

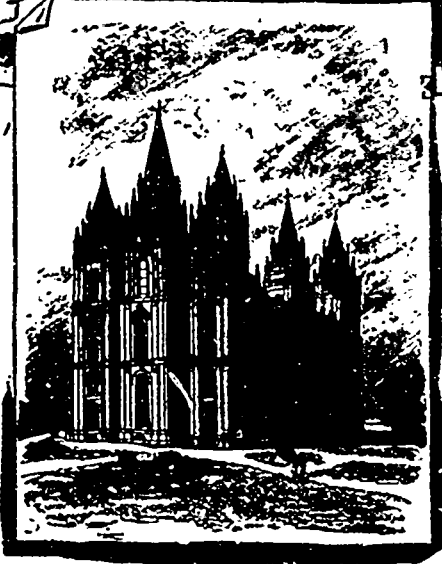
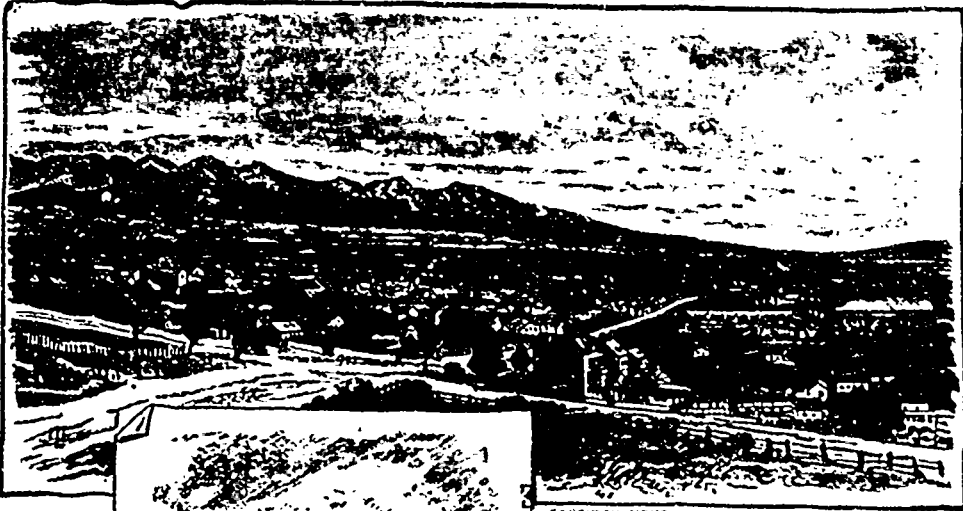
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SALT LAKE CITY.

STREET IN SALT LAKE CITY.

THE VALLEY AND CITY OF THE GREAT SALT LAKE.

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On the afternoon of a bright spring day, some years ago, four travellers were making their way into the chief city of the Latter-day Saints—the Mormon New Jerusalem. The party consisted of the late Rev. Dr. Punshon, the distinguished divine, whose splendid gifts and widespread popularity gave us ready access to every social circle and to every source of information; J. Herbert Mason, Esq., the able manager of one of the principal monetary institutions of Toronto; Rev. Manly Benson, the well-known and indefatigable pastor of Central Methodist Church, Bloor Street, and the writer of this sketch. The day had been one of rare delight. We had been two days ascending the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, and had now made an abrupt and quick descent into this valley of the mountains. From snow-capped peaks we had entered a deep and rocky ravine, thirty miles in length, and only a few yards in width, with a mountain wall on one side and precipitous overhanging cliffs on the other. Through the courtesy of the conductor we had ridden on the locomotive, or in the box-car, all the way down this Echo Canyon, and enjoyed to the full the scenery of the sublimest of mountain passes. From Echo we had entered Weber Canyon, another glorious pass, hewn by Nature through the living rocks. On we had rolled past the Devil's Gate, where the Weber River goes leaping and dashing and foaming against high masses of rock, as though, buffeted from mountain to mountain so long, it would rise up in its angry strength and cleave the huge barrier from base to summit to cut for itself a channel to the sea. Still on we swept through tunnels, over bridges, between overhanging cliffs, waking the thundering echoes as we sped along; into rocky cuts and out of them, until we were beginning to wonder if ever we should have a safe escape from this wild and weird descent, when, lo! as by a sort of sudden surprise, the canyon widened into a lovely valley, and our eyes were gazing with bewildered delight upon one of the purest and most

perfect landscapes which this whole earth can show. We had entered Salt Lake Valley. The Utah Railway, owned by the Mormons, conducted us from Ogden, the terminus of the Union Pacific Railway, to Salt Lake City. The ride through that valley, completely shut in by natural barriers, was indeed charming. Everywhere were seen the changes which these working saints had wrought, for as by miracle they have taken this uninhabited waste and transformed it from savage barrenness into a garden—a wonder of the earth, the home of a thriving people. All that this valley of alkali and dwarf sage-brush needed was water to make it bud and blossom; and as we rode along we could see channels cut from the snow-peaks down into the farms, and catch the gleam of rills glancing down the hillsides, and meandering through fields and vineyards. Flocks of sheep dotted the terraced slopes and dwelling-houses stood on every side.

I was seated beside a Mormon Elder who had one of his homes in Ogden, and was going down to Salt Lake to spend a little time with two of his wives living there. His youngest wife was the teacher of Brigham Young's school of children. We engaged in conversation. I found him very communicative and interesting. He had come into this valley with the Mormon exodus from Council Bluffs, in 1845, and he told me the

sufferings and privations as the weary caravan dragged its way over the mountains to the borders of this great inland sea. He told me how sterile was the land and how dreary and forlorn the prospect. But brawny arms and strong muscles had turned the verdurous and desolate place into a land flowing with milk and honey.

I shall never forget our first saunter through that embowered city. The air

was soft and sweet, southern in its odour, northern in its freshness. The clear, pellucid waters of the mountain-brooks sparkled and rippled in the sunshine as they murmured along on each side of the broad avenues, shaded with acacias. The grand snow-capped mountains, brought near, so near, by the wondrous purity of the atmosphere, displayed every cleft and undulation in their bosoms, while their peaks and sides were draped with floating clouds as soft and white as the snow that wreathed them. Lower down in the valley a golden haze was steeping everything in its own delicious light. We started at once for the Mormon holy place—Temple Block, as it is called—in which are situated the new tabernacle, with its rounded roof looking like a huge oval dish-cover, and the Temple, then in process of erection.

This Temple is as dear and sacred to the Mormons as the Temple of the Lord to the ancient Jew, or St. Peter's to the Papist, or the Pagoda of the Sacred Bull, with its roof of burnished gold, to the Hindu. The Tabernacle, which appears in the general view of the city, like a great meat platter for the Titans, with its oval cover, is two hundred and fifty feet long by one hundred and fifty wide, and will seat an audience of ten thousand. At the west end stand the great organ and choir, and in front of these are circular rows of seats for the church dignitaries, and the stands from which they address the audience.

Some of the houses of this unique capital are of goodly size and style, but

they are for the most part cottages, built of adobe (sun-dried bricks), and stand back some thirty feet from the road side, in trim little gardens, bowered with trees, and smothered with roses and creepers; and the whole city, which covers a space of three thousand acres, appears from a distant view like a vast park, with sylvan bowers, gardens, fruit trees and running streams of water from the mountainsides.

The famous view of Salt Lake is from Camp Douglas, which is situated on one of the benches that rise as clearly cut as the steps of a temple. The famed prospects of Europe cannot excel it, and it resembles the view of Lombardy Plains and the distant Alps from the pinnacles of the Cathedral at Milan. Around you are mountain ranges blazing in the brilliancy of a thousand variegated tints; before you a valley of sensuous beauty, sending back from its bosom the rays of sunshine in colours, shapes and shadows that paint and pencil never realized; the city of these Latter-day Saints sleeping in the vast cradle of the brightly tinted valley, southward the lake itself, with its amplitudes of blue, whose bosom, placid and motionless, glowed like a sheet of burnished gold, while farther beyond, the rose-pink hue of mountains on a sea-coloured sky loomed up like sleeping giants from the mystic background. The air is wonderfully pure. The sky over head has an infinite depth and distance, and the vapoury gold of the atmosphere, as it floats over the lake and valley in a languid dream, contracts beautifully with the intense blue of the cloudless azure and the rosy surfaces of the encircling hills.

This new religion is a sort of Judaism galvanized into the mockery of life and adapted to this century. Its physical circumstances are a copy of the Jewish, and these American saints have founded their Jerusalem in a holy land wonderfully like the ancient Judea. "Look," said Colonel Morrow the general officer of the United States forces, as we stood on the commanding elevation at the Camp, "look at the resemblance. There is the Dead Sea, for it has no outlet and no life. Over yonder is Lake Utah, which ought to be called the Lake of Tiberias, a body of fresh water emptying into it by a river called Jordan. And there beyond stands Nebo."

It is wonderful, the numbers that have come from Europe to this New Canaan. As we were being shown through the Temple and sacred places in Temple Block, the custodian said to me, "Isn't that Morley Punshon?" I answered, "Yes, how do you know him?" "Oh," he answered, "I have often heard him preach in England." I asked whether he had come as a convert and pilgrim to this land. He assured me that he had. I inquired how he had made the journey over the mountains. And his laconic reply was, "Walloping bulls"—meaning that he had driven over an ox-team.



SALT LAKE, UTAH.