

CHAPTER VI.

FORSAKING DEAR ZION.—WE FIND A NEW HOME IN THE FAR WEST.

A New Home in the West.—Dangerous Neighbors.—Some very Unpleasant Stories.—Seeking a New Home.—Preparing to Depart.—Life at Winter-Quarters.—A Lively Time in the Temple.—“Little Dancin’ Missy.”—Bound for Salt Lake Valley.—Life by the Way.—Songs of the Saints.—A False Prophecy.—“The Upper California.”—Saintly Profanity.—A Soul-stirring Melody.—The Saints Excited.—Beside the Camp-Fires.—The Journey Ending.—Entering Zion.—The Valley of the Great Salt Lake.

IN the spring of 1846 our family left Nauvoo, with the large body of the new Saints, to find a new home in the West. The Mormon people had become quite as unpopular in Illinois as they had been in Missouri; and collisions between them and the Gentiles were very frequent.

Sometimes it was one side that was the aggressor, sometimes the other. The Saints were indignant at the treachery which resulted in Joseph Smith’s death. They held the United States government responsible for it, as

well as for the troubles in Missouri, and taught disloyalty to the government, and personal revenge on all who molested them.

The people of Illinois, in their turn, regarded the Mormons as dangerous neighbors, and getting a hint of the new doctrine of polygamy, looked upon them as



grossly

111 FLIGHT TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

immoral, and accused them of much greater crimes than they really committed. All sorts of horrible rumors were

rife, and the indignation of the people outside knew no bounds.

The Mormon people realized, very soon after Joseph’s death, that they must seek a new home, and they looked with a feeling of positive relief to the unexplored region beyond the Rocky Mountains. They believed that there they would find a realization of all that had been promised them by their murdered Prophet. At least they would be beyond all interference and molestation, and after all they had suffered, they did not care how much space they put between themselves and the Gentile world.

All through the winter of 1845 and ’46 my father was very busy building wagons for the purpose of transporting the Saints and their property to their new and yet unknown home; for their destination was not definitely known to any of them at that time. The Apostle Taylor advocated California, and, indeed, announced that it would be the Saints’ objective point when they should leave Nauvoo. He wrote an emigration song about it, and all the way from Nauvoo to Winter-Quarters, some of the emigrating party were tunefully averring—

“The Upper California, O, that’s the land for me!”
Yet, in spite of Taylor’s prophecy and the saintly singing of it, they never reached California.

It mattered little to me, at that period of my existence, where we went. Home was home wherever my mother was, whether it was east, west, or camping on the prairies between. Of course I remember but little respecting the exodus of the Saints from Nauvoo; still there are indistinct recollections of things that happened as early as that which sometimes cross my mind, although they are very dim. My first distinct remembrance was of Winter-Quarters, which were then where Council Bluffs now stands.

112 “LITTLE DANCIN’ MISSY.”

My father built a log-house there, and we were comparatively comfortable. Our family consisted of my father, mother, two brothers, myself, and Elizabeth, the new wife. We were together nearly all the time, but when my father went into Missouri to work a while at his business, and get a little money ahead to take us to our new home, and settle us, he took my mother, my younger brother, and myself, leaving Elizabeth—the new wife—and my oldest brother at Winter-Quarters.

Notwithstanding the facts of the enforced emigration, the uncertainty of their future, and sacrifices they had been compelled to make, the migrating Mormons were not an unhappy party, and they managed to make their stay in Winter-Quarters lively, if not merry. As a people, they have always mixed amusement with their religion in the most amusing manner. Dancing was a favorite recreation with them, and all their balls were commenced with prayer. That

custom, by the way, is still continued, and the blessing of “the Lord” invoked at every dancing party which takes place in Mormondom. The Temple at Nauvoo (I have heard) was used for dancing parties, and it was then given out that the exercise was a religious one. It was taught to the Saints that recreation was positively necessary. Everybody dances among the Saints—president, counselors, apostles, elders, and all; and they dance with an unction, too, that is very amusing, and frequently ridiculous.

It was while on the way to Salt Lake, when I was only about three years old, that I learned to dance. It was when I was living in Missouri that I had my first lessons. Dancing was the common amusement there, and I remember the Negroes used to play. I was active and lithe, and very ready at imitations, and had, besides, a quick ear for music. I was petted by everybody, and the Negro musicians took a special fancy to “little dancin’

113 A BRIGHT GLEAM IN NIGHT’S DARKNESS.

missy,” and they taught me several Negro dances, which I used to execute to the intense delight of my sable [Note: “Black”] instructors, and the amusement of my friends.

That winter, in Missouri, is one of the bright spots in my childhood, to which I am especially fond of looking back. It is, indeed, the only really happy time I can recollect. My father was busy most of the time, and we lived very pleasantly and comfortably, for that section of the country at that early day; my mother was more cheerful than I had ever known her to be, and the atmosphere of our home was peaceful. The second wife had been left at Council Bluffs, and my mother had her husband’s sole care and attention, as she had it in the old days before the curse of polygamy was thrust upon her to embitter her whole life, and rob her of all that a woman holds most dear, and guards most jealously. Its shadow was over her still, and she knew she could not escape from it; but she should take what comfort she could, and think no more of past or future sufferings than she could possibly help.

In 1847 a party of the Saints left Winter-Quarters for the Salt Lake Valley. My parents had intended to accompany them, but my father was obliged to remain on account of business, and to assist in the final departure of the main body of the church. Brigham Young and his family went, necessarily, with the first party. Brigham was now absolute in authority, and he managed the affairs of the Saints so arbitrarily that no one dreamed of interfering with him, or gainsaying him in the least. He decreed that my father should remain at Winter-Quarters, and as a matter of course he obeyed. We were there another winter, and all the while my mother’s heart was setting most strongly Zionward.

It was the 4th of May, 1848, when at last we were

fairly started for our Rocky-Mountain home. The hearts of all the people were filled with eager anticipation, and they said “good-bye” cheerfully and heartily to the civilized world,

114 PICKING FLOWERS BY THE WAY.

in which were centered all the memories of their past, and turned gladly towards that unknown country beyond the wild plains and pathless deserts in which were all the hopes of their future.

My father took provisions that would last a year, by practicing economy, and we had two wagons and three yoke of oxen; there were six of us in the family—our own selves and Elizabeth. We joined with a train of two hundred wagons, which was afterwards divided into companies of fifties. I suppose the journey must have been a tiresome one to the older members of the party, but I enjoyed it extremely. I ran along, during a portion of the day, by the side of the wagons, picking flowers by the way, and talking to the different members of the train, for I knew everybody, and was petted almost as much by my fellow-travelers as I had been by my Negro friends in Missouri. It is a wonder that I was not completely spoiled; I daresay I should have been, had it not been for my mother’s sensible and judicious training. I was her idol, the one object for which she cared the most in the world; but for all that, she ruled me wonderfully, and I yielded her the most implicit obedience, while giving her the most passionate childish love and devotion.

I remember her so distinctly on this journey! She occupied herself a great deal with writing, keeping a literal transcript of all that befell us on our journey, mingled with the deepest religious meditation and poetic fancies. She always wrote in a large book, which she afterwards destroyed, when we arrived at Salt Lake City. I have always regretted that destruction of that book, as I should have liked it as a *souvenir* of that journey to the “Promised Land.” But she was so shy of having her feelings known, and so fearful lest it might fall into some person’s hands who would not understand her, but who would jeer at her for a sentimentalist, that she put it out of her way at the very earliest opportunity. Among other things, she wrote

115 MY FIRST INTERVIEW WITH BRIGHAM YOUNG.

a song, which used to be sung in camp, and was a great favorite; but even that is lost. I cannot recall it to memory, and my mother will not, as she says it is much better forgotten.

We rested every Sabbath, and always held services.

Sometimes we staid a week in camp, resting our tired oxen, and recruiting our own strength. It was a pleasant season



We had plenty of provisions, too, and there was no fear of their becoming exhausted.

Brigham Young had returned from the new settlement to accompany the emigrants and show them the way. We traveled in company with him, and I attracted a great deal

116 SONGS OF THE SAINTS

of his attention. The two families, Brigham's and our own, had lived in adjoining houses in Nauvoo, and I had known "Brother Young" from my birth; he blessed me in my infancy, and I was at one time a great favorite of his as any child could ever be; which isn't speaking very enthusiastically of his affection, to be sure, since he is not noted for his fondness for children, even his own. I little thought then what relation I should one day hold to this man, who was older than my father. My future was not foreshadowed in that summer journey in search of a home.

The Saints used to cheer their tedious journey by singing from some point or other in the train. I could always catch snatches of song; and on Sunday, while we were encamped, the whole body of the Saints would sing their hymns and local songs together. Some of these I recollect very distinctly, and, even now, find myself humming snatches of them, having taken them quite unconsciously. One of them I referred to before, by the Apostle Taylor, who at that time was a famous hymn-writer for the Saints. This one especially was a great favorite of the younger men in the company, and if one voice began it while we were journeying on, it would be taken up the whole length of the

train and sung with great unction. I give it as a specimen of the style of hymns that was popular in the church.

"The Upper California, O, that's the land for me!
It lies between the mountains
and the great Pacific Sea;
The Saints can be supported there,
And taste the sweets of liberty,
In the Upper California—
O, that's the land for me!

We'll go and lift our standard,
we'll go there and be free,
We'll go to California, and have our jubilee;
A land that blooms with endless spring,
A land of life and liberty,
With flocks and herds abounding—
O that's the land for me!

117 LIGHTENING A WEARY WAY.

We'll burst off all our fetters,
and break the Gentile yoke,
For long it has beset us, but now it shall be broke;

No more shall Jacob bow his neck;
Henceforth he shall be great and free
In Upper California—
O, that's the land for me!

We'll reign, we'll rule and triumph,
And God shall be our King;
The plains, the hills,
the valleys shall with hosannas ring;
Our towers and temples there shall rise
Along the great Pacific Sea,
In Upper California—O, that's the land for me!

We'll ask our cousin
Lemuel to join us heart and hand,
And spread abroad our curtains
throughout fair Zion's land.
Till this is done, we'll pitch our tents
Along the great Pacific Sea,
In Upper California—O, that's the land for me!

Then join with me, my brethren,
and let us hasten there;
We'll lift our glorious standard,
and raise our house of prayer;
We'll call on all the nations round
To join our standard and be free
In Upper California—
O, that's the land for me!"

Another one that the Saints used to sing a great deal—and one that was composed in Nauvoo, to be sung in the Temple before the exodus—was set to the pathetic air of “Old Dan Tucker.” I give what I can remember of it.

“In ’46 we leave Nauvoo,
And on our journey we’ll pursue;
We’ll bid the mobbers all farewell,
And let them go to heaven or hell.

Old Governor Ford, he is so small
There is no room for soul at all;
He neither can be damned nor blest,
Through heaven or hell should do their best.”

This song, profane as it may seem, was sung, not once, but many times, in Nauvoo Temple, and religious exer-

118 GLORY OF THE LATTER DAY.

cises in camp were never considered complete without it. Why these two songs stand out more prominently in my memory than any others—with one exception, which I shall presently mention—I do not know, unless it was because the airs pleased me; the first was bright, stirring, and very easily caught; the other was familiar to me in Missouri. When I think of it now, two scenes always come to my mind: one, of a little blue-eyed girl, dancing merrily under the trees while a band of delighted Negroes sang the gay tune which the tiny feet were beating out; another, of the same little girl, running along by the side of a covered emigrant-wagon, with her hands full of half-withered flowers which she had picked by the wayside, listening to the old song with the new words, which she only half comprehended, and involuntarily making her steps keep time to the music.

The other hymn which I remember was a great favorite with the Saints, and whenever they sang it, it had the power of awakening the wildest enthusiasm. It is of a style entirely different from either of the other two. I can’t help quoting here a verse or two, it is so much a part of the memory of this portion of my life.

“The Spirit of God, like a fire burning!
The latter-day glory begins to come forth;
The visions and blessings of old are returning;
The angels are coming to visit the earth;
We’ll sing and we’ll shout,
with the armies of heaven;
Hosanna! Hosanna to God and the Lamb!
Let glory come to them in the highest be given,
Henceforth and for ever. Amen and Amen!

The Lord is extending the Saints’ understanding,
Restoring their judges and all as at first;
The knowledge and power of God are expanding;
The veil o’er the earth is beginning to burst.

We’ll call in our solemn assemblies in spirit,
To spread forth the kingdom of heaven abroad,

119 THE SAINTS AROUND THE CAMP-FIRE.

That we through our faith may begin to inherit
The visions, and blessings, and glories of God.

We’ll wash and be washed, and with oil be anointed,
Withal not omitting the washing of feet,
For he that receiveth his penny appointed
Must surely be clean at the harvest of wheat.

Old Israel that fled from the world for his freedom,
Must come with the cloud and the pillar again;
A Moses, and Aaron, and Joshua lead him,
And feed him on manna from heaven again.

How blessed the day when the lamb and the lion
Shall lie down together without any ire,
And Ephraim be crowned with his blessing in Zion,
As Jesus descends with his chariots of fire.
We’ll sing and we’ll shout,
with the armies of heaven;
Hosanna! Hosanna to God and the Lamb!
Let glory to them in the highest be given,
For ever and ever. Amen and Amen...”

This hymn always stirred the Saints to the very depths of their natures. It was as appealing and sonorous as a battle-cry, as exultant as a trumpet-note of victory. Without understanding it, I was powerfully affected by it; my cheeks would glow, my eyes flush with tears, and my little heart grow so large that I would almost suffocate. The sublime exaltation of the Saints, as they sung this, was felt by me, child as I was, though I could not comprehend it. I shut my eyes now, and see a large company gathered together, in a fast-falling twilight, on a wide plain, that seems as endless as the ocean; the blue of the star-studded sky is he only covering for the heads of this company. In the dusk the white-covered wagons look weird and ghostly. Campfires are burning; men, women, and children are clustered together, and the talk goes back to the old days and the trials and persecutions which these people have borne, and forward

to an independent and happy future, blessed of God and unmolested by man. In the glow of anticipation, some one strikes up this fervid hymn—the rallying-song of the Mormons—and the wide plains echo back the stirring strains. I nestle by my mother's side, awed and subdued, but content to feel the clasp of her hand and meet the loving light of her



SINGING THE RALLYING-SONG.

eyes. The song is over, and “hosannas” and “amens” resound on every side, and out of the blue sky the stars smile down on the wanderers with a calm, hopeful light.

Never, to the very last, up to the time of my abandoning Mormonism and leaving Utah, could I hear this hymn unmoved; and even now the very thought of it thrills me strangely. I have heard it sung again and again since then; but it is, nevertheless, indissolubly connected with that journey across the plains and over the mountains.

Towards the last of the journey some of the Saints began to be somewhat impatient, and begged to hasten onward. We had occupied nearly the whole summer with the journey, and probably crossed the plains more comfortable and with less trouble or loss than any train which followed us. Starting as early as we did, we could move as slowly as we liked, with no dread of winter storms over taking us. The last stop we made of any length was at Weber River, where we remained a week in camp, fishing, and getting ready for the final part of our journey. Our wanderings were nearly at an end; only a few days more and we should reach our new home—the “Zion” of the promises, the resting-place for God's people. Brigham, who did not often indulge in

121 AGAIN ON THE WAY.

“revelations,” said the place had been pointed out to him in a vision, and in the shadow of the mountains the Saints should hold their own against the entire world. The pictures of the mountain-fastness which he drew for the wandering people, and his assurances of their future safety and constantly increasing power, filled them with anticipation and exultation. Already they saw the masses of the converted from the Gentile world knocking at their doors for admission; this yet unbuilt city in the wilderness was to be the Lord's dwelling-place on earth, and to Him here, from

every nation on the globe, sinners were to come flocking, whose future glory would add to the brightness of His kingdom here and swell His kingdom in heaven.

From their stronghold in the mountains they were to reach out and grasp the whole world. “The fullness of the earth” was to be the Lord's through them. Like the Covenanters of old, they might have sung—

“For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!
Thou hast made Thy children mighty
By the touch of the mountain sod.
Thou hast placed the Ark of Refuge
Where the spoiler's foot ne'er trod;
For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our fathers' God.”

In spite of all that this devoted people had passed through, they still believed they were the “Chosen of God,” to whom it was given to “build the waste places of Zion, and make the desert blossom as the rose.”

There was general rejoicing when at last the camp at Weber's River was broken, and we were again on our way. The spirit of prophesy broke loose and fairly run riot among the leaders. The “Promised Land” was near, the “City of Refuge” for the weary-footed Saints was nearly reached, where God Himself would cheer his people. The rest of

122 THE REST AT LAST.

the journey was accomplished quickly; lagging footsteps hastened and heavy hearts grew light as they neared the Mormon Canaan. It was destined not to be a land overflowing with milk and honey, but they had little care for that, when, on the 20th of September, 1848, they reached the Salt Lake Valley, and were welcomed to the Fort by the little band who had preceded them into the wilderness. They were travel-stained and weary; but here was home at least—the “Zion” of their hopes.



CROSSING THE PLAINS—JOURNEYING ZIONWARD