

Salt Lake Octogenarian Builds a Complete House

THE building of a modern dwelling with one pair of hands would be considered a herculean task by a young and robust mechanic, and such a project would enter the mind of perhaps not more than one octogenarian in 10,000. Yet such a feat has not only been contemplated but carried to actual consummation, in recent months, by a Salt Lake whose years number more than four score. That man is Joseph H. Ridges. But a person who holds the distinction of having built the great tabernacle organ, at a time and under circumstances that marked that event, would be expected to attempt and accomplish almost anything that it is possible for a mortal to do. As compared to the work performed forty years ago on the instrument that has become world-famed, Mr. Ridges considers that the recent product of his hands is but child's play, but his friends look at the matter from a somewhat different viewpoint, taking into account the fact that the octogenarian has already lived ten years beyond the allotted age of man. The veteran, however, seems the inference that he is aged, and the fact is that neither in appearance nor in conversation does he give the impression that he is a day over sixty. When boldly asked by a person in conversation with him recently as to his age, Mr. Ridges, with a twinkle in his eye, said: "The last letter that I received from my father gives a date that leads me to believe that I am now 70 years old." "But you know you are over 80," laughingly said his wife, who was sitting by his side.

The cozy cottage of four rooms, situated at 427 west Third North street, in which Mr. Ridges resides, is every whit the workmanship of his own hands, plastering and chimneys excepted, from foundation to ridge. And it was built in a remarkably short time, too. The first idea was to rent the structure when completed, but when the beauty and durability of the house became apparent, the owner concluded to make it his own home, and there, doubtless, he will spend the remaining years of his life.

FOUNDATION SECURED.

When, at the instance of the Short Line management, many trees were felled on the stretch of ground in the region of Third and Fourth West streets, Mr. Ridges was given permission to haul away as many of the green timbers as he wanted. He proceeded at once to cut into proper lengths a certain number of them, and these he took home, one by one, on a wheelbarrow. The logs served as the foundation for a structure that he had planned in his mind. It will readily be seen that a substantial beginning was made, and those who know of the painstaking care that the veteran builder was wont to bestow upon anything that he had in hand, need not be told that every part of the building was put up in a manner that will for a long period bid defiance to time and the elements.

In nothing is superficiality so glaring and apparent as in the construction methods of modern house builders. With all the vigilance that can be exercised over workmen, the owner of an edifice almost invariably finds that he has been cheated and defrauded unmercifully in its erection. The cottage recently completed by Joseph H. Ridges was put up in the good old way. Plaster and weak places are not covered with deceptive veneering, neither are screws driven into place by means of a hammer. Everything is fitted exactly into place and fastened there in a manner prescribed by masters of the craft.

The closest scrutiny of the Ridges cottage fails to reveal the whereabouts of anything that would not pass muster with the most exacting adept in the line of building. The pantry would be coveted by any housewife that chanced to view its interior. Nearly every inch of space is utilized, and for convenience a more desirable adjunct to the culinary department of a home could scarcely be imagined, and this rule holds good throughout the entire house.

BUILT THE GARDEN HOUSE.

For a period of 50 years Mr. Ridges has been engaged in contracting and building in this city, his activity beginning immediately after his advent here in 1857. Many public and private buildings were constructed by him and under his supervision, the most important of which, perhaps, is the

HOW THE SOUTH REGARDS VETERANS OF CONFEDERACY

The following description of the recent Confederate reunion in Richmond, Va., written by Gustavus C. Widney, appears in The World Today, for August:

The procession moved principally on Franklin street, a fine old street at the lower end with splendid homes and big trees. I picked out a good place near Monroe park from which to make my pictures. The crowd which struggled along both walks became a jam, but I kept on the inside of the line, sounds of cheering crept under the overhanging trees, mingled with fragments of sound from marching bands. First a squad of bicycle police—and then the real thing! Not militia, or regulars, but the veterans themselves in uniform as diversified as the flowers of the field; ever man a type. This was a treat for an artist. Uniforms that had been religiously preserved since the last parade were not infrequent. Old battle flags, gilt in color and full of holes, fluttered under the brighter banner of the posts. How they were cheered! Stonewall Jackson's brigade, Stuart's cavalry, Morgan's rangers, Forrest's cavalry corps, the old gray-jackets and others less famous, got such of them an ovation. I stood on Broadway in New York last fall, and saw several remnants of G. A. R. posts march up the street amid almost perfect silence, and was ashamed of my country. How different here! Everybody cheered and I was as crazy as the rest of them, as company after company of the old guard went by.

One old veteran danced a pigeon wing as far as I could see him, and others were almost as emotional. It is hard for a northerner to sympathize with this feeling, or to understand it. Yet I heard a southern man say, "The north and the south united can whip the world!" And that bit of bravado indicated their spirit.

Gardo House, President Brigham Young was a connoisseur in architecture and workmanship, and when an official residence was to be put up, Joseph H. Ridges was the man chosen to superintend the work.

Only once did the two men differ materially in their views concerning any part of the structure. Mr. Ridges wanted to use walnut on the massive doors, and President Young at first objected. He said that he had in his younger days worked so much in that kind of timber that it had become more or less distasteful to him. However, he yielded to the wishes of his supervisor, and a half carload of the finest walnut obtainable was brought in from the east. The doors were made of two inch pine, and veneered outside and in with three-eighths of an inch of walnut.

OTHER WELL KNOWN STRUCTURES.

The Beehive house was entirely remodeled by Mr. Ridges, at the instance of John W. Young, who then owned it. Hammond hall, now known as the Gordon academy, and the first Jewish synagogue in Salt Lake, on the corner of Third South and First West street, are among the many public buildings erected by Mr. Ridges.

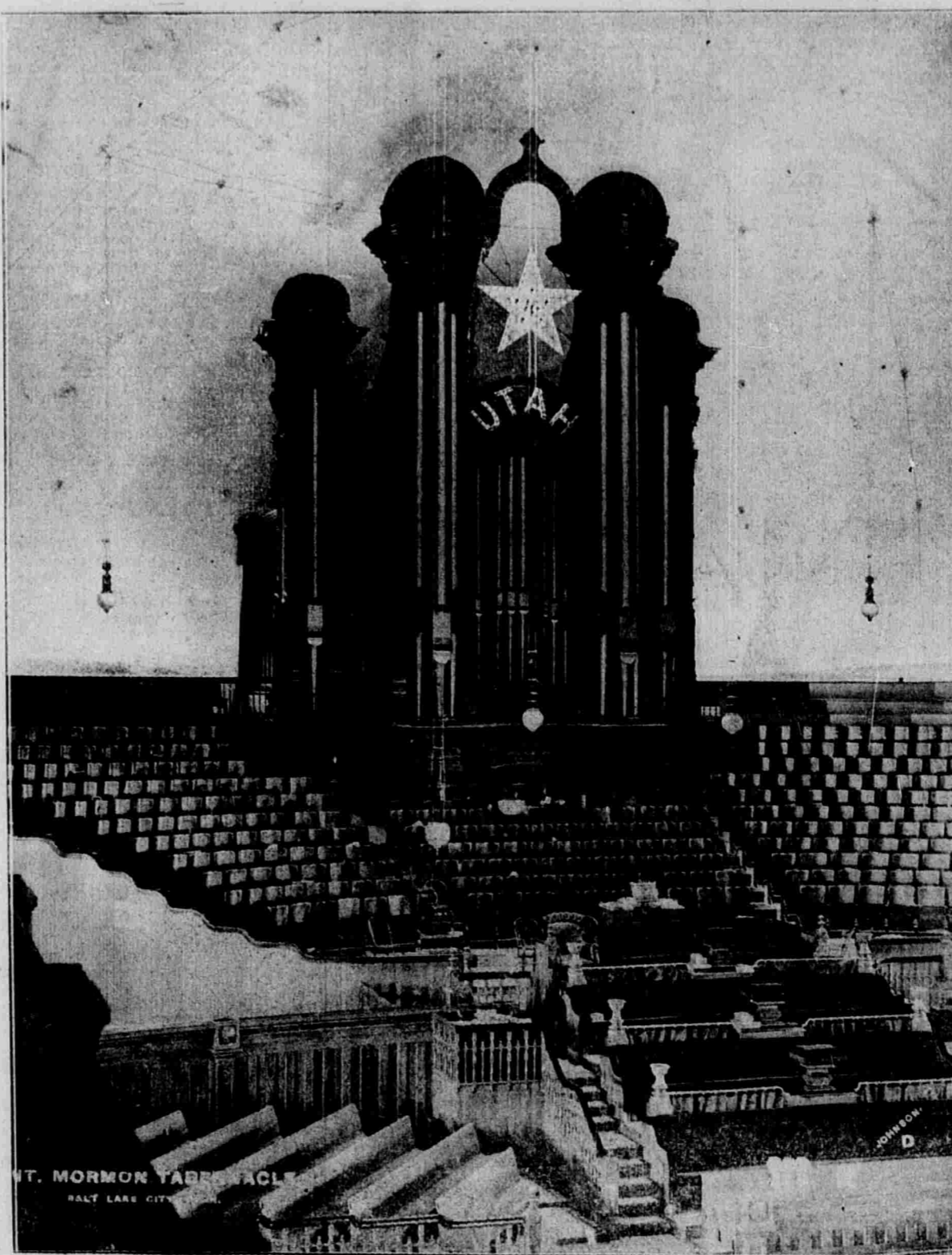
TABERNACLE ORGAN.

The fame of this man, however, will forever rest upon the fact that he was a builder of organs. When the great tabernacle organ shall have crumbled to decay, its history will live and in the annals shall appear the memoir of Joseph H. Ridges. The strange part of it all is that he had received no tuition in the art of musical instrument making. All that he achieved in that line was the result of observations made in an organ factory, during boyhood days, and from a natural penchant for the craft. The manufacturing establishment alluded to was in London, whither the Ridges family had removed from Southampton, the birthplace of Joseph. The manager of the plant sometimes permitted the boy to watch the workmen plying their skill in making musical instruments, small pipe organs, for church purposes, being the specialty. The lad was even allowed, occasionally, to play upon some of the partly worn out organs, which had been taken in exchange for new ones. Thus he learned to love music, and at the same time there was planted in his soul a prepossessing determination to one day build such a music-producing device for himself.

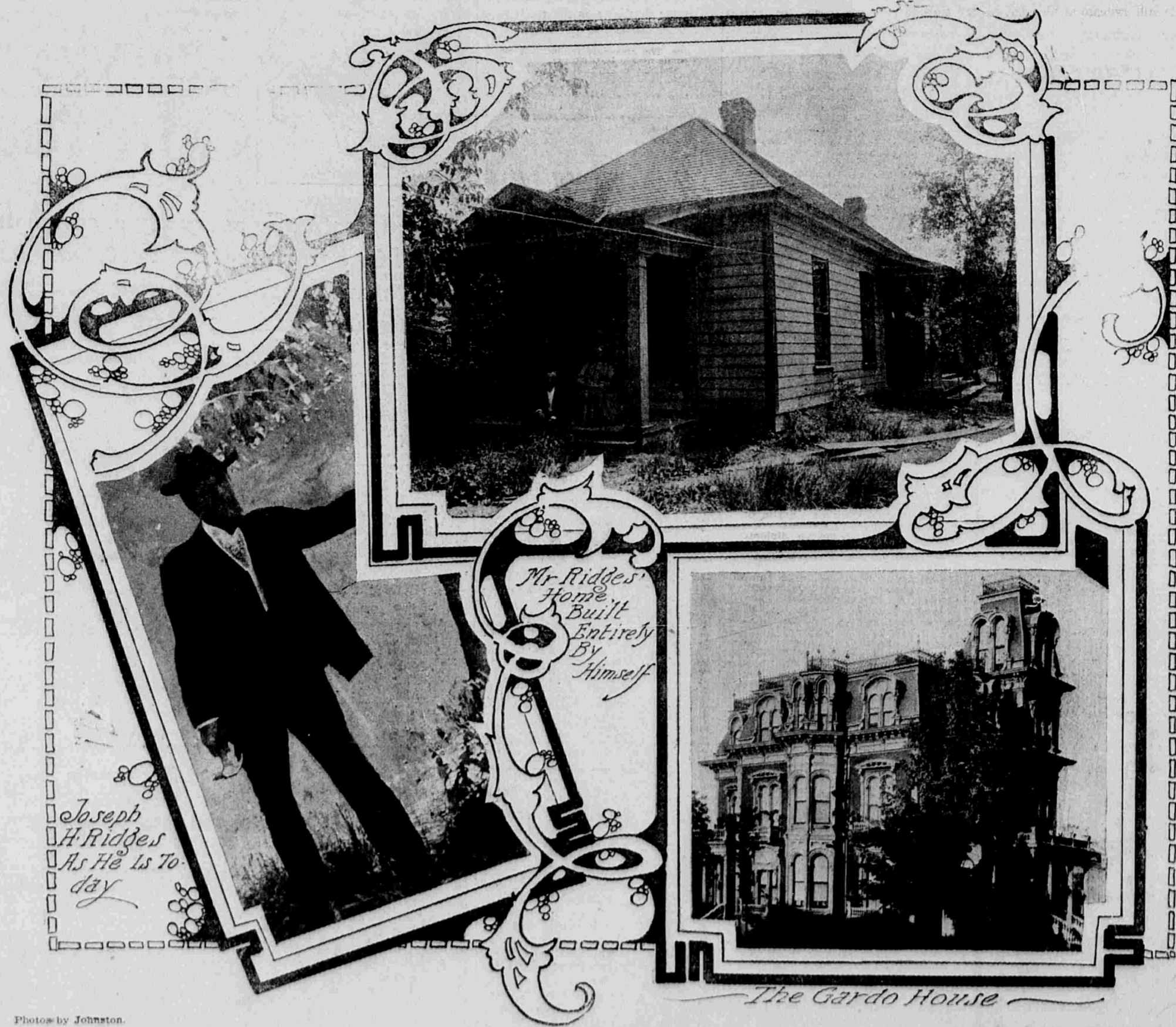
RAN AWAY TO SEA.

The parents of young Ridges decided to apprentice their son to a contractor and builder, but the boy was so opposed to the scheme that he jumped out of the window of the place where he was put to work, and boarding a vessel that was about to sail for foreign waters, he saw many

Joseph H. Ridges, Who Superintended the Construction of the Great Tabernacle Organ, built the Gardo House, the Jewish Synagogue and Other Salt Lake Land Marks, Completes an Entire Dwelling with his Single Pair of Hands



THE TABERNACLE ORGAN BUILT BY JOSEPH H. RIDGES.



Photos by Johnston.

THRILLING ADVENTURES OF THE FATHER OF TENNESSEE.

Gen. James Robertson achieved fame as a hunter in his youth, and is said to have joined Boone in one of that remarkable man's expeditions. He listened with keen relish to the tales of adventure of all those who had crossed the mountains of the west, their description of lands, beautiful, fertile and abounding in game, stirred his ambitious and adventurous nature, and at 23 he set out alone on horseback to find a new domain, and it possible to pre-empt for himself a tract

of rich land. Living upon parched corn that he carried and the game that he shot, he reached the high valleys on the western slope of the Great Smoky Mountains, and was filled with delight. Game was plentiful, the clear sparkling streams watered a rich soil, high peaks sheltered with the strength and force of his character. In the fall he started on his solitary trip east to bring his family to his new plantation, and encountered the first

received Robertson with rough, untrammelled hospitality, and their kindness strengthened his wish to make his future home among them. Selecting a domain he planted a crop of corn and awaited his harvest, hunting and making friends the while with his fellow adventurers and impressing them with the strength and force of his character. In the fall he started on his solitary trip east to bring his family to his new plantation, and encountered the first

of that harrowing series of adventures of which his subsequent career was to be so full. In the passes of the mountains he became confused and finally lost. Among the rocky summits he wandered for days without finding any clue as to his whereabouts. His horse became lean and weak, and he was forced to abandon it. Mountain mists and frequent rains spoiled his powder, and he was compelled to live upon berries and nuts. Wolves and bears and the mountain cou-

noted parts of the old world before again landing upon English shores. He returned to carry out his parents' wishes, and in due course of time emerged from the apprenticeship a full-fledged artisan.

FIRST ORGAN IN AUSTRALIA.

The year 1831 saw the beginning of the Australian gold fever, counterpart of the California craze of 1849. Thithor was drawn into the irresistible vortex Joseph H. Ridges. In the city of Sydney he found ample opportunity to ply his vocation, and ere long became prosperous. In the house where he dwelt was a spacious and lofty room, and here he resolved to carry out his long cherished ambition to build himself an organ. The labor was undertaken during hours when he was not working for others, and except for the keyboard, for which he had to send to London, the instrument was entirely the workmanship of his own hands. When two stops had been completed, (five were subsequently added) the open and stopped diapason, the builder ceased work long enough to play the glorious anthem "Old Hundred." Passersby stopped abruptly in the street, listened in wonder and exclaimed: "A church pipe organ in Australia!" It was, indeed, the first sound from such an instrument that had ever been heard in that far-off clime, and that same organ was the first of its kind to peal forth strains in all the country between the Missouri river and the Pacific coast.

LIFE IN THE ANTIPODES.

Here a word as to how it came to be brought from the antipodes to the new world. When Mr. Ridges had been for some time in the land won for the British crown by the prowess of the immortal Capt. Cook, he, with a fellow Englishman, went into the bush, 400 miles from Sydney, for the purpose of engaging in lumbering. The scene of their activity was in the midst of a dense forest, the abode of a bird called the "laughing jackass," as well as of various species of reptiles. Snakes there were by the thousands, many of them as large as a man's arm and from nine to 19 feet long. A bite from one of them meant death to the victim at sundown, if perchance he managed to live that long.

The men had with them their wives and before a habitation could be provided, it became necessary to burn off a large section of the timber and brush to run out the snakes and prevent their return. Then temporary huts were constructed from the bark of trees, which furnished shelter to the women, while their husbands were engaged in felling trees and sawing them into lumber at an improvised saw-pit.

Mrs. Ridges fell very ill, and being

400 miles from medical attention, her life was despaired of. All that hus-

band and the two friends could do for her was done, but she grew steadily worse. As the men labored at the saw-pit, Mr. Ridges below, the other pulling the saw from above, the former referred to the precarious condition of his wife and wondered what could be done for her relief. The other replied: "In my church there is a sacred ordinance, called the laying on of hands, for the healing of the sick." The anxious husband implored his friend, if he had the authority to administer to the afflicted woman. Hastily washing the perspiration from hands and brow, the Mormons, or Mormon he was, laid his hands upon the woman's head and blessed her in the name of the Lord. She immediately arose to a sitting posture and requested that she be left alone while she put on her clothes, and from that moment she was a well woman.

CONVERT TO MORMONISM.

Mr. Ridges marvelled at the wonderful manifestation of divine power. The other man, fearing to be thought as intruding his religious views upon any one, refrained from discussing the subject, but one day threw a book over the bark partition, upon the bed of his neighbor. It was a copy of Orson Pratt's works, and by the time that Mr. Ridges had read it through he was a convert to Mormonism.

HOW ORGAN WAS SHIPPED.

Four missionaries of the Church were then laboring in Australia, and when they saw the organ in the Sydney home of Mr. Ridges, it was suggested that it would be a valuable acquisition to the people of Utah. A little cross-staple ham-moon was the only instrument that furnished music for the services held at that time in the old tabernacle, where now stands the Assembly hall. The proposition to ship Mr. Ridges' organ to the headquarters of the Church met with the hearty approval of the owner. It was forthwith taken apart, carefully wrapped and enclosed in tin boxes, and when the convert and his wife sailed eastward for the new world, the organ occupied the new world, the place of landing, and later the precious freight was taken to Los Angeles, whence it was conveyed by stage to Salt Lake valley.

SET UP IN OLD TABERNACLE.

The instrument was set up in the old tabernacle. The building was repaired and remodeled frequently, and this necessitated the removal of the organ from one part of the building to another, several times. Finally, when the Assembly hall replaced the structure that formerly occupied the southwest corner of temple block, many of the pipes and better parts of the Ridges organ were utilized in the construction of the one that now adorns the west end of Salt Lake's second largest edifice for the holding of religious services.

BUILDING OF GREAT ORGAN.

When the great auditorium known as the tabernacle was completed, Pres. Brigham Young sent for Mr. Ridges, and asked him if he could build an organ in keeping with the magnitude of the building. He was answered in the affirmative, and forthwith the stupendous undertaking was entered upon. The constructor was given the privilege of having the help of as many men as he desired, and the number was generally from six to 10.

IT TOOK TEN YEARS.

The story of the building of the great organ has been so recently told that it is not deemed proper to repeat the narrative at this time. Suffice it to say that a period of ten years was exhausted in the consummation of the work. The marvel is not that it took so long, but that it could be done at all in this then remote part of the world.

WORK WITHOUT WORRY WILL PREVENT WRINKLES

The man who can do hard and effective brain work during the day and then go home, banish his cares, and take his ease, is a man to be envied. He is all too scarce. Witness the increase in the men one meets who are prematurely gray or bald or wrinkled. The man without a wrinkle is either a man without a care or a man who has mastered the secret of working without worrying.

The late Chancellor Runyon of New Jersey, one of the hardest worked men that ever sat on the bench of that state, was noted for the number of important cases he tried and the strenuous and permanent character of the decisions he rendered. Late every afternoon he went home and at once exchanged his shoes for a pair of comfortable slippers. In reference to his habit the chancellor was accustomed to remark:

"When I come home and take off my shoes, I at the same time take off all my cares and worries. When I put on my slippers I slip on also a feeling of ease and comfort. I banish from my mind the cases that absorb me all day at the office or in the courtroom. I am ready to enjoy my library, to play a game of whist, or to entertain company as the case may be."

That is where all the work-burdened men would like to get. It is purely a personal matter. The will must come in to assist the brain. Unless a man has abused his digestive functions and has upset the nervous system, he can, it is called the will habit. When he has learned to go to sleep and wake up, go to sleep, to get the rest of a sound sleep affords, he has won a half battle. With a reasonable amount of exercise to add to the sleep, the problem of working the brain and banishing the worry has been very largely solved. Not many visits to a physician, and a few visits to a health resort, will be required. The man will have become his own specialist.—Lippincott's Magazine