

NARCISSA JUNE 1839

by Crystal Calhoun



WIELETPOO

June 25th, 1839

My Dear Sister:

Your letter of April inst. I received but a few days ago, or it would have been answered much sooner. You make some important inquiries concerning my treatment of my precious child, Alice Clarissa, now laying by me a lifeless lump of clay. Yes, of her I loved and watched so tenderly, I am bereaved. My Jesus in love to her and us has taken her to himself.

Last Sabbath, blooming in health, cheerful, and happy in herself and in the society of her much loved parents, yet in one moment she disappeared, went to the river with two cups to get some water for the table, fell in and was drowned. Mysterious event! We can in no way account for the circumstances connected with it, otherwise than that the Lord meant it should be so, Husband and I were both engaged in reading. She had just a few minutes before been reading to her father; had got down out of his lap, and as my impression, was amusing herself by the door in the yard. After a few moments, not hearing her voice, I sent Margaret to search for her. She did not find her readily, and instead of coming to me to tell that she had not found her, she went to the garden to get some radishes for supper; on seeing her pass to the water to wash them, I looked to see if Alice was with her, but saw that she was not. That moment I began to be alarmed for Mungo had just been in and said there were two cups in the river. We immediately inquired for her, but no one had seen her. We then concluded she must be in the river. We searched down the river, and up and down again in wild dismay, but could not find her for a long time. Several were in the river searching far down. By this time we gave her up for dead. At last an old Indian got into the river where she fell in and looked along by the shore and found her a short distance below. But it was too late; she was dead. We made every effort possible to bring her to life, but all was in vain. On hearing that the cups were in the river, I resolved in my mind how they could get there, for we had not missed them. By the time I reached the water-side and saw where they were, it came to my recollection that I had a glimpse of her entering the house and saying, with her usual glee, "Ha, he, supper is most ready" (for the table had just been set), "let Alice get some water," at the same time taking two cups from the table and disappearing. Being absorbed in reading I did not see her or thank anything about her-which way she went to get her water. I had never known her to go to the river or to appear at all venturesome until within a week past. Previous to this she has been much afraid to go near the water anywhere, for her father had once put her in, which so effectually frightened her that we had lost that feeling of anxiety for her in a measure on its account. But she had gone; yes, and because my Saviour would have it so. He saw it necessary to afflict us, and has taken her away. Now we see how much we loved her, and you know the blessed Saviour will not have His children bestow and undue attachment upon creature objects without reminding us of His own superior claim upon affections. Take warning, dear sister, by our bereavement that you do not let your dear babe get between your heart and the Saviour, for you like us, are solitary and alone and in almost the dangerous necessity of loving too ardently the precious gift, to the neglect of the giver.

Surviving The Oregon Trail

History - Geography - Survival - Homesteading

Saturday evening, 29,-After ceasing to restore our dear babe to life, we immediately sent for Brother Spaulding and others to come and sympathize and assist in committing to the grave her earthly remains. Tuesday afternoon Mr. Hall reached here. Mr. S. and wife took a boat and came down the river to Walla Walla, and reached here Thursday morning, nine o'clock, and we buried her that afternoon, just four days from the time her happy spirit took its flight to the bosom of her Saviour. When I write again, I will give you some particulars of her short life, which are deeply interesting to me, and will be to you, I trust, for you, too, are acquainted with a mother's feelings and a mother's heart.

Probably we may return to Clearwater with Brother and Sister S., as it is necessary for my husband to go on business for the mission. Dear sister, do pray for me in this trying bereavement, for supporting grace to bear without murmuring thought, the dealings of the blessed God toward us, and that it may sanctified to the good of our souls and of these heathen around us.

O! on what a tender thread hangs these mortal frames, and how soon we vanish and are gone. She will not come to me, but I shall soon go to her. Let me speak to you of the great mercy of my Redeemer toward one so unworthy. You know not, neither can I tell you, how much He comforts and sustains me in this trying moment. He enables me to say, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed, ever blessed, be the name of the Lord."

Sister Spaulding sends love to you and will write you soon.

In haste, as ever your affectionate, but now afflicted sister in Christ,

NARCISSA WHITMAN.