

[From the *Millennial Star*.]

A CONVERSATION

Between several parties whilst traveling in a railway train through Cheshire and North Shropshire, February, 1866.

BY ELDER WILLIAM LEWIS.

Passenger (to elderly farmer).—Sad times these, sir, for agriculturists. I do not see many cattle in the meadows. I presume it is in consequence of the cattle plague.

Farmer.—These are the worst times I have seen yet, sir, and I have seen some ups and downs in my time. This murrain is the worst disease I have ever known, and I have seen several new diseases within the last five and twenty years. It has swept away ninety-two per cent. of the stock attacked all around here, as far as you can see, and it continues to spread like a raging fire on the right hand and on the left. There is scarcely a homestead around here but what has been visited. God only knows where and when it will end!

Passenger (pointing).—What are those mounds in yonder fields? I do not recollect having seen them as I passed this way before.

Farmer (shaking his head).—The cattle you have missed from the fields are buried beneath those mounds. Yonder two horses are now dragging poor farmer Small's last cow to the hole. Poor Small, (striking his stick against the bottom of the carriage) he is a ruined man any day now.

Passenger.—Is he in the cattle club?

Farmer.—His club is broken up. Cattle clubs are of no use; some have broken up, and others have suspended payment. They can never stand the losses, and even if they could they only pay two-thirds of the loss. Suppose a cow to be worth £12, they pay £8, while £20 a cow would not cover present losses. What is a farmer to do with his land without stock? How is he to make up his rent? Who would speculate on more cattle now?

Passenger.—Would not a stock of sheep pay?

Farmer.—This cold wet land will not do for sheep. They would die of the rot. Besides, do you not know that a fatal disease has set in among sheep in the Crimea, the Cape of Good Hope, and other parts? It might come to England as the murrain came from Russia.

Passenger.—I saw something about it in the papers.

Farmer.—It is not safe to speculate in any branch of agriculture now-a-days. The landlords will have to feel the difference as well as the tenants. I know one great nobleman, who, in order to raise the rents, gave notice to his tenant farmers to leave by Lady Day next. Now he is begging them to stay, and making all sorts of fair promises; but the majority are going to leave. I wonder what he will do with his land? Yonder team is plowing up the old turf for corn; most of the Cheshire farmers are doing the same, all owing to the plague.

Passenger.—Is there no remedy or preventative for it?

Farmer.—People have tried everything to no purpose. The vaccination scheme, on which so many fond hopes were built, has proved a complete failure. I tell you what it is, sir, I firmly believe that the murrain is a judgment of God upon us. Most people think the same, and that it will spread in spite of everything until it is God's will to stay it. Bless us all! the world is come to such a pitch of pride and wickedness. People were more simple and far kinder to each other in the good old days, and there were not so many blights, diseases and losses as there are now. Why, I can remember many new things that have appeared within the last five and twenty years. A great many young cattle have been struck; the foot and mouth distemper came, then the fatal distemper called the pleuro-pneumonia; and lastly, this Russian murrain or rinderpest. God help the farmers! They have many things to contend with. The landlord must have the full rent, the parson will have the tithes, the poor rates must be paid, the roads must be kept in repair, the police force must be kept up, and thieves will plunder us! Various diseases attack our cattle, vermin damage our crops, new diseases creep into our families, for which the doctors find Latin names much easier than plain English remedies. They are very positive of one thing, and that is, the amount of their dreaded bill, which together with sixpence in the pound sterling for income tax, the farmer's bill, the cattle club, the fire insurance, and the yearly subscription to the association to prosecute rogues, make up a tidy Christmas box.

Passenger (smiling).—You have made out a good list. I thought that farmers had not much else to complain of but the murrain.

Farmer.—We have been very unfortunate these last two years, and we have a gloomy prospect, you see, for this year. In 1864, there was such a drought that the meadows were actually burnt up, which caused a scarcity of hay and other things. In the latter part of 1865, there was another drought, and the root crops were eaten up by vermin; turnip fields looked bare, without even a weed left upon them, by a strange kind of slug which infested them. These slugs were so hard-skinned that neither lime nor salt would kill them. There was little or no turnips for winter, and for what little many had, they have now no cattle to eat them. It may turn out the same as to the fear of a scarcity of butcher's meat. What if there will be few people left to eat what there will be? Scientific and medical men promise us a visitation of cholera or some fatal disease this year.

Passenger.—A plague upon them and their science, it is enough to frighten anybody.

Farmer.—The winter, so far, although stormy and disastrous to mariners, has been very mild—just the sort of weather for fostering pestilence. Many farmers are already ruined, and many more will follow, unless help comes. Government has refused to grant any State assistance. This plague only existed in one cowshed in London in July last, and it has already visited upwards of nine thousand homesteads. You may easily calculate what it will do if it lives the winter out. Besides this the strange grub I spoke of has commenced attacking the young wheat.

Passenger.—What is to become of the agricultural laboring class?

Farmer.—God only knows. It looks dark for them. On the farms in this neighborhood, where there were kept from six to twelve servants and laborers in proportion, there are now but one or two of each, and the farmers actually grumble at the expense of digging the holes to bury the carcasses.

Passenger.—These thoughts did not seem to trouble the servants and laborers at the fair to-day; they were as merry and drunken as ever; and there was more swearing and all kinds of wickedness than ever.

Farmer (shaking his head).—Ah! they will soon feel the change. They may scatter about to other parts of the country for work, but when the plague will go all over the land, what will become of them then?

A Laborer.—We mun have a bit of bread from somewhere, maister.

Farmer.—This is my station; good evening.

Laborer No. 1.—That mon, like all the rest of the farmers, is always a grumbler. You may think by his cant, maister, that he is badly off; but since he has been at the Green Leasow Farm, folks saiden his made a mint of money.

A Voice.—And he knows how to keep it too.

No. 1.—The labrin' men, sir, canna be much worse off than they bin now. I think the farmers ha'e'n been a djeal too hard with 'em, and too proud and selfish for the Almighty to keep on a blessin' and protectin' 'em. They'll pinch a shillin' out of a poor mon's swat, thinkin' it will do 'em a shillin's worth of good. [Chorus of voices.—That's quite true, Joe.] They've been feedin' their pigs with what they've refused to the poor widows and orphans at their doors. They've been takin' small farms off poor folks and puttin' 'em to big uns. Dunna the Bible say that the cry of the oppressed widow and hireling go up to heaven and bring down a curse? When the farmers wur well to do, they didna think how a poor mon wur to keep hisself and a big family on eleven shillin a week. Talk of butcher's meat a-going to be scarce! Why, a poor mon could only look at it on a butcher's stall afore. [Voice.—Aye, or smell it in the maister's kitchen.] Look at farmer Skinfint of Pinchem Farm, who's lost all his stock, [Cries of, He's a ronk bad un; I'm glad of it; He's an old—&c.] it wor only last year he got poor old Betty Want's son Jim fined five shillin' and costs for gettin' a few mushrooms off his big meadow.

No. 2.—It's come whome to him tho.' Jim Want informed against him for drivin' his cattle along the roads, contrary to the magistrates' orders, and they fined old Skinfint £10, and Jim got hafe the money. [Shouts of, Served him right, &c.] Skinfint kept poor Jack Weak's hafe year wages. Poor Jack had such horrid treatment, and he wouldna stay any longer. Skinfint said, He's a parish bird, and he ought

to be glad of a whome. [Derisive laughter.] There is farmer Bragfat, who won the prize for the best fat ox at the last agricultural show; he bankrupted through losing his cows. You all know that he and the 'tother farmers used to swagger and boast about their fat animals, and get drunk and carry on as if there wor no God lookin' at 'em, while their poor laborers wor hafe clemmed [starved] to djeath at home.

Voice.—They known about it now.

No. 3.—Look how the Misses Dash of the Model Farm, and many other farmers' wives and daughters turn out in their fine dresses on a Sunday morning for church; how they sitten in their snug pews, while we poor smock-frocked men bin' cramm'd into tha galleries or back benches, or anywhere out of the road.

Voice.—It woona be that way in heaven.

No. 1.—I think that this murrain we see amongst the cattle is judgment from the Almighty, and it makes me think strong on what the Latter-day Saints used to preach for years about these plagues a-comin'.

Voices.—I remember it well; and I, and I, &c.

The conversation breaks up into several simultaneous discussions on the merits and demerits of the "Mormons." Lying tales are reiterated; Nixon, the old Cheshire prophet, Zadkiel, &c., &c., are discussed. The people leave at their station, and our passenger is left to his reflections for the remainder of the journey.

In the foregoing narrative the language and sentiments of the characters are truly represented. There is a wide breach between the wealthy and poor classes in this country, which is continually becoming wider and wider. The Lord is also withdrawing His spirit from the British nation, and the time seems to be very near at hand when the deeds of violence, predicted by the servants of God through the medium of the *Millennial Star*, and in other ways, will surely take place in this land.

It is a noted fact that in the Cheshire district and its neighborhood, where the murrain has raged the most furiously, the Gospel has been preached at an early date. The faithful servants of God have been treated with contempt by those whom the riches of this world had choked, and have endured much preaching in it. But their numerous testimonies and warnings will be remembered yet; for the Lord will not suffer a single testimony to fall to the ground. He has commenced to destroy the wicked, and He will cut short His work in righteousness. The cattle plague is but one of the many means employed. There have been thunders, lightnings and tempests throughout the winter, so much so that even the benighted Gentiles have noticed them. The people are given over to strong delusions, and prefer believing Zadkiel or any alarmist, who has not the ability to point out a way of escape from the evils they predict, rather than believe the true servants of God, repent of their sins, obey the Gospel, and fly to Zion for refuge and instruction. Mens' hearts are even now failing them for fear. Their own words will condemn them. They admit God's judgments to be visitations for sin; yet, they fear not God nor give Him the glory. How awful it is to contemplate that puny, mortal men will curse God for the plagues that shall come upon them! What a consolation it is to the poor and oppressed Latter-day Saint to realize that there is a Zion, and that his deliverance is nigh, even at the door, if he will be faithful and true. To those who have means to emigrate, and who, like Lot's wife, linger and hesitate, we would say, Come out of Babylon, lest ye be left behind to suffer with the wicked, and that when you shall long for going, you shall not have the means. The Lord's commandments are not to be trifled with. The words of Daniel, Malachi, John the Revelator, and all the holy prophets, both ancient and modern, are now being fulfilled; the Lord is hastening His work, and preparing His Saints to enjoy the kingdom which shall extend over all the earth. May the Lord give us all a portion therein. Amen.

DEPARTURES.

Elders Isaac Bullock, William W. Riter, Heber J. Richards, Joseph H. Felt, David P. Kimball and Charles S. Kimball, sailed from Liverpool for New York per steamship City of Edinburgh, on the 14th inst.

Elder Isaac Bullock arrived in this country on the 20th day of July 1863, per steamship Hecla from New York, and was appointed to labor as Traveling Elder in the Edinburgh Conference. He continued in that position until the

10th day of October following, when he was appointed to the Presidency of the Scottish District, and at the General Council held in Birmingham in the month of January 1864, was called to the Presidency of the London District, filling that position until released to return home.

Elder William W. Riter arrived here from New York on the 29th day of July 1863, per steamship City of Washington, and was appointed to labor in the Swiss, German and Italian Mission. He was shortly afterwards called to the Presidency of that Mission, continuing there until the Council held at Birmingham in January 1865, when he was directed to accompany Elder Orson Pratt, sen., on a mission to Austria. He remained there several months, returning to England in the month of August following. After traveling for a short time in some of the Conferences in this Mission, he was appointed to labor in the Liverpool Office, continuing there until his release.

Elder Heber J. Richards arrived from New York per steamship Mersey, on the 25th of July 1863, and was appointed to labor in the Nottingham District, under the Presidency of Elder John D. Chase, and at the General Council held in Birmingham in January 1864, was appointed to preside over the Nottingham Conference. He afterwards labored as Traveling Elder in the London and Kent Conferences, but during the last twelvemonths has traveled chiefly on the Continent and in various Conferences in England.

Elder Joseph H. Felt arrived in Liverpool on the 27th of July 1863, per steamship Shannon, and was appointed to labor as Traveling Elder in the Manchester District. At the General Council held in Birmingham in January 1864, he was appointed to the Presidency of the Durham Conference, a position which he occupied until January 1865, when he was appointed to labor in the Scandinavian Mission, under the direction of President Charles Widerborg. He traveled through the different Conferences in Denmark, also in Sweden and Norway, until his return to England to attend the General Council held in January last, when he was released to return home.

Elder David P. Kimball arrived here on the 29th of July 1863, per ship Neptune from New York, and was appointed to labor as Traveling Elder in the Southampton Conference, and at the General Council held in Birmingham in January 1864, was appointed to preside over the Conference, remaining there until January 1865, when he was called to the Presidency of the Birmingham District, a position which he occupied until the date of his release.

Elder Charles S. Kimball arrived here from New York, per steamship Great Eastern, on the 18th of June 1863, and was appointed to labor as Traveling Elder in the Birmingham District. In the month of August 1864, he was appointed to labor in the same position in the London Conference. In January 1865, he was appointed to the Presidency of the Cheltenham Conference, remaining there until released to return home.

These brethren have all labored faithfully in the different positions they have been called upon to occupy, and have gained the esteem and friendship of those with whom they have been associated. They have borne faithful testimonies to the people of the truth of the principles they were sent forth to proclaim, and return to their families and friends with the approbation of the servants of God.

Elders Bullock and Riter have been appointed to take the superintendence of this season's emigration on the other side of the Atlantic, subject to the direction of any agent from Zion who may be sent to co-operate with them. Elder J. H. Felt will labor at the frontiers. Elders H. J. Richards, D. P. Kimball and C. S. Kimball, will pass through the States and cross the plains by the Overland Mail route, and anticipate arriving in Great Salt Lake City early in the spring. Those brethren have each our faith and prayers for a safe and prosperous journey across the ocean, and we trust that under their administration, the same success which has attended all our former emigrations, will also attend this, and that they may all arrive in safety in their mountain home, and receive the blessings which are in store for the faithful and obedient.

PAPER OF WOOD.—Some Providence capitalists have just established a manufactory in Manayunk, Pa., near Philadelphia, which by certain chemical processes, converts forty cords per day of poplar, maple and pine wood into the whitest and best pulp for printing paper.—[*St. Louis Dispatch*.]