

Colonia Diaz. After traveling ten miles up the river we encamped at the foot of a high and almost perpendicular bluff for the night. In starting early the next morning our mules (after fording the river, at a point where the water was quite deep) refused to take us up the opposite bank, and wheeled suddenly around into the river again. With considerable exertion we saved the baggage from being dumped into the water and the vehicle from turning over; but it cost Bro. Ray an involuntary plunge bath, and his little daughter, who traveled with us, a genuine scare. The stupid animals were made to pay for their little "frolic" in speed, as the driver, somewhat offended at his undesirable contact with the cold water, did not forget to apply the lash; hence the hundred miles' travel to Diaz was completed within forty-eight hours after we had said goodbye to our friends on the Bavispe river. After spending Sunday, the 15th, at Diaz, Elder John S. Harris took me to Deming, N. M., from whence I traveled 110 miles by rail to Bowie station, in Arizona, where I arrived on the 19th.

On the 20th one of President Christopher Layton's stage coaches brought me safely to Solomonville, a distance of nearly forty miles. This is the county seat of Graham county, and being informed that the stage would stop here half an hour, I took a fifteen-minute ramble through the town, which contains perhaps a thousand inhabitants. When I got back to the postoffice I found that the stage had gone on and left me on foot. Looking ahead I saw a Mexican on horseback traveling along at an easy gait. By doubling my own speed I soon overtook him, and my next endeavor was to put the half dozen Spanish words or more which I had learned in Mexico to the best possible advantage. By signs and words both I tried to make this Mexican understand that the "carro" (wagon) which he could see on the "camino real" (road) ahead of us had left me, and that I would like him to urge his "caballo" (horse) on and tell the "hombre" (man) who was driving to stop for me. "No sabe," was the reply. I tried to explain further, using two or three more Spanish words, but all to no purpose. Then I commenced to abuse him in Danish; but instead of getting angry, he looked pitifully at me. With "broken" Swedish and "unconnected" German I stared no better, and getting reconciled to my fate, I started out on foot, determined to reach Thatcher, the point of my destination, eight or nine miles away, at all hazards before night. Having walked half that distance, one of the brethren came along with a wagon and took me on board, and I arrived at Thatcher about half an hour after the stage got in. It took me ten days to "catch up" that half hour. For that length of time I was thirty minutes late in filling most of my appointments, and my experience with the stage was my standard excuse for this while laboring in the St. Joseph Stake of Zion. The stage driver, who was a new hand at the business, afterwards apologized and promised never to leave another missionary as he left me, so I forgave him and withhold his name from the public.

Arriving at Thatcher, I found that President Layton had not yet re-

turned from the General Conference held in Salt Lake City, but his counselor, Elder William D. Johnson, "took me in," and I made his hospitable home my headquarters during my sojourn in this Stake.

From the time of my arrival in this Stake till date I have been busily engaged in gathering historical information about the Saints residing on the Gila river. I have held special meetings in all the settlements of the Saints here (Graham excepted), and have been successful in my labors, though I have found both ward and Stake records very imperfectly kept, in consequence of which I am afraid there will be "gaps" and "outs" in the history of the St. Joseph Stake. This is partly due to incompetent clerks and partly to neglect of duty on the part of some who "could" but "would not."

The St. Joseph Stake of Zion comprises eight settlements of the Saints on the Gila river, and one ward (St. David) on the San Pedro river far off to the southwest. The numerical strength of the Stake consists of 405 families, or 2,281 souls. There are one Patriarch (Philemon C. Merrill), 72 Seventies, 81 High Priests, 138 Elders, 22 Priests, 16 Teachers, 146 Deacons, 1,106 lay members and 699 children under eight years of age. Christopher Layton, formerly Bishop of Kaysville, Davis county, Utah, is the president of the Stake. Wm. D. Johnson, formerly Bishop of St. David, Arizona, is first, and M. H. Merrill, a son of Patriarch Philemon C. Merrill, is second counselor in the Stake presidency. Among the members of the High Council is Elder Henry G. Boyle, famous for his successful missionary labors in the Southern states and in other parts of the world.

The valley of the upper Gila, in which most of the Saints comprising the St. Joseph Stake live, is about 75 miles long, extending from southeast to northwest; the lower valley or river bottom varies in width from one-half to five miles; but taking in the mesas and highlands—that is, reckoning from the base of the snow capped Graham mountain on the south to the foot of the lofty range on the north—the valley is all the way from ten to twenty miles wide. The altitude of that part of the valley where our people reside is about 3,500 feet; hence the climate is warm and pleasant. The Gila valley is one of the leading farming districts of Arizona; it contains something like 40,000 acres of land, some of which is as fertile and rich as any in the United States. It certainly has a charming situation. To the southwest from Thatcher the towering Graham peak rears its lofty head, and directly west are seen the dark and sombre outlines of Mt. Trumbull, 9,500 feet above tide-water. This is not the same Mt. Trumbull from which the lumber for the St. George Temple was obtained. North and east are the Gila and Peloncillo ranges, while to the south and southeast stretches the wide plain of the San Simon. "Like an emerald lake, the lovely valley sits surrounded by giant mountain sentinels, a picture of perfect repose and prosperity." At present when the snow capped peaks of the Graham range flash in the spring sun-tide, the fields near its feet are a mass of green, with here and there the bright blossoms

of the orchard and garden. The valley is especially adapted to fruits of all varieties, such as apples, plums, cherries, apricots, peaches, etc; grapes also do well, being large, juicy and of fine flavor. There is perhaps no better locality in Arizona for strawberries, currants, blackberries, gooseberries and other small fruit. Wheat, corn, barley, oats and other grains, give a yield of from thirty to sixty bushels to the acre. Wheat and barley are sown in January and harvested in June. Corn is then planted on the same land, and is ripe in October. Two crops of potatoes are also raised in one season. Snow seldom falls in the valley, and then only in very small quantities, to disappear again before the next day's sun.

Alfalfa does exceedingly well on the Gila, the yield being nearly as large and quality as good as that of the Salt River valley. Four and five crops are raised. On the 22nd ult. we visited a field of alfalfa at Thatcher, belonging to Brother Wm. D. Johnson, in which we measured stems that were over three feet long.

The Saints occupy the central and most desirable part of this lovely valley; all their settlements are adjacent to each other and extend up and down the river for a distance of about 22 miles. There are only a few non-Mormons in that particular locality. Five of the settlements are on the south and three on the north side of the river. On the south side they irrigate from seven principal ditches, named respectively the Montezuma, Union, Central, Damon, Mormon, Dodge and Mathew ditches. On the north side is the Graham canal, the old Oregon ditch, the Bryce ditch, and two ditches supplying Curtis with water. These ditches vary in length from four to fifteen miles and tap the river at different points, one above the other. The Gila river possesses a number of peculiarities; one of them is this, that in times of low water, when it is tapped dry at a certain point, water rises in it again, so that another large ditch can be supplied with a sufficient stream a mile or two below any dry dam. Of all the localities inhabited by the Latter-day Saints in the Rocky Mountains there are but few, if any, places that are more desirable to live in than in the valleys of the upper Gila.

Thatcher, thus named in honor of Elder Moses Thatcher, is the headquarters of the St. Joseph Stake of Zion. It is situated on the south side of the Gila river. The Thatcher ward embraces a strip of country three miles wide extending from the river on the north to the Graham mountains on the south, but only the lower part of this tract is under the canals and inhabited. The towns site embraces the south half of a section of land and is regularly laid out, but some of the streets have not yet been opened. The center of the town is about nine miles northwest of Solomonville, forty-eight miles north-west of Bowie station, the nearest railway point on the Southern Pacific railway, and ninety miles southeast of Globe, a noted mining camp. Thatcher is known for its exceedingly rich and productive soil, its fine orchards, neat and comfortable brick buildings, beautiful flower gardens, shady groves and industrious inhabitants. The present strength of the