1890

Hand of God MS

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Chapter 1.
The hand of God in assisting the United States to obtain her Pacific Coast possessions.

"The Most High pulleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whosoever he will." 1 Sam. 4:25

An old proverb says:

"There is a purpose that shapes our ends.
Rough hew them—we will."

And one who has read carefully the addresses made before the Pioneer Society of Oregon, will often find in regard to the work of those men who came to this coast in the thirties and forties the old expression used, "They builded better than they knew," when they laid the foundation of the State of Oregon.
Both of these proverbs are only another way of expressing the truth of a verse in Holy Writ, "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever he will."

The maps of the United States, as made at the beginning of this century, and as made now, are very different, as far as respects this coast. All of the United States west of the Rocky mountains was left off; California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, and a part of Montana, with Alaska, with its area of one million, four hundred thousand square miles (1,431,477) or two-seventh of the United States.

Less than fifty years ago the title to much of this country was in dispute between the United States and Great Britain, and the rest our government made no pretensions to claim.

I hold in my hand an old and worn-out letter which I captured in Massachusetts, which was written by one of that band who came here fifty years ago and is dated "Writ at New York Oct. 1, 1838," Of the population it says: "The country is large and there are comparatively few inhabitants in it. The Hudson's Bay Company have a number of trading posts which are generally about three hundred miles apart. Mr. Spalding and Dr. Whitman each have a station about 125 miles apart. The Methodist mission have two stations, one 150 miles, and the other 400 miles from here (The Dalles and Salem). Besides these settlements there are no others in this great territory."

Again here is another letter, written by the same person (Mrs. M. F. Eells) to a sister in Massachusetts which begins: "Your letter dated Sept. 12th, 1841, I received July, 1843," twenty two months on the way! I refer to these items as they
could possibly have done in the same period." (Transactions Or. Pioneer Society 1884, p. 29.)

Previous to the time when Great Britain was trying to obtain possession of a part of this coast, and during a part of the time Spain, France and Russia all made some attempts to get hold of it. And it is just as plain, when we look at the colonies of these other countries in other parts of the world, that if either of these nations had obtained it, it would not have been developed as much as it would have been even under Great Britain, and hence very much less than it has been under the United States. But these nations which have been mentioned are among the foremost nations of the globe, hence it is plain that this coast has been more highly developed by us, under the Providence of God, than it would have been under any other nation, and this prosperity is likely to continue in the future.

The question now arises, how has this been brought about? was it a plan of man’s devising or not? I answer: It was not the plan of any man, for in general the people, and especially the government of the United States planned the other way. Nor was it chance. There was a great intelligent Architect who laid the plan; and men did the work—carried out the plan, but in doing so they “builted better than they knew.”

As many a soldier has fought and helped to win a grand victory, who had nothing to do in planning the battle, who was not capable of making a successful plan, and who if he had tried would have made so many blunders that the enemy would have gained the victory, so there was many a battle fought before the United States gained this coast, diplomatic, intellectual and moral, in which men, as it were, fought, but which neither men or our govern-