

of one gun, spokes shot out of the wheel, and yet no one hurt. Young Lever had a bullet burn him across the stomach and left its mark, then struck a spoke. He has sent it home.

All of the boys have interesting stories to tell of their experiences and some of them had very narrow escapes. I went all over the ground a few days since and if the Americans had had the barricades that the Spanish had they would have stayed there forever with no more opposition than they had. They had sacks filled with sand and dirt, six to eight feet high and from two to fifteen feet thick; but when the big guns got to working, it made them shaky, as they can't stand shells bursting all around them, and some of the boys saw some terrible sights on their way in town. There was a loss of about forty killed of the Americans and the lowest estimate on the Spanish side is from two to three hundred killed and seven hundred wounded. The Spanish are in what is known as the old city, which is surrounded by a large, thick wall, well fortified with a large canal each side of it. They have their freedom in the city but nobody is allowed to carry arms except United States soldiers. Some of the Spanish are quite conversant and try to talk with us when they get the chance, but most of them have very little to say. They evidently don't care a great deal for us. They are not very large men, either. One of the boys visited the Spanish hospital a few days since, and a soldier with both legs and one arm off told him: "Boom, boom, Americano," meaning American big guns. Everybody respects the Utah battery for their fighting qualities, which were the best of all.

Sept. 6.—The mail leaves tomorrow, so I will have to close for the present. There is very little difference in the routine of life here at present and it is beginning to get monotonous, but we cannot tell what may happen any day or until a settlement is made with Spain, and then the insurgents may show their hand.

We are faring much better here than since we left home. Plenty of wholesome food and well-cooked. Our officers are liked and they are civil, but discipline is strict, and everybody is satisfied.

Sunday night a M. I. A. meeting was organized and Captain Young took part as a member. We will have meetings Sunday evenings from this on.

I send three pieces of pearl shells that are used in this country for window glass, it is in most of the houses and is about three inches square. These pieces I picked up in the house by the trenches where the boys stood such heavy fire. It is impossible to find a space a foot square that is not middled with bullet or shell holes. The weather has been very good since we arrived, only an occasional rain, but very warm. My health still continues good and I am as careful as possible.

Remember me to all friends who enquire, and let me know the news when you write. This letter will have to do for all this time and I will write more next week. Hoping you are all well.

Your sons, D. J. DAVIS.

FROM SOUTH ALABAMA.

Sister Martha J. Bradley, writing from Lapine, Ala., September 23rd, states that she and her husband have embraced the Gospel and feel happy in the knowledge that they have found the truth. They are thankful to the Providence that led the Elders to their door and for the light they have seen in the Gospel.

Bradford, Ark., Sept. 27, 1898.

At the early age of 18 was called to fill a mission in what was then the Indian Territory mission but is now the

Southwestern States mission. I was called from the La Belle ward in the Bingham Stake of Zion, state of Idaho. When I received my call I regretted my inability, but realizing I had been called of God and knowing He was able to assist me, I prepared to go. At the time appointed for me to leave Salt Lake City I was on hand and accordingly left Salt Lake City on October 23, 1897. After the train started I learned that there were ten other Elders on the same train. We had a pleasant trip, sweeping over the country from there to St. Johns, Kas.

At St. John, I and three others of the Elders, were assigned to labor in the East Arkansas conference, with Elder John H. Peterson as conference president; so four nights after leaving Salt Lake we left St. John for Bradford, Ark., arriving there two nights later.

Elder D. M. Nelson of Woods Cross and myself were assigned to labor in Woodruff county, Ark. On the 4th of November, 1897, we arrived in our field of labor and commenced canvassing the country, distributing tracts at every house where the people would accept them. We also held meetings in all public places where we were permitted to do so. Most of the people are poor; yet we have found them hospitable and kind. Most all of the people are renters, the land being owned by land-owners who often possess thousands of acres.

Woodruff county is a low bottom country, on White river and covered with lots of timber, such as oak, hickory, cypress, etc. Part of the country overflows from excessive rainfall. It is very level and apparently quite fertile. The principal crop here is corn and cotton which are raised on small patches of land cleared off and prepared for this purpose. We labored here for two months until winter rain set in; then we could not get around afoot. I was assigned to labor in Cleburne county with Elder S. O. Rush of Utah. I found a great contrast between Woodruff and Cleburne counties, as in the latter and in fact most all of the upper counties the people generally own their own farms, but the country is very rough and broken composed of undulating hills over which such timber as pine, cedar, oak, hickory, gum, etc., grow in abundance, which is used for firewood and building purposes. I labored here until our conference convened on May 18th, 19th and 20th, 1898, and was held at Bradford where the good Spirit was made manifest abundantly. At Bradford where the first church house of the Latter-day Saints was built in this state this spring, there are a few Saints and a Sunday school organized. After our spiritual refreshment I was assigned to labor in Independence county, Ariz., with Elder George E. Wilkins of Provo, Utah as my companion. Although we were the youngest Elders in the conference (Elder Wilkins being 21 and I 19 years old) we were full of the spirit of our mission and went to work in earnest. Before long we were permitted to see the fruits of our labors.

After finishing the western part of this country, we were assigned to labor in Izard county, the same state. Here we have found many friends.

I have been in the missionary field nearly a year and have seen the powers of God made manifest in various ways, by the healing of the sick through the laying on of hands, by His power of protection from harm and sickness, and although the enemy of truth is not asleep, our hopes for the cause of truth in this section, rest on a sure foundation.

LEONDES L. CLIFFORD,

FALL PLOWING.

There are many excellent reasons why the Utah farmer should prefer to have as much as possible of his plowing done in the fall and early winter. That he may get an early start in the spring is perhaps one of the least of the many benefits he derives from this practice. Yet this reason alone is no small advantage, as it often enables the farmer to be forehanded with his work during the whole season, giving him time to do his planting less hurriedly, and in a proper manner, insuring more satisfactory returns when the harvest time comes.

Fall plowing, especially if the land is left very rough by the plough, enhances the fertility of the soil, through the action of the frost and snows in liberating the nutritive elements of the soil and making the fertility more available for the future crops to absorb. Land that has been exposed to the elements—to alternate freezing and thawing—during the winter, makes the best possible seed bed if fined and leveled by a good harrowing commenced as early as the condition of the soil will permit, and continued at frequent intervals till planting time.

But undoubtedly the most urgent reason why fall plowing should be the almost universal rule in Utah and in fact throughout all the arid West, is the necessity of saving or conserving moisture for the future crops. Land that is plowed deeply in the autumn, and subsoiled to the depth of 15 or 20 inches where conditions warrant it, will absorb nearly all the rain and snows of winter. If all our snow and rainfall could be retained in the soil till needed by the growing crops of the farm, there is enough natural moisture to mature many crops, and so much irrigation as we now practice would be unnecessary. Fall plowed land should be left rough and open through the winter, that it may be exposed to the mellowing influence of the elements, and that it may absorb all the moisture that falls upon it, forming a natural reservoir just where needed during the growing season. To retain this moisture till called for by the growing plants, the land should be fined and leveled with the harrow as early in the spring as the soil can be handled satisfactorily, and if followed with frequent harrowing till the crops are planted and growing thriftily. The purpose of this early and frequent shallow cultivation with the harrow is to prevent evaporation. Every farmer has noticed how rapidly a warm south wind, so prevalent in spring, will dry out the soil, especially where it is unplowed and uncultivated. Twenty-four hours of this warm wind will dry out several inches of moisture unless prevented by shallow cultivation. Drouth may be circumvented by cultivation if started early and continued frequently; the moisture cannot be retained in any other way.

When spring plowing must be done, the better class of farmers do not permit the newly turned soil to be long exposed to the drying effects of the sun and winds, but cover it as quickly as possible with a blanket, made with a harrow. The harrow should follow the plow within three or four hours at most.

An old farmer was asked by a young and less experienced tiller of the soil how he could keep his farm from drying up, as his crops were perishing with the drouth. "Why," he answered, "cover it with a blanket." Astonished, the young man asked how that could be possible, and was informed that leaves or straw or any half decomposed litter would answer, but if his farm was too big to cover in this way he might cover it with dust—"a blanket of dust," said he, "is nearly as effective."