

these interesting natural features of the San Juan valley which suggested the name of Bluff to the original settlers.

Opposite the river and about four miles above Bluff, is a large cave (about 250 feet across horizontally, about 300 feet high and perhaps 200 feet deep) in which there are some very interesting remnants of the habitations of the cliff-dwellers. Perched high up upon a ledge of rocks in the interior of the cave and near its roof are the walls of an ancient dwelling containing sixteen rooms, varying in size from 14x10 feet to 7x3 feet. Some of the walls yet standing are more than 12 feet high and from 18 to 12 inches thick. There is evidence that the building, in some places at least, was two stories high. Remnants of pottery and aboriginal utensils of different kinds are found buried in the sand covering the floors of the respective rooms. Below the ledge on which the walls stand, on the slope leading to the bottom of the cave, grows a species of wild desert vegetation in great profusion which is green all the year around; and beautiful flowers have been picked from it in the month of January. The soil where this vegetation grows is almost moist, and at times there is a small seepage of water from the sand forming a tiny stream which trickles down the ravine opening out from the mouth of the cave into the river bottom. Accompanied by several of the brethren from Bluff I visited this interesting cave yesterday.

I have seldom, if ever, in my visits to the settlements of the Saints in the Rocky Mountains, found a more open-hearted and appreciative people than the Saints at Bluff. I have spent today (Sunday) with them in meeting and addressed a congregation of both Saints and strangers twice. After the evening meeting I was surprised in an unusual manner in being presented by Bishop Jens Nielsen with the sum of \$11 contributed by the good-hearted Saints toward defraying my traveling expenses. Though entirely unlooked for on my part, the means came very handy, as I was puzzled as to how I could obtain the necessary funds to buy my railway ticket from Mancos to the San Luis Stake.

The Saints at Bluff certainly deserve great credit for their public spiritedness. They have just completed a fine rock schoolhouse, which is by far the best building of any kind in San Juan county. They have also the walls of a new meeting house, 50 x 30 feet, up to the square, and expect to have it under roof this fall. As soon as it is definitely that the settlers will not have to vacate in favor of the Indians, most of the families here are ready and able to build good and substantial private dwellings, up to the present they have lived in their primitive log houses.

ANDREW JENSEN.

*Written for this Paper.*

## IN THE HOLY LAND.

Thinking a few lines from the "Holy land," relative to the future prospects of the Turkish mission, might be of interest to the readers of the NEWS, I will endeavor to set forth some of my views on this question.

The work of the Lord in this dispen-

sation has as yet not had its commencement in Asia Minor, notwithstanding a number of the Elders have diligently labored in this part of the vineyard, to establish branches and gather out precious souls to help roll on the great and glorious latter-day work. When I say the work has not yet commenced, I mean, of course, comparatively speaking, for a number of souls have been found that were willing to humble themselves before the Lord, and receive baptism for the remission of their sins, and at Aleppo, and Aintab promising branches of the Church have been established, the members of which, while poor in this world's goods, are rich in spiritual blessings and gifts. And though at Aintab the Saints are persecuted by their Protestant neighbors, still they rejoice exceedingly in the testimonies they have received through faith and good works, and are ever ready to defend the principles they have espoused.

Elder F. A. Hulsh, of Payson, Utah, is at present at Aintab, studying the Turkish language and encouraging the Saints to lives of usefulness and honor before God. He reports a splendid feeling existing among them and considering everything I think the outlook at Aintab is bright and full of promise.

The same be said of Aleppo where Elder Vezerian, a native brother, is stationed and is diligently laboring for the upbuilding of God's kingdom on earth. A number of souls have been added to this branch recently, and the Spirit of God prevails among the Saints. Two or three of the brethren are professional men, as is also Brother Vezerian, and their learning and influence and knowledge of the language are a great help to the spreading of the glad tidings. Elder Albert Herman from Bear Lake county spent considerable time in this part of the vineyard. He is now at Damascus trying to make an opening there, I fear with rather indifferent success, though when I was there a few weeks ago two of the natives asked to be baptized. They were Arabs, and Arabs are, as a rule, very hard to impress with the importance of the rites and ceremonies of the Gospel. Their former education causes them to think that water baptism is too simple an ordinance to require any previous reflection or preparation. They exhibit great interest in the Gospel when they first hear it and accordingly ask to be baptized; but when it comes to repenting of sins and humbly bowing before the will of our Heavenly Father, and forsaking paths of evil, they are not steadfast enough and in a very short time they cool off, and then, of course, baptism is out of the question. With the Armenians it is different, for they investigate and strive for the Holy Spirit by fasting and prayer, and this fact accounts for the progress of the Lord's work in the north, Aleppo and Aintab, where a great part of the inhabitants are Armenians, while here in Palestine and Syria, where the great majority of the people are Arabs, the success of the Elders has not been so encouraging. Another drawback in the Syrian part of the mission is the language, which, extremely difficult of itself, is made still more so by the many other lan-

guages a missionary is continually coming in contact with. The length of time spent in this mission is scarcely enough in which to master the language under existing circumstances, and when an Elder is released he is succeeded by some one totally inexperienced regarding the tongue and customs of this ancient and peculiar people.

I understand a class has been started in Utah in which future missionaries may gain at least a foundation of modern Arabic. I would recommend that those who study Arabic with the view of filling a mission in this country acquire also a knowledge of German, for this language is indispensable to missionaries in Palestine. Our Elders have found a number of choice souls in the German colonies throughout this land, and no doubt there are a few more waiting for the rays of the Gospel light to burst in on them.

Though my views concerning the Eastern people have undergone some change since arriving here a year ago, I still believe there is a great work to be done in this land. Numbers of the House of Israel will be fished out of the dark places and be made to rejoice in the Gospel. The Elders will have to be patient and full of faith and Christian love, for they will certainly meet with much opposition from those who profess to be followers of the meek and lowly Jesus as well as from the followers of Mahomet. The Scribes and Pharisees and the Herodians, though flying different colors, are just as much a part of Palestine today as when the Captain of our salvation was made to suffer the death of a malefactor on Calvary; and though the spirit of the age prevents them from doing the same with God's servants in this day, they lift their hands as high in horror, and pull just as long faces at the mention of Prophets, Apostles, and blessings following the believer, as did the self-righteous bigots who cried, "His blood be on us and our children," eighteen hundred years ago. Our Lord "taught as one having authority" and laid the axe at the root of all the false religious systems of His day; and His duly authorized and commissioned servants of all ages have done the same thing. No wonder they were, and are, rejected and opposed by the great majority of the world. The stone that was hewn out of the hill Cumorah "without hands" continues to roll and gather moss and the "kingdoms of this world are gradually becoming the Kingdom of our God and His Christ," and I see nothing but a bright future for the Turkish mission.

DON C. W. MUSSER.

P. S.—Since writing the above I have received a letter from Brother Herman from which I learn of the destruction, by fire, of the "Great Mosque" in Damascus. This magnificent building was at one time a heathen temple of either Greek or Roman architecture, as its massive stones and beautiful arches indicate. After Constantine's conversion this heathenish temple was changed into a Christian cathedral, and was dedicated to John the Baptist. Three centuries later, when the city fell into the hands of the Moslems, the church was divided, by treaty, equally between