dr. Satterlee had just completed his course at the Fairfield Medical College and presumably was as qualified as any physician could then be to diagnose his bride's physical condition. Her health, however, was so precarious by the time they reached Williamsport that there was some thought of sending her home [Letter 22]. A day's rest in an inn proved so beneficial that the doctors felt she could continue with the party.

The missionaries continued their journey by sleigh on Monday, March 7, and arrived at Pittsburgh the following Saturday. Had they been traveling a few weeks later, they could have taken the recently opened Allegheny Portage Railroad from Hollidaysburg to Pittsburgh, but this was closed during the winter months. The party took rooms in the Exchange Hotel.[45] On Sunday Marcus with the two Indian boys attended the East Liberty Presbyterian Church[46] where the boys created a sensation when their identities became known. Narcissa, suffering from a headache, remained in her room at the hotel [Letter 20]. Here, the following day, she spent her twenty-eighth birthday. The party secured passage down the Ohio River on the 127-ton steamboat, *Siam*, that left Pittsburgh Tuesday morning, the 15th. The vessel had been launched in 1835 and was the one which had carried Whitman and Parker up the Missouri River to Liberty that spring.

Chapter 7 footnotes

1 I examined the original records of this church, now no longer in existence, in the summer of 1935.

2 Mowry, *Marcus Whitman*, pp. 65 ff. Whitman letter #10. Mowry gives no date or place of writing.

3 See fn. 10, Chapter Four.

4 Spalding spelled his name without the "u."

5 Hulbert, *O.P.*, printed some of the letters Greene sent to Whitman but did not include his letter of January 22, 1835, from which this quotation is taken. Copy is in Coll. A.

6 Parker ms., Coll. W.

7 Drury, *Spalding*, gives details about the early life of H. H. Spalding.

8 Hotchkin to the American Board, August 6, 1835, Coll. A.

9 Spalding to his wife, May 3, 1871, Coll. O.

10 Original diary in Coll. W.

11 Organized in 1815 to aid indigent students studying for the ministry, largely Congregational in its constituency but for a time included the Presbyterians.

12 Gray, *Oregon*, p. 110.

13 For more details regarding Eliza Spalding's early life, see Drury, *Spalding*.

14 Original letter is in the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia. Dr. Beecher was then President of Lane Theological Seminary.

15 Spalding reported this price to the American Board as the value of "sundries" given to him and his wife by "Capt. Hart for miss. to Flat Head Indians." See *Missionary Herald*, May 1836, p. 196. Capt. Hart did not know when he gave the wagon and other items to the Spaldings that they would be going to Oregon. He was much opposed to his daughter going so far away. Capt. Hart died Feb. 27, 1846, and in his will denied Eliza any of his property unless she returned home. Drury, *Spalding*, p. 317.

16 A son of the Rev. Cushing Eells who was a member of the 1838 reenforcement to the Oregon Mission.

17 Rev. J. S. Griffin and his wife went overland to Oregon in 1839 as independent missionaries.

18 Original letter in Coll. W.

19 *W.C.Q.*, II (1898):2:36.

20 Original, Coll. A.

21 *Ibid.*

22 Drury, *Spalding*, pp. 68-9.

23 Drury, *Spalding and Smith*, p. 294, quoting from an entry in Spalding's diary for July 9, 1840. See also Smith to Greene, September 3, 1840, Coll. A.; Gray to Greene, October 14, 1840; and Drury, *Whitman*, p. 119.

24 *Op.* cit., August 1959, p. 44.

25 Spalding, *Senate Document*, p. 9.

26 A picture of the inn is in Drury, *Whitman*, p. 121. It was known as the Hamilton House and was torn down in the spring of 1919.

27 Spalding, *Senate Document*, p. 9.

28 Original, Coll. A.

29 *Prattsburg News*, January 27, 1898.

30 *W.C.Q.*, I (1897)3:20.

31 Description given to the author in 1935 by a resident of Rushville who recalled what her mother had told her.

32 Locks of Narcissa's hair, showing it to be blond with an auburn tinge, are in Colls. O., W., and Wn.

33 Portland, Ore., *Times Sun*, May 8, 1927. The portrait was dedicated May 16, 1927.

34 The late Mrs. Edmund Bowden of Seattle donated one of the sleeves to Whitman College.

35 *Op. Cit.*, p. 109.

36 The *Presbyterian Journal of History*, December 1932, published what it claimed to be a picture of Marcus Whitman from an "original ambrotype." Since the ambrotype process, which was a transparency on glass, was not discovered until 1851 and not patented until 1854, this claim is clearly unfounded. The picture may have been one of Whitman's namesakes.

37 *Op. Cit.*, p. 108.

38 *O.H.Q.*, II (1901):26.

39 *W.C.Q.*, I (1897):3:19.

40 Matilda Sager Delaney to Mrs. Bowden, March 26, 1928; copy in Coll. Wn: "Her best dress was a black bombazine—it was her wedding dress and her whole family wore black at her wedding."

41 Several tunes have been associated with this hymn including Newton, Wellwood, Smyrna, Latter Day, and Greenville. This was a favorite hymn used in that generation especially in farewell services for missionaries leaving for some distant land.

42 When I visited Angelica in the summer of 1935, an old lady whose grandparents were present at the wedding told me this story. See also *Magazine of American History*, September 1884, p. 193. The Angelica church burned in 1868. See references to the wedding in Whitman letters 19 and 44.

43 Parker ms., Cornell Uni.

44 Miss Esther Smith, the fiancée of John Dunbar, who was supposed to go out with this party was, for some reason, detained. Dunbar returned East the following winter and was then married. *Nebraska State Historical Society*, II:149.

45 I am indebted to Ross Woodbridge (see "In Appreciation") for this information. He found a record of the hotel's list of guests in the *Daily Pittsburg Gazette* for March 14, 1836.

46 While passing through Pittsburgh, the missionaries received a silver communion set from the East Liberty Presbyterian Church. The chalice, inscribed: "E. L. Pby. church," without its base, is now in the Presbyterian (Indian) Church of Spalding, Idaho.