

HENRY HEWITT.—Many differences have been developed in respect to the particulars of the immigration of 1843 which can be reconciled only by making allowances for the natural discrepancies of memory with regard to events long since passed, and to the fact that the different companies and sections of the whole immigration had different experiences, and that the few survivors are not likely to have seen nor heard precisely the same things. Each of the various accounts may be given as each pioneer remembers it to have occurred; and each will have its own interest and value. It was to this immigration that Mr. Hewitt belonged.

He was born in Huntington county, Pennsylvania,

but, going to Missouri at the age of sixteen, made his home near that of a Mr. Matheny. There becoming acquainted with the pioneer's daughter Elizabeth, one year his junior, he was married to her three years later. The next year, 1842, he met a mountaineer who had been in Oregon and who, by his long stories of adventures and accounts of the wonders of the West, set fire to his imagination and so filled him with the idea of coming here, that he talked with all his friends to induce the formation of a large Oregon company; and, indeed, he held a public meeting, at which as many as thirty-six men signed a paper promising to make the journey the next season. All but six of this number, however, receded from the agreement; and Hewitt himself, not feeling certain that the company would go through, and remaining on account of his family, did not go to the rendezvous. Relying on the promise of his comrades that he would be informed of the forward movement, he was, nevertheless, left behind, greatly to his disappointment. Making arrangements, however, to cross the country the next year, he raised a small company, and was on time at the rendezvous, joining the first great emigration with Applegate, Burnett, Martyn, Lennox, Waldo and others.

Soon after starting, their great care was to march in such fashion as to be able to resist an attack of the Indians, of whom they had a wholesome dread. To this end they drove in four columns, some thirty wagons in each, at such a distance apart as to easily form a hollow square in case of an attack, with a place for their herds within. But this plan, which we find mentioned first by Mr. Hewitt, proved cumbersome; and it was also wearisome to the animals to break four separate roads. It was not possible to preserve much order in crossing the streams; and at every ford each column must wait until all were over. To handle the large bands of cattle in any such way was also difficult. The train was therefore divided into three companies, each with its own captain. In the crossing of the South Platte, usually said to have been effected by means of chaining all the teams together and passing over in solid column, Mr. Hewitt speaks of a large part making the crossing by putting buffalo robes underneath the wagon beds, thereby transforming them into boats, while men waded alongside of these amphibious crafts to propel and guide them. At the North Platte he speaks of canoes being obtained and lashed two and two, into which the wagons were rolled with the wheels on one side in one of the canoes, and the wheels of the other side in the other; and by this ferriage the crossing was accomplished. Doubtless these different methods were all tried in different places or by different companies.

Our pioneer speaks of the efficient services of the Pilot Gant to Green river, and of Whitman's guidance the rest of the way,—how the Doctor hastened on ahead of the train from Fort Hall, leaving directions tacked up all along the road, and also sent back to them an Indian guide, the faithful old Sticcus, to meet them in the Grande Ronde and pilot them through the Blue Mountains. Mr. Hewitt himself kept the lead over this difficult

range, and was the first to drive a wagon, with the exception of Whitman's old vehicle in 1838, from the summit into the vast Columbia basin that lay before the desolate plain. On the way to The Dalles, however, Lenox gained the lead, Hewitt coming in second.

The trip from The Dalles was by water; and the cattle were driven along the south shore, but were crossed over to the north side at Wind Mountain, taken thence to Vancouver, and were swum back to the south side at Sauvie's Island. Hewitt selected a home in Washington county, but the next year went up the valley to the Yamhill, buying the Joseph McLaughlin place, which had been first taken in 1832 and was the oldest farm on the west side of the Willamette. This has been Mr. Hewitt's home for nearly half a century. Here he has farmed and borne his share in building up the community, and has reared his family of ten children, all of whom are still living; and all but the eldest, his only daughter, Anna Eliza, are natives of this state.

Of all his reminiscences of early times, none are more pleasant than those that relate to Doctor McLoughlin. Whoever came to this venerable father of our state in need of any kind, whether for food or clothing, paid to him what money or wheat he could bring with him, and got the supplies. If the pay were enough to square up, it was all right. If the settler had little or nothing, and the pay were insufficient, it was all right also. The Doctor divided with the pioneers, and waited for them to pay their bills when they were able. Some never became able; and the Doctor thereby lost some twelve thousand dollars.

Mrs. Hewitt is no less a pioneer than her husband, having been born in Owen county, Indiana, in 1823, moving at an early age to Illinois with her parents, and afterwards to Platte county, Missouri. She has thus seen all the life of the West.