

A WEEK IN BANNOCK STAKE.

As representatives of the Deseret Sunday School Union board, Elder John M. Whitaker and myself left Salt Lake City on Friday evening, Aug. 3rd, to attend the Bannock Stake Sunday school conference to be held at Rexburg on Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 5th and 6th, the proceedings of which have been reported to you. Pressing business prevented Elder J. M. Whitaker's acceptance of the invitation of President T. E. Ricks for us to remain until their Stake conference a week later, so he returned home, leaving me to fill the program mapped out by President Ricks, which was to be a visit to his Stake at large, or more literally a visit around his large Stake; so on Monday President Ricks came with his well appointed team and conveyance and in his agreeable company and that of his wife and Counselor Wm. F. Rigby we travelled westward from Rexburg over a road a portion of which, near the bridge, would be all the better for a little attention from the road supervisor. Crossing the bridge, 240 feet long, spanning the north fork of Snake river, a river of noble proportions, we made 15 miles to the Egin log school house by 10 a.m., where a congregation of the capacity of the house, not counting the babies, had assembled on short notice, and in the midst of their pressing harvest labors, to meet with us. Sister Ricks, representing the interest of the Young Ladies M. I. A., and Sister Hinckley, who with her husband, Patriarch Arza Hinckley, and a daughter had come in another conveyance from Rexburg, and representing the interest of the Relief societies of the Stake, spoke, as did also President Ricks, Elders Rigby and Griggs. Dinner at Bishop H. H. Smith's and we drove on through a country wonderful in its fertility and mighty water courses, artificial and natural; for what they term ditches are the equals of large canals, some of them having capacity of thirty thousand inches of water and of these main water courses in this Stake there are some twenty-five in number and aggregating 1,500 miles in length, and their construction, owing to the gentle sloping character of the country and lava sand formation, has been comparatively easy. A fitting background to the lovely picture presented from this point, looking eastward, and the source of supply of these rivers and river-like canals was the Teton peaks in their snow-mantled inaccessibility, and sentinel-like solitude and their mountainous ranges to their right and left. With pride, which was pardonable, the brethren drew the visitor's attention to the vast extended fields, on either side of fast-ripening and heavy-headed grain, together with countless acres of thrifty appearing potatoes, carrots and other roots, and also the giant patches of lucern, the first crop of which was to be seen in all directions gathered into huge stacks gladdening the heart of the owners at the prospects of maintaining through the approaching winter the now fat and healthy condition of their numerous cattle and horses. Multiplied as are these fruitful acres of this extended plain, yet there are many acres (miles I should say) yet awaiting the hand of honest toil, and the hearts

of Pres. Ricks and his able associates, Counselors W. F. Rigby and J. E. Steele, and of other prominent men of the Stake go out in kindly desire for an invitation to the genuine homeseeker, among those especially who have identified themselves with that labor, temporal and spiritual, which has characterized the founders of Utah.

After leaving Egin we drove to Parker and began a meeting there under a bowery, but were soon dislodged by a wind and rain storm which suddenly came upon us and drove us to seek shelter in an unfinished granary adjoining where our meeting was concluded. Bishop Edwin Carbine, active and intelligent, would have us see his field of magnificent grain. He has taught school and gives practical object lessons in physical culture by farming 160 acres of land. Fording the North Fork, we partook of the trout and other delicacies provided by Brother and Sister Black in their flower-adorned home at Wilford and then on to Rexburg by 8 p. m., having traveled forty miles in this circuit.

The next day, Tuesday, as arranged by President Ricks, Brother John T. Smellie, whose guest I had been, still further added to my obligations to him by taking me in his cart and driving me fifty miles to the "Basin," but Teton Valley would convey a better idea of its size, as it is about twelve by twenty-five miles in extent. Clear, cool streams of water abound in every direction easy of access for all purposes.

To the east side of the valley and crossing the line into Wyoming we are made comfortable by Sister Rigby and family. The cool canyon breeze made sleep pleasant and refreshing and prepared us the next day to enjoy a pleasant walk to the homes of Brother Wilson, Bishop Matthai Pratt and Elder George Little. The view from Bishop Pratt's house is particularly beautiful and above him is a site that at once suggests a fitting place for a temple. Driving southerly about fourteen miles and crossing Trail creek we came to Raymond and held a meeting, as per appointment with the Saints of that place, and became the guests of Bishop D. R. Sinclair and wife. In this frontier settlement, with all that that term implies—scattered houses of logs with dirt roofs and huge corrals, etc.—we found how taste could be displayed in adorning even a ruder log house and making it home-like. The house we have in mind was of logs with its walls covered with terracotta colored building paper and adorned with tastefully arranged picture cards; a large Elk's horn served as a hat-rack, while a coal-scuttle, a mended glass pitcher, some empty white-lead kegs, cans and boxes, etc., served for flower pots, displaying a wealth of geraniums, creepers and other house plants, all so artistically arranged as to hide measurably the crudities of the holder. So in like manner were family portraits festooned with drapery of but slight cost, while a badger skin deftly concealed a rent in the well-worn carpet.

Thursday with a sixty-mile drive to Rexburg before us aroused us early, and through grass-covered ranches, alarming the sage hen at intervals, we ascend the west bench of the basin, and by the "cut off" make the lower crossing of Xanxon creek, where, after

unhitching, our animal became suddenly and unaccountably very sick. Exercising our faith, to say nothing of other means employed, we were gratified and grateful in seeing her improve, so that at sunset we were prepared to make the twenty-five miles before us, accomplishing it by midnight amid a thunder storm startling in the intensity and novelty of its electrical display. Our quilts afforded us protection from the falling rain. During this trip Brother Smellie proved himself a good driver and a very agreeable companion.

Friday, President Ricks, the personification of punctuality, was on hand with his team, having, as before, Sister Ricks and Counselor Rigby as fellow-travelers. We started for Iona via the Butte ferry, the bridge over the South Fork being under repairs. Speedily ferrying the river, our course was through a succession of grain laden fields to Menan, and thence the log-cabin home of Elder Nephi Stevens. Mother being away the young daughter proved herself fully competent to prepare on short notice a grateful meal. Brother Stevens had the brethren inspect his wormless and sound apples growing on thrifty trees. Mammoth carrots, cabbages, pie plant and potatoes made his big heart still bigger with the sense of gratitude he felt to the Giver of all good. Through Lewisville, by Rigby and Willow Creek—duplicates of the other settlements in their acres of plenteousness. Conspicuous on the plains of Iona stands the comfortable mansion of Councillor J. E. Steele, and the terminus of our forty-mile drive. In this vicinity, as stated by President Ricks, some ten years ago President W. Woodruff, Elder H. J. Grant and others stood upon a wagon and addressed the occupants of five or six other wagons, instructed them in regard to the settlement of that region—then houseless, fieldless, fenceless, and desolate in its solitude. Elder W. F. Rigby and I were billeted upon Brother Isaac Gudmansen and we found him the good son of a good man's son and ably seconded by a good natured wife. Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 18th and 19th, were spent in attending the conferences of the Primary association, Relief society and of the Stake. Elder H. J. Grant arrived on Sunday morning to attend the latter. The return to Salt Lake City on Monday morning was uneventful. This round of some 240 miles traveled by team in Bannock Stake enabled me to see much of that fruitful and promising country, and the very general interest in the Sabbath school work there manifested as well as the activity in the various organizations and labors of the Saints, and much of the health can be traced to the untiring energy of President T. E. Ricks, well sustained by his counselors, Elders Rigby and Steele; and one of the brightest feathers in the cap of a member of Bannock Stake in the estimation of its worthy president is to be an up and go at it Latter-day Saint.

Another pleasing feature of the "changed conditions" as here existing is the reception of the Gospel by a number who have heretofore been markedly antagonistic to the Latter-day Saints, but overcoming murky prejudice and accepting baptism are now zealous in well doing.

T. C. GRIGGS.