

JACKSON COUNTY.

The Early History of the Saints and Their Enemies.

The Men Who Participated in the Mormon Wars.

Joe Smith's Practical Polygamy and Its Results.

A Beautiful and Flourishing Country for Sainly Gathering.

Joe's Curses Which Miss Fire Like an Old Shot Gun.

Correspondence Tribune.]

INDEPENDENCE, JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI, Sept. 23th, '73.

Compelled by a mysterious and afflictive providence to wait two days in West Missouri, I seized the occasion to run down here and put in a day in the Holy Land of Mormonism. And I have seen and heard so much to interest me that I am sure many of my Mormon friends will be pleased to learn how their old neighbors get along, and read of the present condition of the land of Zion. It is, indeed, a goodly land. Of that there can be no question by Saint or Gentile; and my opinion of the Prophet has risen fifty per cent. since I arrived at his

SELECTED SPOT FOR THE NEW JERUSALEM.

I have now visited and got pretty well acquainted with five of the Mormon Zions—Salt Lake City, Council Bluffs, (or rather Winter Quarters on the west bank,) Independence, Nauvoo and Lake county, Ohio; and it must be said that they always made good selections. If the "Lord" had only kept his word with them, they might have amounted to a great deal in this section. But the "Lord" proposed and the Missourians disposed, and things are as they are.

Falling in on the ears with an old citizen who has been here forty years, he had the driver take me to the hotel by way of Limestone Arcane and

THE TEMPLE BLOCK,

and on the highest point we paused and took a good view of the situation. It was beautiful beyond description. Twelve or fifteen miles westward, the spires of Kansas City glittered attractively in the light of the setting sun; while in all directions gently rolling prairie and tasty groves combined in rural beauty—the prairies rich with tall corn; the groves each enclosing a magnificent farm house. Independence is on a series of knolls and intervening slopes; the native timber still adorns the town; drainage is excellent and pavements good, and the result is, one of the most beautiful and healthful cities in the West. The population is 4,000, and in that number is an amazingly large proportion of pretty girls. I don't see how it is possible for a single man to get away from the place.

Temple Block, still unfenced, is on the crown of the most commanding knoll; but the ground slopes so gradually that the rise is not evident till one leaves it. That and the lots immediately adjacent are the property of some resident Mormons, of whom there are

TWO SECTS HERE

the Hedrickites and Twelvites. They have a bishop and did publish a little weekly called the *Truth Teller*; but it has lately "ausgespicht." There were two brothers named Hedrick who headed one of the dissenting parties which refused the Presidency of Brigham. John Hedrick had his neck broken in this county by a runaway team; the other one moved to Kansas, where he now owns a mile square of land and is rich in flocks and herds. Meanwhile Brewster, Cutter, Page and others, who also led off small bands of dissenters, died, and their followers partly gathered here; the rest of them are scattered in Iowa, "half Mormon and half nothing." The conglomerates in Missouri took the name of Twelvites, but have kept on splitting into factions till only a dozen or twenty families are left here under Bishop Haldeman. They have preaching once a month and are contentedly waiting for Christ's second coming. They have a big advantage over Brigham—they own the undoubted site of the Temple which is to be, in the New Jerusalem. In most other respects Brigham is ahead.

Jackson is the second county in the State, St. Louis only being ahead; and it had in 1870 a population of 60,000. Kansas City has doubled in size since then, and allowing for a slight increase throughout the rural districts, they claim a population for the whole county of 85,000. No part of Missouri has a better population. From every commanding point, schoolhouses and churches are seen; every good plat of land is under cultivation, only the ridges and groves being in common. There is just about timber enough to suitably adorn the landscape, and all the public buildings and most of the residences are elegant and handsome. The records show, except in Kansas City, an exceptionally small percentage of crime. The old settlers announce with some pride that there has never been a mob in the county since that which expelled the Latter-day Saints. I use this term because it is in common use in Utah; but while they were here it was an unknown phrase. The Saints called themselves the "Church of Christ," and they were known by the sinners as *Mormonites*. Their present title was afterwards adopted at Kirtland. Of course, in the above statement as to mobs, the citizens exclude the era of the war, which did some damage in the county, but none of any permanence. The average of wealth and intelligence is high. In short, if the "Lord" condescends to come in person, he could not well select a better place to come to.

My first call was on Dr. William E. McLellan, whose name you will find in every number of the old *Millennial Star*, and in many of Smith's revelations. I found the old gentleman in pleasant quarters, himself and wife living with two grandchildren in a home he has occupied for many years. He joined the Mormons in 1831, and left them in 1836. Came to Independence in 1831 from Paris, Illinois, and was baptized here. Soon after he went on a mission and returned in 1833. Soon after his return a Mormon meeting was called in the yard in front of John Corral's house, (I visited the place,) where the Doctor was called upon for remarks. He expounded on the scriptures, (this is his account,) that the Gentile world was in bad straits; that a general wind-up was at hand, and that the result would be blood and destruction to the unbelievers and a glorious triumph for the Saints. The Doctor was careful not to specify how this would be brought about, or to set any time, but the speaker who followed him prophesied that before five years

ALL UNBELIEVERS IN JACKSON COUNTY WOULD BE DESTROYED.

Upon this a few Missourians in the outskirts of the crowd signified an emphatic dissent and went down town. That evening an indignation meeting was called in the public square, where Russell Hicks, a lawyer, and Saml. C. Owens, county clerk, gave it as their opinion that the Mormonites intended to raise the slaves,

join them and massacre the whites. This set the ball rolling and the next Tuesday three hundred armed men from the county were assembled in town. They tore down the Mormon printing office, chased Dr. McLellan through a corn field and into the woods, but failed to catch him, committed some other outrages and notified the Saints to emigrate. The latter assembled their forces on Big Blue, in the upper part of the county. The citizens feared an attack on the town, armed all the men, and sent a small scouting party to parley with the enemy. This party was fired on by the Saints, and two citizens, Brezzel and Linsule, killed. This was the first blood shed, and the Mormons shed it. But it settled their fate in Jackson county, and they were driven out en masse the next November.

Dr. McLellan is strongly of opinion that the troubles of the Saints here did not result from anything they had done, but altogether from what the citizens feared they might do if they got a majority. The Saints at that time interpreted the prophecies much more literally than they now do; in particular Sydney Rigdon, Orson Hyde, W. W. Phelps, and Martin Harris, whether in Kirtland or Missouri, were instant, in season and out of season, in declaring to the Gentiles that the great day of Armageddon was at hand, and that if the Gentiles resisted the ordinances of God, blood would flow even to the horses' bridles. With them was a small minority of the Saints, who went about the country notifying the old settlers that they had better sell out and leave, for the Lord was "about to clean up his threshing floor and make a way for the Saints." Of course, this sort of talk created trouble, but the Doctor is very emphatic in his statement that the Saints committed no more actual crime than an equal number of other people. The Doctor "dissented" (the apostates were then called "dissenters") in 1836. His faith was first shaken by the changes made in the revelations. He had been careful to keep copies of the originals, presented proof that all the early

REVELATIONS WERE CHANGED, THREES TIMES,

and considerably amended before they appeared in their present form. Next he was swindled out of all the property he put into the joint stock concern in Kirtland, and soon after was convinced that the Prophet had suborned men to commit crime. What follows I give on his authority, and he is regarded here as a thoroughly reliable man.

THE DOCTOR'S STORY.

At Kirtland there was a wealthy citizen, Grandison Newell, who brought a number of civil suits against Joseph Smith—estimated as high as thirty. Dr. McLellan was a witness in some of these cases. About that time a devout Saint whispered to the Doctor that "men had slipped their wind for smaller things than Newell was guilty of." Upon this the Doctor saw one of Joseph Smith's intimates privately, and the latter confessed that he and another were then employed by Smith to assassinate Grandison Newell! The Doctor satisfied himself fully that the man's statement was true, and thought it about time to leave. He accordingly put his wife on one horse, took another himself and "lit out." Soon after he settled in Upper Missouri, and was soon surrounded by the Saints again, but was careful to keep still and have no intimacies with them.

SURIN'S POLYGAMY.

He was in the vicinity during all the Mormon troubles in Northern Missouri, and grieved heavily over the suffering of his former brethren. He also informed me of the spot where the first well authenticated case of polygamy took place, in which Joseph Smith was "sealed" to the hired girl. The "sealing" took place in a barn on the hay mow, and was witnessed by Mrs. Smith through a crack in the door! The Doctor was so distressed about this case, (it created some scandal at the time among the Saints,) that long afterwards when he visited Mrs. Emma Smith at Nauvoo, he charged her as she hoped for salvation to tell him the truth about it. And she then and there declared on her honor that it was a fact—"saw it with her own eyes." The long disputed question, then, as to whether the Prophet did practice polygamy, is now effectually set at rest; and Brigham is a little ahead of young Joe on that point. About the time she told the Doctor this, Mrs. Smith also published a card in the *Quincy (Illinois) Weekly*, in which she stated that she had no faith in the prophetic mission of her "late husband, and considered his revelations as the result of a diseased mind." Despite all these experiences, Dr. McLellan is still a firm believer in the Book of Mormon. He thinks it was truly "given by divine inspiration," but that the men to whom the trust was committed proved unfaithful, and have gone from bad to worse ever since.

FIRE BRANDS.

I also met a gentleman named Brown, who resided in Gallatin, when the Mormons sacked that place and burned the principal houses. This was after they had been harassed considerably by their enemies, and he was inclined to sympathize with them at first, but was rather rudely converted by having his father's house set on fire by the sparks from the store-house. About the same time Millport, (a little town in Davis county) was plundered and partially burned by a band of Mormons, still they might have settled their troubles with the people had it not been for dissensions among themselves. But in Far West, the Saints' capital, were many of the original converts who did not fully believe in the latest revelations. Of these Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, John Whitmer, W. W. Phelps and Lyman E. Johnson received a written notice signed by eighty-four Saints, that they were considered guilty of counterfeiting, gambling, etc., and were under surveillance. These persons accordingly fled to the Gentiles for protection. The first two were "witnesses" to the Book of Mormon, the next, one of the "eight witnesses." Some of them came to Dr. McLellan's on their flight. One by one the suspected and disaffected slipped out of Far West, while the irregular war went on; but finally the militia assembled under an official call, and in a very short time all the Saints were dispersed or captured. I obtained, and now have in my possession, a complete copy of the evidence taken on the trial, from the copy certified to by Judge Austin King, and printed by authority of the State.

IN CLAY COUNTY.

When the Saints went into Clay county, the citizens there were profuse in kindness to them, and full of indignation at the people of Jackson; but in a year or two the Clay county people in turn began to hold mass meetings, and beg the Mormons to go further on. One of these meetings appointed a committee to draft an address to the "new settlers, the people commonly called Mormonites," a copy of which is before me. It is a funny document. It sets forth in florid rhetoric the facts that the exiles from Jackson had come into Clay poor and destitute, averring that they only wanted refuge for a year; that the people of Clay had exhausted kindness on them, and sought by all honorable means to make peace between them and Jackson county; that the time was past in which the Mormonites had agreed to go, and yet they showed no signs of leaving, and if they remained so much as one year longer, it would cause war between Clay and Jackson. The address closed

by imploring them, by every consideration of honor and public safety to go further, and suggested Wisconsin Territory as a good place for them, "where their neighbors will be few, all Northern people like themselves; they own established government of their own, and have no conflict with our laws," etc. Cornelius Gillum was active in effecting a compromise, and finally got the Saints to remove without using Clay as a basis of attack against Jackson county. This Gillum afterwards led a company of militia in the war against the Saints. I may as well add here that Dr. McLellan evidently sought to soften the case against the Saints, and apologized for them as much as possible; but his wife, in what little she had to say, took a more radical view of it, averring of her own knowledge that the leading Mormons in Far West were guilty of every kind of little crime and meanness." Lyman Johnson, one of the exiles from Far West, was her nephew. I also saw Mr. Reuben Wallace, who served in the extemporized regiment which was raised to defend Jackson county from "Joe Smith's army"—meaning, I suppose, "Zion's Camp" from Kirtland. But the people of Clay county positively forbade the Saints to use their territory as a basis of operations against Independence, and the expected invasion was indefinitely postponed. Also, Mr. Weston, late mayor of this city, whose father commanded part of the Jackson Militia; Mr. Lucas, son of General Lucas, and many others. All the participants in the war against the Saints have been so often described in Utah as a set of murderous scoundrels, magocrats and villains, who deserved

HANGING FIRST AND HELL AFTERWARDS,

that one is rather surprised to find in the survivors mild, venerable old gentlemen, who look as if they had never wantonly injured a fly. Colonel Thomas Pitcher, in particular, is generally pictured in Mormon annals as a blood drinker, whose favorite meal was a Mormon baby on toast; but he is an exceedingly quiet and pleasant old farmer, with hardly nerve enough to butcher a calf. As the Prophet Joseph pronounced the curse of heaven on all these men as enemies of God and his saints, and predicted untold horrors for them, your Mormon readers will no doubt be pleased to learn

THEIR SUBSEQUENT HISTORY.

The first fact that strikes one is, how wonderfully tenacious of life all these combatants seem to have been, whether Mormon or anti-Mormon. It seems as good as a life insurance to have been engaged in the Mormon war on either side. But individually the account, as far as known here, is as follows.

Oliver Cowdery, first witness of the Book of Mormon, after being "cut off for lying, counterfeiting and immorality," turned his attention to law and real estate, in which his success was only average. It was a favorite practice with him when half drunk to preach a Mormon sermon. When visited by any of the Saints, or a stranger, he invariably asserted the truth of his "testimony," but among his friends privately he admitted that it was "all a bottle of smoke." He died in Richmond, Ray county, and Elizabeth, his wife, afterward married an old farmer, with whom she is living up in Iowa—"fair, fat and sixty," and not caring much about Mormonism.

David Whitmer, second witness, still lives in Richmond—a well to do livery man and stock dealer, accounted by all the citizens a perfect gentleman. He generally refuses to talk about Mormonism, but when hard pressed by interviewers insists that "an angel showed him the plates." Privately he informs his friends that his statement is true, but he means Mr. John Angell, a neighbor of the Smiths! The "curse" don't appear to have got him bad, but there is no telling what may happen. It would be a great card for some missionary from Salt Lake to restore the old man and bring him to Utah, as Stevenson did Martin Harris; but as Whitmer is rich, while Harris was a pauper, he might not be so easily restored.

John Whitmer, brother of David and one of the "eight witnesses," lives near old Far West and is the wealthiest man in that vicinity, owning 700 acres of land in one body, cattle upon a thousand hills, and ready money in abundance. Evidently the "curse" has mixed him on a fair point blank range. But the "Lord" may snatch him bald-headed yet, before 1870 and the return of the Saints. So it won't do to count too much on his case.

Samuel G. Owens, who made the first speech here against the Saints and led the mob, was shot dead in the Mexican war, while leading an assault. I hardly know whether to credit this to the "curse" or not; but on second thoughts have concluded it is only fair to do so. True, a great many men were killed in that war who had nothing to do with the persecution; but the "Lord's" book-keeping may differ from ours, and it is best to be on the safe side. So credit Owens to prophecy.

Russell Hicks, then Owens' deputy, is now an old lawyer at Kansas City. He is a rough, gruff old sinner, but hale and tolerably prosperous. But if he don't go a little slower on his "bitters," I think the "curse" will eventually catch him.

Jonas H. Flournoy, another mob leader, then postmaster, died a natural death years ago. Nothing remarkable about his fate in any respect.

General S. D. Lucas, who assisted Generals Doniphan and Clarke in the capture of Far West, served his country with distinction for many years, and died a natural death. His family holds high rank here, both socially and intellectually. His son is recorder of deeds for this county, and is a man of promise. Possibly the "curse" is postponed to the next generation, according to the law of Moses.

Henry Childs, attorney for the Saints, and generally their friend, moved West, and was killed in an Indian war. No "moral" to be drawn from his case.

Samuel Weston, then justice of the peace and a savage anti-Mormon, died a natural death, leaving a moderate property and respected family. His son, late mayor of this city, has made a success in the plow manufacture. I asked him particularly if he felt the "curse," but he could not say that he did.

Colonel Thomas Pitcher, the great Mormon-eater, who led the militia of the county in the final struggle, lives a little out of town on a beautiful farm; he feels the firmities of age, and otherwise is doing as well as could be expected.

Cornelius Gillum tried for a long time to compromise the trouble in Northern Missouri, failed completely, charged the fault of the failure to the Saints, and became one of their bitterest enemies. He settled in the Platte Purchase, and made money, afterwards went to Oregon and became a renowned Indian fighter, and for aught I can learn, may be living there yet.

Reuben Wallace, another "mobster," is keeping a grocery and food store here. He is usually troubled with biliousness at this season of the year, but beyond that is not particularly conscious of the "curse." I have thought over his case considerably, and if you consider the prophecy his hardiness, you may credit his biliousness to the "curse"—but you must do it on your own responsibility. I wash my hands of it.

Captain Samuel Dogart, who commanded the Missouri militia at the battle of Crooked river, (and by the way the opposing accounts of that battle are fearful "crooked") served

many years after as a Methodist preacher, finally got too fat and lazy for that business, and moved on to a farm up north. No later reports of him. Should think if the "curse" got anybody, it would hit him; for to that battle Apollon Patten was killed. Mr. Samuel Tarwater, a citizen, was also badly wounded and captured by the Mormons who hacked him almost to pieces with their knives and swords. One earlock was cut off and his jaw broken, most of his lower teeth knocked out, a rib broken and at least twenty flesh wounds on his body. They departed, leaving him for dead, but under the treatment of Dr. Ralph he recovered and lived to a good old age. On account of his case, many of his neighbors and friends cruelly treated all the Mormons they captured. In fact the war seems to have been conducted on both sides with great barbarity.

This letter has run out to nearly asonable length, and I will only say of all the other notables of the Mormon period, that they have lived or died, prospered or failed, according to their talents and character, very much like other men. Jackson county has a population nearly equal to that of Utah, and about twice as much wealth. The crops this year are enormous, and the general condition prosperous; law and order prevail, and his and property are secure. If the "Lord" has put a "curse" on the country, he has a queer way of showing it; but as the statute of limitations does not run against Prophets, it may come to a fulfillment any time within the century. And further this deponent saith not. BEADLE.