

et Joseph for assisting in that work. After the Temple was finished Joseph appointed a time for all who had helped in labor or means to come together and receive a formal blessing, and when all in the house had been blessed under the hands of Joseph and Hyrum, the Prophet said, "There is somebody that has not been blessed," and turning to Hyrum said, "won't you go to the door and see if you can find any other that is entitled to a blessing." Hyrum looked among the crowd about the door and asked Benjamin if he had done something to help build the Temple. The boy replied, "Only a little," and added, "that he had only given a gun, and did a little work," upon which Hyrum called him in and he received his blessing as youngest of all who were laborers upon that Temple.

When the great apostasy occurred, and many had to hide from the apostates to avoid vexatious lawsuits, he helped in every way he could to get them away to Missouri. The faithful Saints then were dubbed "lick-skilletts" by the apostates.

Joseph, Hyrum and a few others—selected for "first vengeance," started out to Missouri in the winter of 1837; and in the spring of 1838, the poor who could not get away to Missouri of themselves were helped by Saints who had means; and a large company of seventy wagons was thus started under the lead of Joseph Young, Elias Smith, Jonathan Hale and others.

The young man Benjamin was very useful and active in helping off that company, and had entire care of the sick during the journey to Far West, Missouri. At times and for many nights in succession he did not close his eyes to sleep, and when the sick needed comforts that were not in the camp, he sold everything he could spare of his own, together with things contributed by others, to procure what was desired. Of that poorly provided company, many were sick, and a number died upon the way. It is said by those who were members of that first great Mormon camp, that the history of its journey has never yet been written.

The Prophet met the company a few miles out, before they arrived at Far West, and gave advice to portions of the company about locating and what to do when settled. To Benjamin he said, "I want you to go direct to Diahman, for there you are needed and there you will do the most good." The troubles that ended in the expulsion of the Saints from the state were then just commencing, and this young man, 19 or 20 years old, received his inheritance "by lot" and drew the lot upon which stood Adam's altar, but could not improve it, as he entered right into the spirit of the times in defense of the poor against the mob, who soon began to drive the brethren from their farms, rob and burn their houses, drive off their horses, cattle and hogs, and with their crops destroyed and left to waste they were, in Diahman, soon reduced almost to starvation. Many people were forced to leave all behind and flee to the town, where, in a few days, prang up almost a city of wagons, tents, rail-pens and brush wicklups, in which people stayed until the evacuation of the place, amid rain, hail, snow and frost. That was a sad time. Necessity was an excuse for retaliative reprisals in which our young Benjamin played a conspicuous part. The events of that time inducted him to lessons of experience that created pages of history in his life.

When the Missouri troubles culminated in the surrender of weapons of war by the Mormons, Benjamin laid down probably the most valuable rifle owned by a Mormon at that time. Ben-

sides being a true shooting gun it had sixty pieces of gold and silver inlaid upon stock and barrel.

This incident I relate as an index to the man as I have found him from boyhood to old age. On the day he was 79 years old, we met at the house of Doctor Heber J. Richards in Provo, and I noticed in small matters, from which I read volumes concerning men and women, that he was the same in characteristics, now that he is called "Uncle Ben," as when I knew him in Kirtland as the "boy Ben." At our last meeting on July 30, 1897, as I grasped his hand I noticed a massive gold ring, and a cane upon which he gently leaned, of peculiar excellence. I looked into those soft brown eyes shaded with very long black lashes; I admired, I loved the old man even more than the boy. With some men there is a tumble-down appearance about their barn, fence, gates, woodpile, house, inside and out, and even to their clothes and hair on their head. The reverse arrangement is always visible in everything that belongs to this gentleman.

Returning to Diahman: after laying down our arms we were placed under a very strong guard and thus left for the rest of the day to the gaze and curiosity of every mobocrat that had a spite to spit out to any one for fancied or real wrongs. During the whole afternoon we were pulled and handled and overhauled by different mobbers, and at intervals some little exciting scene would break the terror of the occasion and give a prospect of something more terrible. Among these episodes a man called to Col. Sachal Wood, of Dewitt historic fame, who came and listened to the complaint of one Mr. Taylor, who charged our friend Ben with great misdemeanors during the few weeks he had been in the country. The colonel looked at boyish young man and asked in a way that indicated unbelief in Taylor's charge, "Did you do that?" The young man said, "yes sir," as innocently as a child when asked if his father was at home. The colonel drew his sword, and with a slight flourish, pointed to Gen. Wilson's quarters and said, "march." The boy marched as indicated and was followed to the general's quarters, where he was placed under guard, and where for ten days he had for a seat and a bed, a little bunch of hazel brush, and no covering from rain and snow. A negro cook kindly gave him spare crumbs for his food. His guards were brutes who boasted of their crimes at Haun's Mill. One of the guards by the name of Rogers, showed repeatedly a corn-cutter stained with blood and said that he chopped up old man McBride with that, and that by-and-by he would cut Benjamin to pieces in the same way.

Day and night those miserable fiends would compel that prisoner to go out and pack wood to keep fire while they guarded him by the light and heat thereof, frequently taunting him with the terrors of his approaching end. During the ten days of his imprisonment he appeared before a justice of the peace, by the name of Adam Black, to answer to some charge, but never answered because two military officials, with Dr. Carr of Gallatin, volunteered to defend him, and they claimed the right of trial by court-martial. Black got angry and said "no military officer could rule his court," and thus he transferred the case to Gen. Willson, who with a thousand of the militia, was camped in the forest just below Diahman, on Grand river. As the dreary time passed his guard became more insolent and cruel. He was at one time required to bring wood and make a larger guard fire. He started with a bayonet

close behind him, to obey orders. Taking up a heavy green maple load on his shoulders and struggling in the deep snow to return, the guard behind him said with a bitter oath, "walk faster or I'll stick the bayonet into you." But the guard was surprised when the stick of wood was thrown to the ground and the boy was transformed into a fierce lion. He hurried defiance at his guard, and told him he had carried his last stick of wood, adding "if I had a sword I'd split you through." The prisoner spoke in a loud voice which attracted the attention of the colonel who came up and inquired the cause of such loud talk. The prisoner told the officer that he had been required to pack wood for the guard to keep fires and he had come to the conclusion that he would do it no longer and had been telling the guard so. The colonel said he was right, and then ordered the guard to cut and carry their own wood, and be sure to treat that young man as a prisoner in the future.

During the time of his confinement, not one friend had been permitted to speak to him, and every appearance indicated that he would be tied to a tree and shot, as a relief to his sufferings. This he confidently expected. One day, as his guard was a little indifferent to his charge, William Huntington, my brother, who was a close companion of, and the same age as the prisoner, came into camp if possible to see and get a word with his friend. The prisoner saw him standing not far away and asked the guard if he might speak to that young man? Consent was given and William approached to within a few feet to him, when they conversed in a careless manner so as not to attract especial attention. William found out a little of their treatment and the prospects before him, and then told him that some of the people feared he would turn traitor to get released from his sufferings. To that he made no answer only "Why don't they pray for me?" William went straight home and told mother and Zina, his sister, what he had seen and heard. Mother and Zina immediately called upon two or three other sisters and all joined in fasting and prayer, which lasted all night and into the next day.

Before relating the manner of his release, I must show the tactics played upon him by Dr. Carr, the colonel referred to, and a lawyer from St. Louis, who was also a major. They acted the part of friends to the young prisoner, and laid before him several inducements to put the blame upon somebody else and thus free himself. They asked him who his captain was, who was with him in the retaliating expedition, and so on. He told them that he had been in the country only a few weeks and he was mostly a stranger to everybody, and everybody strangers to him; that the captain was always spoken of and appealed to as "Captain Cornelius," (Lot) and thus his answers incriminated no one in particular. The aim was not to punish or inflict severities upon him alone, but to get some clue by which they could seize upon some men of prominence and persecute them. The young man understood their game, and resolved, if die he must, to die alone—and when on his 79th birthday he related the statement made by William, of people's fear and his answer, "why don't they pray for me?" he said, with tears running down his cheeks, "I would rather have been tied to every tree in the woods and shot, than to have forfeited my integrity to my brethren."

The fast and prayers of those sisters did not close until the object of their solicitations stood before them. What believer in prayer can doubt that their prayers and fastings led to