

and had gone to school with Joseph Smith, and had also eaten and slept with him. He showed us the location of the farm which once belonged to Martin Harris, about a mile northeast of Palmyra. The old farm house, a rock building, is still standing, and the place is now owned by a German. In coming in on the New York Central Railway we passed through one corner of the farm. Mr. Ford told us a number of interesting things in regard to the Smith family, but when he informed us that Joseph at the time he lived in this neighborhood was an old bachelor, we began to think that the old man's memory had commenced to fail him.

Our next man was Major John H. Gilbert, the person who set the type for the first edition of the Book of Mormon in Egbert Grandin's printing office in Palmyra, 37 years ago. We found him living in a comfortable frame house on Gates Street. He is a remarkably well-preserved man, 80 years old, and withal gentlemanly and intelligent. He seemed to take pleasure in relating to us the particulars connected with the printing of the Book of Mormon. Of the 580 pages of which the book consisted he set in type about 500 pages himself. The work of printing the book, he remembered distinctly, was commenced in August, 1829, and finished in March, 1830. Oliver Cowdery and Hyrum Smith were the two who generally brought copy to the printing office, and Oliver Cowdery and Mr. Grandin read the proofs together by copy. Mr. Gilbert had, to his best recollection, only seen Joseph Smith twice. On the one occasion he came to the printing office and staid about twenty minutes, arranging something in regard to the work. Mr. Gilbert said that the late David Whitmer had made several mistakes in his pamphlet, where he alludes to the printing of the Book of Mormon. Martin Harris, he said, had given security for the full amount agreed upon for printing, before the work was commenced, and there was no delay because of financial embarrassment. At the time of printing Mr. Gilbert kept a private copy of the Book of Mormon for his own use, which he sold in an unbound condition a few years ago to P. T. Sexton, a rich banker of Palmyra, for the sum of \$500. Besides this, he has at different times secured a number of bound copies for several parties at the rate of \$15 per copy. We made particular inquiry in regard to the manuscript or copy from which he set the Book of Mormon. His answers went to prove that it was the copy now in possession of the Whitmers in Richmond, Mo. At times when he was hurried to get a form ready for the press other compositors would be sent to help him, and on such occasions he would frequently cut the pages in the manner we saw some of them cut in Richmond. Mr. Gilbert has not followed the trade of a printer for the last sixteen years, but whenever his birthday comes around he makes it a regular practice, and has done so for several years, to go to the several printing offices in Palmyra and set up a stick or two of type. He is called the veteran printer of Wayne County, and he thinks he is about the oldest living printer in the United States; has a wife 78 years old living; also five children; six children are dead.

We next visited the house which was once Egbert Grandin's old printing office. Mr. Grandin has been dead many years, but his house, a substantial three-story brick building, is still standing on the north side of Main Street, Palmyra, about half way between Market and William streets. The lower story is now occupied as a news depot and novelty store; J. H. Johnson, proprietor. The second story which Egbert Grandin used as a bookbindery, is now divided up into dwelling apartments, and the third story, where the Book of Mormon was set in type, is used as a store-room for sewing machines and organs. It may be interesting to some to know that the celebrated Mr. Singer, the leading man of the Singer Sewing Machine Company, who was a native of this part of the country, helped to erect the building.

We had comfortable quarters at the Powers House last night. The proprietor, Mr. W. A. Powers, is a relative of O. W. Powers, late associate justice of Utah.

Palmyra is a fine little town on the New York Central and West Shore railways, 23 miles east of Rochester, and has about 2,500 inhabitants. Among other handsome buildings we noticed five church edifices, owned respectively by the Baptists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists and Catholics. The four Protestant churches are located on the same street and on four opposite corners, and their four steeples rising from the same place is the first thing that attracts the attention of approaching strangers. The Catholics have to content themselves with a position in the rear; in point of church buildings they are generally in front, but in Palmyra they are few in numbers, and their modest little brick church, standing back from the others, affords only a little cross in lieu of a steeple.

This morning we engaged Mr. T. G. Qualter, a livery stable owner, to take us a few miles on our journey. He had previously been engaged by others of our brethren from Utah, who have visited here. One mile and a half due south of Main Street, Palmyra, taking the road locally known as Stafford Street, we came to the old Smith residence, situated in the extreme north-

west corner of Manchester township, Ontario County, New York, where the youthful prophet lived with his parents at the time he had his first vision, and was first visited by the angel Moroni. The farm is now owned by W. A. Chapman, son of the late S. T. Chapman, who bought it of a Mr. Absalom Weeks 28 years ago. But previous to that time and after it was occupied by the Smiths it had changed hands several times, and has also been considerably enlarged. The frame of the building, originally erected by the elder Joseph Smith and his sons, is still standing, but the interior of the house, a story and a half building, has not been materially changed, but new additions have been made to it. The old lady, mother of the present owner, and her amicable daughter, took considerable pains in showing us the room where Joseph is supposed to have kept the plates after receiving them from the angel. In this, however, they may be mistaken; but it is no doubt the room in which Joseph on the night between the 21st and 22nd of September, 1823, conversed with Moroni.

In leaving the old Smith residence we turned east to the Canadagus road, when we, about 2 1/2 miles south of Palmyra, passed the Armington school house, in which Joseph and several of his brothers and sisters are said to have attended school. One and a half mile further, or a little over four miles due south of Palmyra, on the east side of the Canadagus road stands Cumorah the highest hill in the neighborhood. It rises abruptly from the more level country north of it to the height of about 150 feet. Climbing it from the north end, the highest point, on which stands the stump of a large tree is soon reached; south of this the hill gradually recedes until it is lost in the level about one mile distant. There is a number of other hills in this part of the country, and they all extend north and south like so many summits or ridges. A number of them are several miles long but only a few hundred yards across from east to west. The hill Cumorah is no exception from this rule. Besides the north end its eastern and western slopes are quite steep and the top consists of a narrow ridge somewhat rocky. Both sides of the north end of the hill have been plowed by the present owner clear to the top, and only a very few trees have been suffered to remain of the dense forest that no doubt covered the hill at the time Joseph received the plates. About 200 yards south from the north end on the west side, however, is a beautiful beech grove containing, we should judge, about six acres of land; most of the trees are small but stand very close together. Into the shade of this little grove we retired in solemn prayer and rejoiced exceedingly in being permitted to be here.

FAYETTE, Seneca County, New York, Oct. 2, 1883.

We left the Hill Cumorah about 11 o'clock today. Two miles south we passed through the village of Manchester, and traveling one mile further we arrived at Shortsville, a small town on the N. Y. C. & H. R. Ry. From here we went by rail to Waterloo, a flourishing little city of 5,000 inhabitants, situated on both sides of the Seneca River, about half way between the north end of Seneca and Cayuga Lakes. After making some inquiries as to directions, locality, etc., we started southwest in search of the old Whitmer residence in which the Church was first organized. Having walked about ten miles we came to the house of an aged gentleman by the name of John Marshall who had attended meetings in Whitmer's house when a boy and had heard Joseph and a number of other early Elders of the Church preach. Guided by his directions we had no further difficulty in finding the exact spot we were aiming for, and about 4 o'clock we arrived at the farm once owned by Peter Whitmer, Sen., and now the property of Jesse Snook, a prominent business man of Waterloo, who rents it to Chester Reed, the present occupant. The old Whitmer house in which the Church was organized and in which a number of the first general conferences of the Church were held and Joseph received a number of important revelations, was a one-and-a-half-story log house. It was torn down many years ago, but the site on which it stood is well known and was pointed out to us. The old family well is still there; also several of the logs which once constituted a part of the building, lay along the fence half decayed.

The site of the old Whitmer residence is about four miles south of Waterloo, and about 40 rods west of the road leading from that place to West Fayette on the Geneva and Ithaca Railway, in Fayette Township, Seneca County, New York State. It is about a quarter of a mile north-west of a small cluster of houses (about six in number) locally known as Jollytown, named after a family by that name, which is mentioned in the early history of the Church. The village formerly called Fayette, about four miles east of West Fayette, is now generally known as Beerytown. We examined the ground very closely, and thought of the past, speaking of the present, wished that certain things might transpire in the future, prepared resolutions, made the necessary entries in our note books and returned to Waterloo, where we are now waiting for the train to take us back to Rochester.

We have heard a great many things about the extraordinary qualities of

the Smith family, but nothing that beats the following related to us this morning by a citizen of Palmyra:

"When Joseph Smith," says our informant, "was digging for the Golden Bible, he ran short of provisions, and in order to obtain some mutton from a somewhat simple-minded neighbor, Joseph prevailed on him to furnish a fat sheep, the best he had to be offered as a sacrifice to God. The farmer who at first appeared unwilling, at last consented, and consequently the sheep was brought into a shed back of the Smith family residence. (By the way the identical hill was pointed out to us). But while the Prophet was going through a lengthy ceremony preparatory to offering the sacrifice, one of his boys, as previously arranged carried off the sheep, weighing 200 pounds which was needed by the family for food."

If one of the Prophet Joseph Smith's boys (his eldest son being born in 1832) could carry off a sheep weighing 200 pounds as early as 1837, five years before birth, it is no wonder that Joseph Smith has made such a great stir in the world. This is a fair specimen of several other stories put in circulation about Joseph Smith and the "Mormons."

In closing this letter we will state however that nothing we have been able to learn through diligent inquiry in this neighborhood about the Smith family has in the least degree shaken us in the confidence we formerly had in their integrity and truthfulness.

ANDREW JENSON,
EDWARD STEVENSON,
JOSEPH S. BLACK.

ORIGIN OF YELLOW FEVER.

Astronomical Influences and Prognostications.

A special dispatch to the Boston Herald, dated Ottawa, Ont., Sept. 27, contains the following report of an interview with the famous Prof. Wiggins, in relation to the causes of various epidemics past and present. Asking his opinion as to the source of the yellow fever in the South, the interrogator received the following reply:

"The cause is purely astronomical. You remember Prof. Grimmer predicted that the earth would fall into the sun June 19, 1881. There was a particle of truth in what Grimmer said, that is, that when the planets were in the same line there was a tendency to approach the sun. True, the earth's advance could not have exceeded a few miles from her normal orbit. Still, the effect has been so marked that even the most illiterate perceive that nature is temporarily demoralized. Whoever heard of such disasters as have occurred since that period—cyclones, earthquakes, floods, cholera, yellow fever—and what is to come who can tell! All this is exactly what would happen if the earth were forced a few miles nearer the sun. When you squeeze an orange, the juice is forced through the rind. The increased solar attraction would contract the earth's mass. The land surface would become smaller, and the water would flow over it. Hence, floods and the reports of rivers in all the continents overflowing their banks. Then this shrinkage would not be uniform, and hence earthquakes. Then, again, the atmosphere would become denser, and would consequently hold more carbon and its compounds in solution, producing miasmas, and thus cholera and yellow fever. Since 1881 cholera has done its terrible work in Europe, especially in Spain and Italy, and now the fever is desolating the South. Smallpox, two years ago, carried off hundreds in general, and last year typhoid fever Ottawa. The southern cities may be said to have no drainage any more than those of India or the Sudan, and are always in a condition to breed disease. It is well the people live largely on fruits, for if they murdered animals by the millions, as we do, erected slaughter houses around their cities like we have around Ottawa, with their horrible stench, cast the offal in the river or feed it to swine and sell the pork full of trichina in the market, in all probability the yellow fever would by this time have invaded Canada."

"Did the planets ever produce such diseases as these at any former period?"

"Yes, several planets were in perilous position at the same time in the years 542 and 1665, and hundreds of millions of people then perished by the plague and black death. You remember how the plague nearly depopulated London in 1664, and not only London, but almost every city in the world. The planets approaching us condensed our atmosphere, contracted the earth's body, and forced the fluid carbon from every chink in her surface, to breed disease and death. Rev. Dr. Wild, of Toronto, preached a sermon in his church in 1883, calling attention to the diseases which were coming upon the earth, and pointed to the fact that several of the planets were then in the perihelion."

"You think, then, that the earth is passing through a severe ordeal?"

"Yes, and so are all the planets. Mars, which is moving millions of miles farther from the sun, and is many hundreds of years older, finds his atmosphere so dense and full of clouds that we can scarcely see some parts of his surface through the telescope. But they have no yellow fever there. If they had such a place as Florida, they would so cultivate it that it could not breed fever, or would

hew it down and let the sea flow over it. No doubt one object of the numerous canals on his surface is to absorb the carbon and to prevent disease. In a few hundred years the whole tide of human energy and skill will be turned to our digestive system."

Is there a gentleman or lady living that does not feel that the human intellect is far in advance of his or her physical system, and that our bodies with their filthy digestive systems are a burden to us, and were only made for the long past animal age? No wonder the old theologians thought we would some day have a resurrection and get a new body."

"Do you mean to say that man will ever be able to change his physical being?"

"Yes, certainly, but of course it will be a slow process. You know Darwin shows that we have many rudimentary muscles that we once used, showing that nature changes with circumstances. The viscera of domestic animals are more enlarged and elongated than those of their wild progenitors. Men's minds—and women's, too—will be bent on producing those fruits which contain only those elements which compose the blood. What is the sense of taking into our stomachs a great quantity of material that the digestive organs can not use? None whatever. Look at the trees. They have no unnecessary organs as we have. In time, so well will we have cultivated the vegetable kingdom we use, and so well will we have learned to manufacture our food, that nothing the system cannot utilize will be taken into the stomach."

"What will be the use of a digestive system then?"

"No use. All those breed catching organs below the second stomach, and probably below the first, will be absorbed from disease and will disappear, the same as the gall has disappeared from the horse, and then disease will die from the face of the world. What, then, will be the human intellect? Here we have a vast digestive machine consuming through the action of our cerebellum or posterior brain the greater part of our mental energy. We cannot think after a hearty meal, such is the demand of the stomach on the brain. Then this mental energy will be stored up for thought, contemplation, amusement and happiness. Never, till this change takes place, will mankind rank among the lofty beings of the universe, like, for instance, the inhabitants of Saturn and Jupiter."

"A great storm will originate in the northwestern territories, near Regina, on October 6. This will divide into two currents or wings, one running southward through the Mississippi valley to the Mexican Gulf, the other striking eastward over the great lake system and the river St. Lawrence. On October 8 and 9 there will be great danger of cyclones at the mouths of the Mississippi and Rio Grande and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where these currents pitch into the sea, while there will be slight barometrical depression. The temperature will be remarkably low, on account of the moon's perigee and the peculiar position of Mars and Jupiter. This will be a cold and stormy autumn, with probably great loss of property and life on land and the sea."

CONFERENCE IN TENNESSEE.

Encouraging Outlook for the Work in that State.

LEBANON, Tenn., Oct. 4, 1883.

Editor Deseret News:

On last Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 29 and 30, all of the Elders of the Middle Tennessee Conference, with Presidents Smith and Spry from Chattanooga, met near Baird's Mills, Wilson County, where with Saints and friends we had a time of rejoicing such as will not readily be forgotten by all those who attended and took part in our meetings, and who for something to reanimate the inner man, partook of the delicacies and substantialities of life, spread upon a large table, to which all were freely invited, and did partake. Characteristic of southern generosity, no time nor means were spared by the Saints and some friends to make the occasion one of both pleasure and interest. Some Saints even from Cannon County, forty miles distant, came laden with things to suit the taste and also a goodly store of faith to make sure their enjoyment. To say the least we hope the Saints in Utah will feel as thoroughly revived and spiritually renewed as did those who attended our conference here which was conducted by the conference authorities and President Spry, with Robert Skelton as secretary.

During the four meetings the principles of life were clearly portrayed by the speakers. These present were Elders F. W. Chambers, Ogden; Thomas Peters, Brigham City; E. M. Elmer and Franklin Maymire, Payson; Willard Hatch, Taylor, A. T.; W. F. Heninger, Eden, and Robt. Skelton, Tooele.

Elders Haymore and Heninger are just from Utah. Elder Hatch is released to return home in November. All have now retired to their respective fields of labor, seeking for the blood of Israel and warning mankind to flee from the wrath to come.

Our conference is in a prosperous condition with prospects of others soon coming into the fold. With this next company, November 20, many souls will migrate to Colorado, Arizona and Utah, to enlarge and strengthen the borders of Zion.

Six Priesthood meetings were held, at which the Elders received much encouraging instruction and were the leading features pertaining to the conference very well considered. With renewed faith and hope we now press on to deliver the message of peace to our fellow men, lest they perish in their sins and their blood be upon us.

R. SKELTON, Jr.

LAND REVIEW.

Heroic Treatment Given Mr. Holman's Suspension Bill.

Editor Deseret News:

The bill introduced by Mr. Holman on August 28th, entitled "A bill to suspend all laws touching the disposal of public lands except the homestead law, and for other purposes" to which reference has twice been made by me, came up for action in the House of Representatives on the 21st inst., and was most thoroughly pruned.

The entire first section of the bill, as originally presented by Mr. Holman, was stricken out, which removed nearly all of the provisions against which objections were directed, leaving only that portion relating to railroad grants.

The public land laws will continue to be executed as heretofore. Persons who have made pre-emption filings and timber-culture entries may legally perfect title. Those who made homestead entries with the understanding that they could commute the same to cash at any time after the expiration of six months from date of entry, will be permitted to complete the same in accordance with the terms of their contracts, and persons who accepted pledges of the government redeemable in public land for waivers of valid and valuable claims, may continue to locate their scrip.

The people of the great Northwest are to be congratulated upon the escape they have experienced, as nothing could have more seriously injured the growth of their section, than the passage of the bill introduced.

The bill was so changed that the title was found inapplicable and "A bill relating to railroad land grants" was substituted. It simply provides that during the pending of the measures now before Congress in relation to the forfeiture of certain lands heretofore granted by Congress to railroad corporations and thereafter, no act done or performed by any such corporation shall in anywise enlarge the right or claim of any such corporation to any lands covered by any such grant, or diminish any right now existing in the United States to declare the forfeiture thereof. This provision shall not be construed to in anywise affect or diminish or waive any right now existing in behalf of the United States to declare the forfeiture of any of the lands embraced in any such grant.

HENRY N. COPE.

UNCOMMON FAIRNESS.

The Oldham Chronicle published in Lancashire, England, has the following literary notices which are quite uncommon in their fairness to our Church publications:

"THE BOOK OF MORMON. Liverpool: Geo. Teasdale, 42, Islington. (pp. 636.)

The Mormons, or Latter-day Saints, have opened a missionary head centre and publishing office in Liverpool, from whence the movements of the body are controlled, and its literature issued. The days of pooh-poohing the Mormons are now gone, and devout and thoughtful men feel called upon to examine the wonderful and almost unique claims of the Book of Mormon, or else give as reasonable an account of its origin as that offered by itself. It is simply a question of evidence, and the problem is practically in a nutshell; and yet how few Christian people have devoted one hour's thought to the subject. Apart altogether from its claims as a divine revelation, the Book of Mormon is a work of singular interest. Its style is very similar to that of the Quran, or the Book of Chronicles, and it gives us a history of a large number of Israelites who left Jerusalem long before the Christian era, and who ultimately settled in America. This history is written in a quaint, simple, impressive style, and is of absorbing interest. It combines the excellencies of a book of travel, a history, and a religious manual. Its moral tone is high, and the work abounds in the loftiest inspirations. It ought to be in the study of every preacher of the Gospel, and all Christians ought to know what it really is. It costs but two shillings, beautifully bound in cloth."

"THE MILLENNIAL STAR." Liverpool: Geo. Teasdale, 42, Islington.

For fifty years, ever since the discovery of the Book of Mormon, this penny weekly has been pouring forth its wealth of thought, its thrilling records of service, and its healthy stimulus. The articles on "The New Witness of God," which have appeared during the past seven or eight weeks, are most powerful and persuasive. They are a scholarly, vigorous, and almost exhaustive defence of the genuineness and authenticity of the Book of Mormon. Mr. Teasdale issues a number of tracts and pamphlets on Mormonism which are having a wide circulation. They are able, courteous, and interesting."