

Written for this Paper

A MISSIONARY'S INTERVIEW WITH MOBOCRAT WILLIAMS.

PULLEY'S MILLS, Williamson Co., Ill., January 24, 1895.

There is such a manifest change of feeling among the people not of the faith of the Saints since I left my two years' mission to the Southern States, seven years ago, that I felt it would be only a matter of justice and perhaps interest to mention my pleasant experience among them up to the present.

Having been called by the Prophet of God "as was Aaron," and set apart on the 4th day of January, 1895, by Elder Heber J. Grant, to labor in the Northern States mission, I bade adieu to fair Utah and forsook houses and lands, family and friends and all that was dear on earth, to prove my faith in the Gospel by my work, on the following day.

The journey was very pleasant, made so largely by the congenial and very agreeable company of Elder Samuel W. Richards, being on his way to preside over the Eastern States mission, whom I had the pleasure of accompanying as far as Council Bluffs via U. P. He continued to New York, and I called upon President Stout, who, on account of ill-health, has been released to return home.

I found Elder Stout to be a humble, kind-hearted, intelligent man, for whom I could not help but show the utmost sympathy and brotherly love. Much could also be said of kindness and credit due the Saints who were kindly administering to him.

A Mr. Huntington, now deceased, kindly gave the mission the use of a large hall, situated at 104 Broadway, Council Bluffs, where the Saints hold two meetings every Sunday, which are gratuitously advertised by the kindness of four leading newspapers, which are generally pretty well attended.

Brother Joshua R. Clark, of Grantville, Tooele county, having been called to fill the vacancy caused by the release of Brother Stout, reached here the evening of the same day that I arrived, January 7, 1895. It was jointly agreed by the two brethren that I should labor in Williamson county, Ill., and suggested that I go by the historic Nauvoo and Carthage. I was truly thankful for this suggestion, as I always have had a great desire to see these places of sorrow and spoliation.

January 8th I bade good bye to my new friends and bought a ticket to Burlington, Ohio. From there I went to Montrose, just across the river west, opposite Nauvoo.

The river was frozen over sufficiently to afford the passage of pedestrians. Two gentlemen are running opposition hand sleighs, on which they carry what little express, passengers or luggage there may be for Nauvoo. I rode on Mr. Reimboldt's sleigh, himself skating and pushing the sleigh.

In about ten minutes we were across the river. We then took his conveyance and rode up the rising hill where the once beautiful town of Nauvoo stood. I could not help the feeling of awe that seemed to creep over me, as house after house was pointed out to me where the down-trodden, robbed, driven and murdered servants of God once lived; among them being the

house of the great latter-day Prophet, Joseph Smith. The houses that are remaining, which the Saints built, are among the best average buildings of today.

I registered at the Arlington hotel, from Salt Lake City, and I soon made my business known, and was introduced to an old gentleman who lived here in the times of trouble, by the name of Thomas E. Keiley, who received me very kindly and spared no pains in giving me all the information he could command. We visited all the houses of note now standing, and I carefully made a note of the history of each, as given by him. He condemned with the most severe emphasis the way the Mormons had been treated. He said he was only a boy then, but was eye witness to "Jack-Mormons stealing from parties and hiding it upon the places of Mormon leaders, and then going to the parties whom they had stolen from and telling them they'd bet the Mormon leaders had them." He said he never belonged to the Church, but his father once did, but had apostatized in the days of Joseph Smith, "because of polygamy."

I next called at the Nauvoo *Rustler* printing office, and gained what information I could of the present feeling toward the Mormons. The people here universally acknowledge the mistake of those who drove the Mormons, and agree that it was one of the most wicked things that ever happened. With an expressive sigh they tell of the time when Nauvoo had about 22,000 inhabitants, while Chicago at that time had 12,000 inhabitants. Nauvoo then, they are careful to remark, had no saloons; now with about 1,200 inhabitants it has several saloons.

Leaving these people with a kind, interesting feeling towards the Mormons, I departed for Carthage, having to recross the river and take train to Keokuk, Ia., and from there to Carthage. I registered at the Grove hotel, made my business known, and was soon introduced and kindly received by the people. I called at the place where the Prophet and Patriarch were killed, and found that I had learned more about the building in a moment's view than I had ever found out by reading.

The place is now used for a dwelling, and the kind old lady is very hospitable in showing strangers through the house and giving liberally of her beautiful selection of flowers. I also secured a piece of stone from the building.

I next called on Sergeant Williams. I found him still bitter in his epithets toward the man whom he "saw killed." He said—"We all wanted him killed; we held a meeting the night before and decided to kill him. We loaded our cartridges blank, and agreed upon the plan carried out." He then continued to say that "Joe Smith was a bad man; he taught the people to steal. One of his teachings I remember now was, 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, therefore take whatsoever seemeth you good.' Such doctrine as that would make bad people." So Williams went on. He then asked me where I was from. I told him from Salt Lake City. He would not tell me any more, and was seized with such a violent shivering and shaking,

that his daughter politely asked me if I would not defer further conversation. Sergeant Williams, as he calls himself, lives in about the poorest house in Carthage. The forest trees, in their native wildness, remain with the greatest possible dullness, and everything, both within and without, bears the frown of a just God.

I found people in both of these towns who would look at the Views of Salt Lake City, which I had with me, and with a suspicious moisture in their eyes express: "Surely the Lord is with these people or they could not endure and accomplish what they have."

January 12th I met Brothers Bentley and Roberts, at Marion, Williamson county, Ill. There seems to be a great interest in the Gospel by many of the people of this and adjoining counties. Many houses are being opened for us to preach. A number of baptisms have occurred, and many more persons desire to be baptized. Just this week, one of the largest houses in the vicinity has been opened for us to hold a series of meetings in, and at least one has been permanently opened.

Ministers apparently have become convinced that they have no argument that will stand against the pure Gospel as taught by the Mormons, and in some instances are making us a home at their houses and speaking to our praise in their churches. This has been done especially by a Rev. Johnson, of the Presbyterian church, who happened to visit Salt Lake City and the Tabernacle, hearing President Joseph F. Smith preach, when he was traveling with the Presbyters last summer. He pronounces the Mormons a "good people with a good religion," and that they have the "most beautiful singing he ever heard."

The Saints and the people generally are very kind and hospitable to us, and we feel to bless them and explain the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ freely as we have freely received of it.

The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few. Elder Bentley informs me that he now has room for twelve Elders, and cannot get them. We therefore "pray the Lord if the harvest that He will send forth more laborers."

I hope the Elders will notice this—for I understand people are measurably anxious to hear all through the mission and indeed, I may say, the United States—and that the Elders will not think the missionary work ended.

SAMUEL G. SPENCER.

PROSPEROUS MESA.

MESA CITY, Jan. 21, 1895.

For some weeks past we have had just such rains as makes the farmer nappy. Some are still sowing grain while the earliest sown is already knee high, and I am told that in places lucern is even now large enough to cut. Winter so far has been like a pleasant spring time. Roses and other flowers are yet blooming, with potatoes, tomatoes and other vines still green. The citrus family of fruits are here proving a success beyond our hopes. Salt river oranges, in color, excellence and early ripening, are second to none. And while the scarcity of money is the skeleton in the closet of all business firms, yet energy is not dead, and the assurance of a grand