

Houtz sisters. Mrs. Ross gave "The Little Ruggles," followed with a sweet solo by Mrs. Dr. E. I. Rich. President Shurtliff spoke in high terms of the labors of Bishop Stevens and invoked the blessings of heaven upon his future life. Charles Pike rendered a solo, and Mrs. Moench followed with a neatly prepared speech on the manifold cares and duties devolving upon the shoulders of Bishops. The crowning event was the impromptu speech by Judge Rolapp and the presentation of a gold headed cane. The speech bristled with wit and pathos and branded the judge with a vein of humor unlooked for by his friends. The Bishop responded feelingly, stating that he highly appreciated all that had been done and said, and especially the kind memento so expressive of the feelings of the people toward him. Miss Ethel Pike rendered a beautiful solo, followed by Miss Bertha Eccles with a recitation. President Middleton depicted the qualities necessary for a Bishop to possess, each of which he said Bishop Stevens possessed to an eminent degree. Mrs. Roseltha Ballantyne gave a recitation and Miss Janie Fowler followed with a solo. President Flygare endorsed what the previous speakers had said, after which Miss Dora Snow read an excellent poem dedicated to Bishop T. J. Stevens. Mrs. Mary Farley sang a solo, after which the congregation joined in singing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

This ended the program in the meeting house and from here the company adjourned to the ward institute, where the remainder of the evening was spent in social dance. At the close of the ceremonies Mrs. George W. Larkin Jr. presented the Bishop with a beautiful oil painting, subject, a winter scene in Switzerland, executed with her own hand. W.

### A FERTILE REGION.

The following, which appeared in the New Year's edition of the Denver Republican, is here reproduced at the request of a correspondent:

Farmington, N. M., Dec. 31.—(Special.)—The past year has been an unusually prosperous one for the great fruit and agricultural districts of San Juan county, N. M. The most satisfactory weather conditions prevailed during the growing season and full crops of every variety of fruit, hay, grain, fodder, etc., were realized.

This country is drained by three large streams, the San Juan, Animas and La Plata rivers, and the valley of each stream forms an agricultural or fruit district by itself, and in the lower end of the county, where the Animas and La Plata merge into one with the San Juan valley, is the wonderful Farmington fruit district surrounding the town of Farmington. Along the upper Animas, from Aztec to the state line, and along the upper La Plata, great quantities of grain, hay, alfalfa and small fruits are raised, and large numbers of high bred cattle and hogs are bred and fattened. In the Farmington district fruit raising is the principal pursuit, while at the same time immense quantities of corn, small grain, alfalfa, potatoes, etc., are produced. Although as a fruit district this country is comparatively new, and a large number of young orchards have not yet come into bearing, yet the entire fruit crop of this vicinity, during the season just closed, reached the enormous quantity of some twenty million pounds. The yield per acre was in many instances truly remarkable. There were numerous ten-acre tracts of seven to ten year old apple and pear trees which gave a yield of 400,000 pounds of fruit, many individual trees bearing from 1,000 to 1,500 pounds. Apples of every variety formed about

50 per cent of the crop, while 20 per cent were peaches, 20 per cent pears, and 10 per cent was made up of such fruits as cherries, apricots, plums, nectarines, grapes, etc. Large quantities of the most luscious berries of every variety were also raised, and the watermelons and cantaloupes that were produced would not have found a rival in the fanciest patch down in "Ole Georgy," as far as quality and size were concerned. Aside from the fruit, this vicinity produced 10,000 tons of alfalfa, 20,000 bushels of corn, 40,000 bushels of fine winter wheat, rye and oats, 200 tons of honey as well as large quantities of potatoes, beets, vegetables, etc. Great numbers of cattle and hogs were fattened, and the mountain towns supplied with chickens, turkeys and various dairy products.

But the one drawback this country has to contend with, in the face of all its good things, is the lack of adequate transportation facilities. The nearest railroad shipping point is Durango, Colo., about fifty miles to the north, and to move the enormous crops such a distance by wagon is a physical impossibility. Although everything on wheels was pressed into service, day and night, only a part of the great crop was moved. Some 250,000 pounds of apples and pears were hauled overland to Gallup, N. M., on the Santa Fe railroad, and about five million pounds were hauled up and distributed from Durango, Colo.

The superiority of Farmington apples over those raised anywhere else in America, has attracted widespread attention, and a large proportion of the apples that were shipped out went to supply the fancy trade of the far eastern markets. While several hundred thousand pounds were secured by eastern parties for export to Europe. The balance of the great crop was put up into dried fruit, cider and wine, and what was left of course went to the hog pen, where Mr. Porker revelled in all the delicacies of the season.

Owing to its isolation from the rest of New Mexico and the necessity of marketing fruits via Colorado points, much of the fruit raised here finds its way to the eastern markets as choice Colorado fruit; and only a few weeks ago an entire trainload of Farmington apples was made up at Durango and went forward as Durango fruit. However, the Denver & Rio Grande railroad promises to speedily remedy this disadvantage by building a branch from Durango to this productive region and proper railroad facilities will make this country one of the most favored spots on the continent. People are beginning to realize these facts and the last few months have witnessed a steady stream of homeseekers and business men to this vicinity. The town of Farmington, located in the heart of the fruit belt, has experienced a veritable boom. Building operations of the most substantial character may be seen on every hand. There is not a vacant house to be had, and people are compelled to camp on the outskirts of the town in tents, owing to the scarcity of other shelter.

Improved fruit and farm lands under old ditches are selling at from \$25 to \$200 per acre. There are, however, many thousands of acres of fine government lands on the mesa between the rivers which can easily be irrigated if taken hold of by large irrigation enterprises. Work of this kind has just been commenced by the Animas River Land and Irrigation company on a twenty foot canal, which will cover some 50,000 acres of government land. This land may be taken up as desert claims, and water obtained from the company at merely nominal figures. Large ditches to cover 60,000 acres additional will be built by the same company next

spring, so that in a short time the area of lands under irrigation in this county will be nearly doubled, and the crop output augmented accordingly.

Aside from its agricultural and fruit interests, this country has other vast and wonderful resources. The bars of the La Plata and San Juan rivers are rich with placer gold. The hills are full of minerals and chemicals, while the entire country is underlaid with great seams of the finest coal, some veins cropping out forty feet thick, and evidence of oil and natural gas may be found on every hand. Canaigre grows wild in great profusion everywhere.

This country offers grand opportunities to capital for investment in the canning, evaporating and distilling of fruits, the manufacture of beet sugar, extraction of canaigre, mining and milling, with cheap fuel and an abundant supply of the finest water power in the West, which will not go begging long for substantial attention. The future of this district looks most promising, and the coming year will witness great strides in development and improvements.

### A MORMON COLONY WANTED.

Jackson, N. M., Jan. 25, 1898.

As we read of the cries of poverty and the appeals for help in almost every issue of the "News," we who live on the outskirts of Zion are made to feel that our circumstances are not so bad as they might be. My occupation calls me out among the people of our county quite frequently, but in all of my travels in the past eighteen months I have not seen a single case of poverty; neither have I as much as heard of a person, in this county, who was really destitute and needing help, either among our people or our friends. So, while we are deprived of the same spiritual blessings and educational advantages which our brothers and sisters enjoy who live nearer headquarters, we are not suffering for food, raiment or shelter. And, while we are enjoying so many of the comforts of life, we are not selfish at all, but would rejoice in seeing others without homes or a means of earning a living, settle on a piece of good land, where by the sweat of their brows they could eat bread all the days of their lives, which they had raised or earned with their own hands; we would welcome hundreds of industrious men seeking homes to our fair land of sunshine, for we need help to take water from the rivers on to the upper lands, to build reservoirs, subdue the land and make the desert blossom as the rose. We feel the need of help that we may more successfully carry on our religious and educational institutions.

We have an abundance of land and water for hundreds of families, which will not lie idle but a short time, for the people in the over-crowded East are already turning their faces to this choice garden spot of New Mexico. We need capitalists as well as hard working men to successfully develop this country. One might ask, when there are so many in Utah out of employment, and without homes or a piece of land upon which they might raise their food, who are crying for bread and who have to be supported during the winter months at least, by their more favored brothers and sisters, why for goodness sake don't some of our good brethren, who have money to invest, come out and see this country, or seek information from Elder Brigham Young; and while they might make thousands they could assist their less favored brothers and sisters in obtaining land for an inheritance and water for the land where these worthy poor children of our Father might grow in happiness.