I left, the rivers were high and snow fell immediately after to an unusual depth. All the signs are of a very severe winter and a very early one. Here where I now write in Oregon, the country is covered with snow to the depth of over a foot & it is hard frozen. There is not a hope of saving the cattle. They will perish through almost the whole extent of Oregon. [illegible] fire to ten thousand dollars worth. The potatoes have been frozen to a serious extent, for you know they rarely more than house them, & even the seed wheat has been ground up. Wheat is worth six dollars a bushel. Flour at the Oregon Mills 40 $ per bbl. So that you see the prospects in the mountains. The Columbia is frozen nearly across at Vancouver, a very unusual thing. Even had I been aware of the increase in the salary of the Collector of Astoria, I should not, until knowing how the election had gone, have left the mines, with any favorable prospects, for I had firmly determined to continue in them until I had money enough to establish me in something else. There is no country in the world where money is as necessary to success as it is in California and Oregon. To take this office for a few months & then be turned out of it, with outstanding bonds and the necessity of waiting until my accounts are settled before I go out of gunshot would be ruinous to me. Even on my arrival at San Francisco to which place I hurried, I was in great doubt whether I ought not at once to decline it, & it was only on learning the probability that Wolcott had forwarded my bond with the necessary security ~~that I~~ and on the urgent recommendation of Hooker that I concluded to defer ~~it~~ a decision till my arrival. I have written to notify the department of my being here, and ~~have~~ am going