

CORRESPONDENCE.

Written for this Paper.
PROSPEROUS SAN JUAN.

BLUFF, San Juan County, Nov. 19, 1893.—In company with Elders Brigham Young, Elders F. A. Hammond and Wm. Halls of the San Juan Stake Presidency, Elder Robert Watson and others, I left Moab, Grand county, Utah, on the 18th inst., and traveled through a desert country in a southeasterly direction about thirty miles, and encamped for the night in a cedar grove near Hatch's wash. After spending the evening in pleasant conversation and making the surrounding cliffs resound with the songs of Zion, we made our beds in the sands of the desert and enjoyed a comfortable night's rest.

Early the next morning we were again on the way, and after traveling thirty miles further we arrived at the new settlement called Monticello, where a meeting was held in the evening, the congregation being addressed by Elders Young, Jensen, and Hammond.

On the morning of the 15th (Wednesday) Elder Young and the rest of the company, myself excepted, started for Mancos, Colorado, ninety miles distant, to attend quarterly conference there the following Saturday and Sunday, while I, after attending to historical labors at Monticello, started for Bluff, the headquarters of the San Juan Stake of Zion, where I arrived on the 16th inst. Elder Francis Nielson, of Verdure, brought me in a light vehicle over the forty-four mile desert, intervening between South Montezuma creek and Bluff.

Monticello is pleasantly situated on high ground near the east base of the Blue mountains. No settlement in Utah territory commands such a fine and extensive view of surrounding country as does this remarkable little town, which was first founded in 1888 by a number of families called by the Stake Presidency to locate here. Looking south, east and north, as far as the eye can reach, an immense tract of country lies exposed to view with a number of mountain chains and peaks in the far distance, forming the background of what would make a beautiful picture. West of the settlement the snow-capped Blue mountains prevents a view of the country sloping towards the Colorado river. Southeast, in the extreme southwest corner of the state of Colorado, the Ute mountains, distant about sixty miles from Monticello, prevents an unlimited view in that direction. Further to the left, about a hundred miles away, the so-called Parrot mountains, near the base of which lies the settlement of Mancos, show their rugged, irregular summits against the horizon; while the La Sal mountains northeast, form the background of the landscape in that direction.

Monticello is a fine grain producing country, but it is rather cold, owing to its high altitude, for anything in the fruit line except the hardier kind. About twenty-five families, nearly all Latter-day Saints, compose the numerical strength of the settlement; while seven families residing on South

Montezuma creek, at a place recently named Verdure, constitute a branch of the Monticello ward with George A. Adams as presiding Elder. Elder Frederick J. Jones is the Bishop of the Monticello ward; his counselors are Andrew P. Sorensen and Charles E. Walton jr.

Considering that the settlers here are and have been in constant jeopardy of losing their lands and improvements by the contemplated removal of the Southern Ute Indians from Colorado into this country, the people of Monticello have made great progress. They built a respectable meeting house when there was scarcely half a dozen families of permanent settlers in the place; and before then there were sufficient houses erected to shelter the original settlers. A Stake conference was held in the new meeting house, at which the Saints had a season of rejoicing. This was in August, 1888. The Saints have now about twelve hundred acres of land under fence, of which about one-third is being cultivated and watered from North Montezuma Creek. There is room for many more settlers; and as dry farming has already been successfully tried, the surrounding country affords facilities for thousands and thousands of Latter-day Saints who are not afraid to cope with the difficulties connected with the building up of a new country.

The little settlement has in times past been considerably annoyed by cowboys from the surrounding ranches. On several occasions these have come up in large numbers threatening the inhabitants with death and destruction, discharging their firearms in the streets, and in other ways endangering the lives of the citizens. During a fracas of this kind three years ago, Sister Walton, a highly respected lady and Saint, and a Texan cowboy were shot and almost instantly killed in front of the meeting house. If the settlement was stronger, these attacks would most likely not be attempted; but as this part of the country is known as a regular resort for outlaws and fugitives from justice (the peculiar natural features of the country affording them special protection), our people are by no means safe as yet against similar attacks in the future.

The Saints of Monticello, however, seem to be well satisfied with their settlement, and some of them would at once set to work to replace their primitive log dwellings with houses of more desirable material, if the much vexed Indian occupation question was settled in favor of the citizens. Elder Young, in his discourse the other evening, promised the Saints that if they were united and desired to stay, they should not be disturbed.

Bluff, which is the home of about twenty families of Latter-day Saints, is situated on the right bank of the San Juan river, immediately above the point where the Cottonwood wash opens into the river. The valley of the San Juan, at the point where the settlement stands, is about a mile wide from bluff to bluff. The soil is very sandy, though quite productive; but as there is only about three hundred acres

of land under cultivation, the people have had to look for means of maintenance from other sources. Thus, sheep and stock raising are carried on to quite an extent by the citizens, and the incomes from these sources and the dividends received from the co-operative store are the main dependencies of the people. Referring to the store mentioned, it may be said that it is not only well patronized by the citizens themselves and the prospectors who are still looking for gold in the sands of the San Juan valley; but the Navajo Indians, whose reservation lies across the river in Arizona also come here to trade off their blankets, hides, pelts, wool, etc., for merchandise. The Co-op store, this being virtually a trading post for the Indians, has done a very good business from the beginning.

The San Juan river is very similar to the Rio Virgin in Washington County, Utah; its waters are exceedingly hard to control; the river rises and falls at pleasure, changes its course frequently and in time of floods carries everything exposed away before its muddy, turbulent waters including dams, waterwheels, trees, farming land, fences, etc. One of these floods, which swelled the river far beyond its usual banks in 1884, destroyed a great many of the improvements made previously by the settlers, and most of the original settlers, who had founded the place four years previous (in April, 1880) got discouraged and left for other parts of the country. Another little settlement called Montezuma, located by the Saints at the same time as Bluff, about fifteen miles above that place, was entirely abandoned at that time and has never been resettled since. In the fall of that year (1884) President Joseph F. Smith, Elder Erastus Snow and others visited the place and held meetings with the Saints. In the course of his remarks, President Smith said that those who had responded to the call of the Church authorities in coming to settle on the San Juan and who had struggled in the past to make the settlement a success, but who now desired to leave should be blessed but that those who would remain and try anew to build up the town should be doubly blessed. A number of the present inhabitants of the place whom I have interviewed during my visit here are very anxious that I should state as a historical fact that the words of President Smith have had a literal fulfillment. Those who remained have since 1884 been greatly blessed. Prosperity has followed the labors of their hands from that time on; their canal which they made anew after the extraordinary flood of 1884, has proven a success; and their business enterprise (undertaken mostly on the co-operative plan) have since that time proven quite profitable. Thus, the present inhabitants of Bluff are comparatively well off in a financial point of view, and acknowledge the hand of the Lord in their prosperity.

The natural scenery around Bluff, though wild, is grand beyond description. The bluffs on both sides of the river rise up in perpendicular heights, forming interesting groups of pinnacles, domes and walls and abounding also with caves, crags and numerous fantastic and strange formations. It was