

with grain they can be easily tapped; also shelves are built in the walls, so that convenience can be had without using wood. We occupied one, one night, and found them to be about fifteen or eighteen feet high, and the arched part ranged at from twenty to thirty tiers of adobes, one tier being placed just a little inside the other, so that they finally closed to a peak. All the outhouses and kitchens are built on the same principle.

From Hama to Homs we had a good, well built road. We crossed the Orontes again at Restan, a city built on a spur of the mountain standing out boldly into the narrow valley. Homs we found to be quite a stylish little place, and here the police were extraordinarily good. They called and got our names and sent us an escort, a soldier, with whom we might deposit a little backshish. The country around Homs was moderately good, though somewhat hilly in places and a good deal of rocky land. A little further along the road led us up over the mountain of the Syrian desert, these being low ranges formed from the eastern slope of the Anti-Libanon, the ravines being for the most part dry. At Nebk we struck the road to Palmyra and Bagdad. Here we found a strip of land well cultivated. Nebk is a small town and has a good stream of water, hence good gardens.

The people said it was good, pure water, and we supposed it was, but as we looked up the stream we saw the people, donkey, dogs, or what not in the stream together dipping out the water. No one cared to dip above his own feet or donkey; it was clear and fresh and what difference does it make. Often we see the women who carry water wade right into the spring and stand in the water or pool and dip up the water, which they were first washing themselves in—for house use. The filthiness of these people is indescribable.

At the village we put up at next Brother Maycock made a discovery that spoiled Brother Larsen's appetite for the next day. Now Brother Maycock has an eye open for the curious, and he discovered the women in a little hut baking, so he invited himself to look, accepted the invitation and walked in. He found the good housewife baking slap-jacks in a large earthen vessel about the size of a forty gallon barrel. Here the good baker had, and had had, a hot fire on, made in the bottom of the open vessel or large crock. The fire, however, was made up of the grass the cows and camels had eaten a few days ago, and when the fire went down a little she quietly reached down a little more of this fabricated fuel, while she quickly and skilfully pasted the flat cakes of dough on the inside of the jar. This did not help the appetite. But the climax was reached when the baby, a little child of a year or more, was seen wading around in the coarse meal. Travelers being without bread have to buy the bread or do without. Now we try all and surely hold fast to our methods as being the best. We are satisfied of its superiority. We got our bread from a neighbor whom we made ourselves believe had treated the baking differently.

Once in a while we find a village that seems more advanced than the others, but as a whole they are very filthy and ignorant. It is no wonder that smallpox and cholera and fevers of various kinds rage in the summer time.

The country just north of Damascus is strangely thrown up by eruptions in former ages. The ledges are seen to run in various directions. Sometimes when coming horizontally they will suddenly be broken off and be seen to stand upright as it were and thus form a great many curious curves and crooks not often seen even in the Rocky Mountains. As we came out of

the hills and looked down upon the valley of the Barada, the surroundings of Sham or Damascus looked like a perfect oasis in the desert. Soon it was seen that they had an irrigating system. Canals and ditches were seen in all directions. It appeared to the writer that the water might be more carefully utilized, hence he made to cover a larger piece of land, but the people seem satisfied. They dig deep trenches and throw the earth up around the trees or vines, and then they fill the trenches full of water and allow it to stand in these pools to sink. Garden spots are watered on the same principle. One cause for this one may suppose to be that the water supply is but light in the summer and as the land is very flat it would allow of that method and a good deal of water can be turned on to stand there till it sinks. The grain itself around the city looked much of it very well. Coming along we saw some of the country butchers come in with muttons dressed for market, some on horses, some on donkeys. The meat was laid across the animals rudely and frequently you might see a dirty little Arab riding along with a couple of muttons on the same jackass, his dark skin and naked legs rubbing on the mutton not disturbing him in the least. But it seriously disturbed our appetites for Damascus mutton for the time being. But happily we forgot all about it and when we got into Sham we ate our little mutton stew with a few new potatoes all right.

Our trip from Aleppo to Sham in seven days was made without any accident and with much pleasure to our little company. The fare was quite reasonable, and the weather good.

F. F. HINTZE.

NORTHWEST VIRGINIA CONFERENCE.

Littleton, May 7th, 1898.

Our conference was held in Wetzel county at the Sugar-run school house, April 23rd and 24th. The following Elders were in attendance: A. P. Kesler, Geo. W. Worthen, president of the conference; W. B. Stark, Jas. M. Brower, W. H. Rawson, Wm. Anderson, Thos. Evans, E. Hoff, W. T. Wayment, Geo. S. Bunker, E. M. Greene, S. Wisner, M. Swapp, C. Gardner, Jasper Bird, S. Bolten and Peter Fox, the last two being residents. The Saturday meetings were not so well attended but in the evening the house was crowded. During the day services a number of the Elders spoke. The evening speakers were Elder George S. Bunker and Elder Kesler, who touched at some length upon the pre-existence of spirits, after which the people showed their hospitality by entertaining us for the night. Sunday morning at 10 o'clock conference again convened. The principles of the Gospel were explained at some length by W. B. Stark, E. M. Greene and Geo. W. Worthen. A Priesthood meeting was held between the morning and afternoon services, at which the Elders spoke favorably concerning their fields of labor, some having been entertained at the large hotels. Several baptisms were also reported since last conference. Elder A. P. Kesler then gave us some timely instructions and gave us our appointments for the summer.

At 2 o'clock the house was again crowded, the time was occupied by Jas. M. Brower and Elder Kesler, who spoke upon the apostasy and restoration, after which, owing to the heavy rain, conference adjourned. All seemed to have enjoyed themselves.

Next morning Elder Kesler left for Maryland, and we began to disperse for our different fields of labor. In some parts much interest is being taken in the Gospel and almost invariably

friends raised up on every hand. The health of the Elders, with but one exception, has been exceedingly good.

GEO. W. WORTHEN.

President.

J. M. B., Secretary of Conference.

A NEW BRANCH.

Fondu, Lac, March 8, 1898.

A branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized here on April 12th, with E. W. Croft, President of the Wisconsin conference presiding. After prayer and singing, the brethren and sisters expressed themselves as being willing to act in the respective offices, and were set apart by Elders E. W. Croft, Chas. Huhl and B. S. Rupp, as follows:

H. L. Kleis, presiding Elder; Carrie Edwards, clerk; Chas. Kollar, C. F. Sommercorn visiting teachers; Edith Lafore, organist.

The Sunday school organization was then perfected, with Chas. Kollar, superintendent; C. F. Sommercorn, assistant; Carrie Edwards, secretary and treasurer; Eddie Sommercorn, librarian; H. L. Kleis, teacher of the theological department; Carrie Edwards teacher of the primary department.

Timely instructions were then given by Elders E. W. Croft and C. Huhl for the successful working of the organizations. The branch is small at present, but the Saints were encouraged by E. W. Croft to bring to mind the membership of the Church in 1830, and its advancement since that time.

We held our first Sunday school, with nineteen members, of which seventeen were present. School was called to order at 10 a. m., with Elder Rupp presiding, and giving an outline of the work to be carried on in the Sabbath school. Elder J. C. Murdock also gave timely instructions.

In looking over our record I find the branch here consists of fifteen members, also "nine children under eight years of age." They feel well in the Gospel, and we all thank our heavenly Father daily that he sent His true servants to us with His Gospel, and gave us knowledge enough to accept the same.

CARRIE EDWARDS, Clerk.

GREETINGS FROM A SISTER.

Townley, Ala., May 10, 1898.

A feeling of gratitude prompts me to address a few lines to your valuable paper. Last June our settlement was thrown into a state of excitement by the appearance of Elders Slack and Wheeler, of Utah, who began canvassing from house to house distributing literature, etc. They received some opposition from the leading church members, but finally secured a building and held a series of meetings which were largely attended. The people were pleased with their teachings and simplicity of their doctrines but were astonished that it should flow from such a source. All admitted the fruit to be pure and wholesome but many pronounced the tree as evil. Many neglected Bibles were taken from the shelves, dusted and searched for corroborating testimony of the strange doctrine.

We found what we sought and now we rejoice in a knowledge that our course is approved of the Father and feel to praise and extol His holy name for His mercy. We send greetings to the Saints in Zion and earnestly wish for the happiness of our venerable Prophet. Very sincerely,

MINNIE LOCKHART.

The Utah boys at San Francisco enjoyed a rest on Decoration day, drills being few and far between.