

When the officer contended that even the Indians had to work hard during the fishing season to get food for winter, the prophet answered:

"This work lasts only for a few weeks. Besides it is natural work and does them no harm. But the work of the white man hardens soul and body. Nor is it right to tear up and mutilate the earth as white men do."

To the officer's assertion that the Indians also dug roots and were even then digging kamas in the mountains, he replied:

"We simply take the gifts that are freely offered. We no more harm the earth than would an infant's fingers harm its mother's breast. But the white man tears up large tracts of land, runs deep ditches, cuts down forests, and changes the whole face of the earth. You know very well this is not right. Every honest man," said he, looking at me searchingly, "knows in his heart that this is all wrong. But the white men are so greedy they do not consider these things."

He asserted that the Indians were now so helpless before the white men that they must cease to exist unless they had assistance from a higher power, but that if they heeded the sacred message they would receive strong and sudden help as surely as the spring comes after winter. When some doubt was expressed as to his own faith in these things, he asked pointedly:

"Do the white teachers believe what they teach?"

"It is said, Smohalla, that you hate all white men."

"It is not true. But the whites have caused us great suffering. Dr Whitman many years ago made a long journey to the east to get a bottle of poison for us. He was gone about a year, and after he came back strong and terrible diseases broke out among us. The Indians killed Dr Whitman, but it was too late. He had uncorked his bottle and all the air was poisoned. Before that there was little sickness among us, but since then many of us have died. I have had children and grandchildren, but they are all dead. My last grandchild, a young woman of 16, died last month. If only her infant could have lived"—his voice faltered slightly, but with scarcely a pause he continued in his former tone, "I labored hard to save them, but my medicine would not work as it used to."

He repelled the idea that the Indians had profited by the coming of the whites, and especially denied that they had obtained ponies from this source. His statement on this point may be of interest to those who hold that the horse is indigenous to America:

"What! The white man gave us ponies? Oh, no; we had ponies long before we ever saw white people. The Great Spirit gave them to us. Our horses were swifter and more enduring, too, in those days, before they were mixed with the white man's horses."

He went on to tell how the Indians had befriended the first explorers who came among them and how ungrateful had been their later recompense, and said: "We are now so few and weak that we can offer no resistance, and their preachers have persuaded them to let a few of us

What that he
children & people
are all dead
how can we go
to meet them