

## CORRESPONDENCE.

*Written for this Paper.*

## A SAD FATALITY.

FILLMORE, Utah, May 15, 1894.

A gloom of sadness has pervaded every home in our fair city for the past three days owing to the death by drowning of two beautiful children of prominent families in our midst.

On Saturday, the 12th, Mrs. Virgin Holbrooke made a visit to her sister-in-law, Mrs. Joseph E. Ray, taking with her her little daughter Florence. She there met her sister Ella, the wife of Mr. Dudley Reese. During the visit their three children, Evelin Reese, aged 7 years, Florence Ray Holbrooke, born Sept. 20th, 1889, and John A. Ray, born Jan. 21, 1890, asked permission to go and gather wild posies, but were strictly forbidden by their parents and were told of the dangers from Indians in the neighborhood and the high waters in the raging creek. Notwithstanding these cautions the childish passion for flowers impelled them onward in the search. Just one block east from Mr. Ray's residence is Chalk creek, and across it is a frail foot bridge to accommodate residents upon the other side. This bridge is fifty-four feet long, made of a few props and stringers and upon these is laid a single inch board from twelve to fourteen inches wide, with a rickety crooked rail for grown people, three feet high.

This death trap the little ones assayed to cross, and Evelin Reese got safely over; Florence dared not venture, but Johnnie Ray, the man of the party, crossed over a time or two, to assure little Flossie that there was no danger, then taking her by the hand, he backed along the narrow board leading his timid cousin to the center of the stream, where the rushing whirl of the muddy waters unstrung the nerve of one or both, and they fell four feet, into the deep water together. Evelin saw her cousins go to their death and tremblingly recrossed the dangerous bridge and hastened to inform the assembled mothers of what had happened. Two other little ones a block below reported seeing a little white hand sticking out of the water.

Soon a hundred people gathered to search the onrushing waters for the children—amongst them the distracted mothers; and it would be a heart of stone that would not be moved in sympathetic grief when Willie Hatton and Lafe Huntsman brought to the creek banks a half a mile below where they had fallen in, the bruised and broken idols of their homes. Strong men's eyes filled with tears as they saw and heard this sudden grief. Mrs. Holbrooke, who is a delicate woman, could scarcely look upon the jewel that twenty minutes before had glistened with life and love, whilst Mrs. Ray worked for an hour in the creamery (in seeming oblivion of all the world around her) with a desperation born only in a mother's hopeful heart, until exhausted nature fell limp and lifeless to the ground.

It was 4 o'clock p. m. and both

children must have been 'instantly killed by the mad waters beating them upon the rocks of the precipitous creek. Flossie's father, Mr. Orson Holbrook, was at his farm seven miles from home, whilst Johnnie's father was in Salt Lake City and by a miscarriage of the telegram only got the sad news at 10 a. m. Sunday. With three relays of horses he reached home from Juab, forty-eight miles, in four hours and a half. These times of sorrow teach one lesson, that every clean heart in sympathy proves "all the world a kin."

The two children were known to everybody in our city. Flossie was the charm of the home amid the grown-up brothers and sisters, with singular intelligence; whilst Johnnie Ray was known to everybody who traversed our streets, as the miniature athlete, the precocious idol of his father. They were the babes of numerous families, the culminating fruition of ripened love. When yellow sheaves are gathered in, there is a robustness in sorrow; but when the stern reaper ruthlessly thrusts his sickle into untimely vines, there is a tenderness in grief that levels all hearts as molten gold; and by the crucial test of sorrow we learn that the "dark beyond" is but the figment of a godless mind, and under the influence of the Gospel the opaque veil becomes a thin transparency, through which we hold communion with our loved ones, and weld the links of fatherhood that leads back to the Eternal One.

The funeral services were held at 10 o'clock today and were conducted by Bishop T. C. Callister. Elder F. M. Lyman, of the quorum of the Twelve Apostles, made a hasty drive of 25 miles from Scipio to be present, and arrived to find the meeting house filled to its standing capacity. It was a touching sight to see six little boys bearing the corpse of Johnnie Ray, followed by six little girls dressed in white bearing gently into the house the remains of lovely little Flossie. The pure white caskets were placed side by side. The choir, to plaintive music, sang the hymn on page 354; the opening prayer was offered by Elder George Crane; the choir sang "Rest of the Weary." Then Elder Lyman addressed the large and attentive congregation, commencing with the words, "But Jesus said, Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." He then told how, twenty-five years ago, his eldest son fell into this same river of rapid, muddy water, but his life was saved by the rescuing hand of Horace Owens. For an hour he fed hungering sorrow with the bread of life and the logic of death, lifting the pall that hung over our town, and giving hope and consolation to all. He was followed briefly by Elder John Greenwood. The choir sang, "I Am Waiting by the River," and benediction was offered by Patriarch Joseph D. Smith. Then the great audience filed past the silent little ones, who lay like sculptured innocence. Their bruises looked like the vandal touch upon unadorned beauty. A large cortege followed

to the grave yard, among whom was Elder Lyman, who has been the comforter of this sad day. A. BIRD.

## IN OKLAHOMA.

Elder J. A. Stephens writes from Marshall, Oklahoma Territory, under date of May 16, as follows:

The Elders of Oklahoma are well and having good success and are commencing to reap the reward of their labors; many are being baptized and enjoying the blessings of God.

Sunday, May 13th, at Marshall, Elder A. N. Wallace baptized Torance Burns, an old man 75 years of age, who seemed very faithful and has been longing to see the weather open up so that he could arise from his sick bed and go down into the water and become a recipient of the Gospel. It was a beautiful, warm day and many were there to witness the scene. After his baptism we entered into his humble home and I confirmed him a member of the Church.

There being a large congregation gathered together we held a meeting and Elder A. N. Wallace addressed the congregation upon the first principles of the Gospel and warned them of the restoration of the same.

We met with the Saints on Sunday and anticipated in the exercises in Sunday school.

This little branch is making good progress and enjoying the blessings of God. Elders Davis and Levi Holt are energetic workers for the progress of the Marshall branch. We will leave for Stillwater, fifty miles east of here in the morning, to open up a new field of labor, where we expect to be crowned with success.

This leaves the Elders and Saints in good health and enjoying the blessings of God. J. A. STEPHENS.

## STAKE CONFERENCES.

## BANNOCK.

The quarterly conference of the Bannock Stake of Zion was held Sunday and Monday, May 13 and 14, in the Music hall, Rexburg. There were on the stand Elders Heber J. Grant and Abraham H. Cannon, of the council of the Apostles, the Stake presidency and Patriarchs and most of the Bishops.

Conference called to order by President T. E. Ricks, Sunday, 10 a. m.; he reported the Stake in good order and fully organized; the prospects were good for a fruitful season; all have enough to eat, and there are no difficulties among the people.

Several Bishops reported their wards, corroborating the president's report.

Elder Abraham H. Cannon addressed the meeting, treating upon the hard times and the lessons they should teach the Latter-day Saints—dependence upon the Lord in times of prosperity as well as adversity, economy and unity should be the result. He gave some striking examples of the power of unity and desired to see Latter-day Saints speedily come to such standard. Spoke also of the evils from disregarding the word of wisdom.

Sunday, 2 p. m.—Elder John Evans, returned missionary from Great Britain, reported his labors in that land.