

bridge, Berkshire county, Mass., to Salt Lake City, presumably as long a wagon ride as any of the gathered Saints have had. In leaving my native town I had many warnings from well meaning friends, who were so fully prejudiced against Mormons as to consider that no good thing could come to me and my family by going among them. Prophecies were plentiful that I should lose all my worldly possessions and promises abundant that if I would write back that I wished to return they would raise means for my deliverance.

"Though I have been peeled, robbed and driven by a mob, I have prospered in worldly things far more than those who gave me warnings; and the acquaintance I formed with Joseph Smith confirmed my faith in the work I have embraced. I entered considerable Government land adjoining Nauvoo, fenced and improved a 160 acre farm six miles out of Nauvoo, built a good substantial two story brick house, with extensive and good barn and outhouses in the city.

"In 1842 I filled a mission to Canada; in 1843 I filled a mission to the Indian nation, and during that year was elected member of the City Council of Nauvoo; and in 1844, by vote of the Council, was elected Mayor of that city and held the office until its charter was repealed. The same year I was sent on a mission to Massachusetts. During these years the threatenings of mobs had been violent. Joseph and Hyrum Smith had been cruelly murdered while under the pledged protection of the Governor of the State; and in February 1846, I, with many others was forced to flee from Nauvoo, crossing the Mississippi on the ice, and seeking refuge in the wilds of Iowa with snow on the ground. We here lost some of our dearest friends and relations by the hardships and exposures they were called to meet, among them my brother Orson's wife, daughter of Deacon Samuel Curran, Canaan, Columbia County, N. Y. Her death and that of others was directly due to our compulsory exodus from Nauvoo. Her father, mother and kindred, were, according to the light they had, exemplary and devoted Christians. To such as these were the western mobbers appealing for countenance and aid, while they were hounding their children to most cruel deaths. Not many weeks after my brother Orson lost his wife, my wife Mary weakened under the exposures and hardships of the journey, and was, like many others, laid to rest by the road side, none of their kindred having today any recognition of where they lay.

"I wish here to make affectionate and honorable mention of my brother Hyrum, whose life before association with our people, and his devotion and loyalty to the Gospel after embracing it, was worthy of the highest and noblest recognition. He had left Nauvoo with the first outgoing Saints, as captain of fifty in the company of one hundred, organized under my presidency. During the journey from Nauvoo to Garden Grove, he organized the labor force of the camp, and took contracts from the settlers bordering our route of travel, to chop timber, split rails, etc., thereby procuring sustenance for the camp, and acquiring other much needed means for the feeble and ailing. The next morning after his arrival at Garden Grove he voluntarily started back to Nauvoo.

Through great efforts he succeeded in emigrating from there several poor families, also to sell some of the property left there by the three Spencer brothers, taking payment in stock cattle; but immediately trumped up writs were manufactured, and attachments issued to hold the property until the mob which was gathering should come into Nauvoo. By almost superhuman efforts he escaped with the cattle and means, reaching the camp of the Saints at Pisgah, although he did so as a martyr,—his exposures, anxieties and labors had killed him. He died some miles east of Pisgah, and his body was brought there for burial, his grave being fenced and marked by two stones, inscribed with the letters H. S.

"In pursuing our journey west from this point we followed the Indian trail across Iowa to Council Bluffs, camping much of the time in close proximity to Indians, and herding our cattle on their grounds. We had no trouble with them, for while we were suffering so cruelly from the Christian [?] mobs the hearts of the savages seemed changed and softened and true sympathy was extended by them to a most touching degree. It was here proven as it has been often proved by our people, that having the Gospel, they had also with them the power of God unto salvation.

"We tarried during the winter of '46 and '47 near the banks of the Missouri river. I acted as bishop during these memorable months when the very essence of manhood and womanhood was tested, and I leave this affirmation that the test was not only heroically met, but met with that divinity of patience and trust that only a people can show who are divinely inspired.

"I fitted out from this camp Francis Boggs, Elijah Newman and Levi Kendall with two yoke of oxen, wagon, provisions, seed grain, farming tools, etc., and who came as pioneers, arriving on the site of Salt Lake City the 24th of July, 1847; and, if their testimony be true, these oxen drew the plow that turned the first sod in Utah Territory.

"After the pioneers left, my reorganized company of one hundred started west in June with Ira Eldredge as captain of fifty, following on the Indian and trappers' trail which led to the North Fork of the Platte river. This journey was a continuous panorama of incidents. Only an arm's length, as it were, back of us, was our old New England life, our New England relatives and associates, our fine homes and farms, and still nearer, only a short drive back, lay the home and farm which we had just been driven from into exile; to have them back we had only to deny Mormonism. Before us lay the problem of colonizing with such people as we were, in such scattered conditions as the mob had left us, the 'Great American Desert' of which the ablest of statesmen, Daniel Webster, had said 'it is not worth acceptance;' of which the great Calhoun had said 'it is not worth a pinch of snuff;' and in which views Benton had acquiesced, these opinions having birth about 1845—but Joseph Smith had told us in 1842 that God's work should stand, that his people should not be swallowed up by mobs that they should become a numerous and mighty host in the Rocky Mountains. No earthly light illumed the bleak prospects the ablest men of the world had pictured—here before us, morning, noon and night the seemingly boundless

plains, red men by the thousands; buffaloes by the tens of thousands; here to us a new world where for weeks no rain fell, for months no dew moistened the arid air. Here the very atmosphere seemed to lie and deceive in all the estimates of distance, objects seemingly ten miles away would prove to be twenty or more. Here an animal could be killed at even tide, jerked, hung up by the wagon side, and cured without taint as we traveled on.

"Those who faced these conditions in the spring of 1847 realized that in this undertaking they severed all alignments of the past life; lives of the dear ones, memories of loved kindred and homes, respectability of character, all to perish in the desert with the brand, for ever attached, of fanatics, of fanatics! There was no lack of intelligence or discussion of this matter. A disciple of Him whose tongue never uttered guile said 'faith was the gift of God.' He gave this gift to modern Israel in the confines of the desert. The merry laugh, the prayers of thanks, the supplications for those who had despitefully used us, the songs of praise in the camp were the acclaims of prophetic victors, and as we journeyed, hope brightened and gave assurance of what our children witness today. We had read of the children of Israel in the wilderness, but here were the children of Israel in very fact. Those ancient ones were scientifically preserved by God, as were we; their famine was fed by manna, ours with quail; they subdued enemies with the sword, ours, the most savage of savages, were softened and made in some respects to minister to our wants, and I wish it here to go on record that the hand of God was as much or more visible with this modern Israel, in bringing and planting, and successfully sustaining them in this then desert land as it was with ancient Israel; and when all the facts come to light it will be the pleasure and justice of the world to acknowledge it, and then it will no longer be said, 'that the Lord God liveth that brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' but He liveth who hath brought Israel out of all countries in the latter days.

"I reached the present site of Salt Lake City with my company September 23rd, 1847, and was the first eastern emigrating company organized in June at the Elk Horn, to reach the valley, and to move into what has been called the 'old fort.'

"I engaged in farming and various industries, forming at one time a partnership with Jacob Gates, J. C. Lutie, and my son, in opening a ranch in Rush Valley, from which we were unjustly ousted by Johnson's army, at a loss to us of many thousand dollars, and by members of whom my nephew Howard O. Spencer was afterwards nearly murdered.

"I have had the blessings of God in sustaining a large family in this once desert, having had in addition to the wives before named, Emily Thompson, by whom I had two sons, Jared and John D., and four daughters, Aurelia, Sophia, Emma and Josephine. December 27th, 1856, Sarah Jane Grey was sealed to me, who bore me three sons, Orson, Mark and Grove, and one daughter, Sophronia. Elizabeth Funnell was also sealed to me, by whom I had four daughters, Georgiana, Chloe, Elizabeth and Cordelia, and one son Henry Wilson.