

## WILLIAM HORSLEY

We have chosen the writing of William Horsley as a beginning to the emigrant pioneer histories. The fact that it is his own words makes his writing interesting and valuable.

I was born at Soham, Cambridgeshire, England on 20 November 1842. My parents were in good circumstances and nothing of any note troubled or disturbed the peace of our happy family until the spring of 1849, when the Latterday Saints, or Mormons, as they were commonly called, made their appearance in town and began holding meetings and preaching the gospel as taught by our Savior when he was here on earth.

My mother, on hearing about the Mormon missionaries, attended their meetings and became very much impressed with the truth of the message they bore. Her growing interest in the newly established church brought forth bitter anger and countless reproaches against her, not only from my father but from her parents as well. They thought she was bringing great disgrace upon the family and my father became so enraged about it that he brought our former minister to talk with her, and together they labored long and diligently to persuade Mother to retrace her steps and leave the detestable doctrine alone.

The minister's efforts were all to no purpose, however, for Mother continued her attendance at the meetings and very soon she became a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. At this, the anger of my father and also my mother's parents knew no bounds, and they insisted that she either stop going to the meeting of the Saints or seek another home.

The cruel choice between religion and home and husband now lay before my mother and must have proven a very trying one to her aching heart. Her faith in the hereafter, however, proved stronger than all earthly ties, for she clung with tenacity to the doctrine she had embraced and knew to be right.

Previous to this time, my father and mother had lived together in perfect happiness, peace and quietness prevailing in our home; but now, oh how sadly were things to change! My father, in his uncontrollable rage, beat and abused the wife he had loved so tenderly before and for no other reason except her belief in the truth of the gospel as taught by what he considered the horrid Mormons. "Join anything, but keep away from them!" he would often say, his bitterness against them was so great.

I had great cause to love and respect my mother, as every child should do, and often wept at seeing her beaten and otherwise cruelly treated by my father. Daily his anger grew more intense, until one morning in a fit of rage he commanded her either to renounce the Church forever or leave the house. Upon her refusal to comply with the former, he opened the door, and with her entreaties ringing in his ears, shoved her into the street, a homeless outcast.

Poor Mother, with a baby in her arms, and myself, the oldest, clinging to her skirts, bent her steps towards my grandfather's, leaving the other child, the youngest brother, with Father. My grandparents having always been very kind, we felt assured of a welcome from them; judge, therefore, of the bitter disappointment when we met nothing but angry reproaches and were refused even the shelter of the house. This was a sad blow to my grief stricken mother, with two little children and no place to lay her head. Turned like a criminal from the doors that should receive her with such gladness, we felt downcast indeed. No one seemed to have any sympathy for us, as but few had possessed sufficient courage to join the Church, even though their convictions pointed toward that channel, on account of the bitterness existing against it.

My mother at length found shelter for the night with a family who had joined the Church, and all who have been placed in like circumstances will understand

with what gratitude it was accepted. My mother now had no one except her Heavenly Father and her own weak efforts to rely on: accordingly, early the next morning, with me by her side and the babe held closely in her arms, she turned her steps toward the city of London, to seek, as many have done before and since, in its crowded thoroughfares, in stifling shops or well filled factories, a penny to buy a loaf of bread. I remember how I pleaded with her, between my sobs, and with tearful eyes, not to go to London where we might starve, but to return to my father and live as we had done previous to our trouble. Her answer was, "No, my boy, never will I give up what I believe to be the truth. No, not for all the homes of this world."

In due time, after many hardships, we reached the great city with its throngs of people, many of whom seemed to be in as sad a plight as we were, without friends or money. Mother had three sisters living there, all in good circumstances and amply able to aid us without the least inconvenience. After some little search they were found; but as letters from my grandparents had imparted the home news and bitterness as well, we found no welcome, but from each place were coldly turned away. Not knowing what to do with two children in a large city, Mother at least persuaded one of her sisters to give me shelter until she was able to provide a home for me. To see her and my little brother going away was a great trial for me and filled my heart with unspeakable grief, but there was no help for it.

Mother wandered about several days, living very poorly, obtaining a little food as best she could, until she obtained work at a tailoring establishment. Although the pay was small and the hours that she sat at her needlework very long and tedious, it was more than acceptable, as it furnished support for herself and little one. In all this trouble, the Lord blessed her with a cheerful heart, and she toiled diligently on fixing up her little room to be quite comfortable and homelike. After a few weeks had slipped away, to my great joy she told me to share her humble lodging, which was poor indeed compared with the home Father had made for us, but we felt very happy in it.

I soon wanted to help my mother, thinking it probable that I might do something to lighten her labors, so one day we started out to search for a situation for me. After looking for some time, we saw a card in a shop window reading, "A boy wanted." When we applied, the proprietor looked at me and smiled, saying I was too small, but he gave me a penny. After trying several places, Mother obtained a situation for me at a stationer's. My duty there was to watch the news stand outside from eight o'clock in the morning until eight o'clock in the evening for the sum of two shillings and six pence per week, sixty cents, Mother to board and clothe me. I can assure you, though, I felt very proud to take my week's wages home to my mother, small as the amount was. I was not alone in my pride, for well do I remember how the tears ran down her dear face as she kissed me and said, "God bless you, my boy." I think that was one of the happiest evenings of my life.

About this time a branch of the Mormon Church was established at Great Cambridge Street, Hackney Road, London, called the Hagerston Branch, and again my mother had the privilege of meeting with those of her own faith. This caused her to feel more cheerful and happy but soon trouble arose anew. My father made his appearance in London and began to harass and annoy Mother constantly, trying to persuade her to renounce the doctrines he so detested and to return with him to their home. As she persistently refused, her persecutions became almost unbearable, until one day he tried to take me to my old home by force. I made a vigorous protest against this indignity and, with my mother's assistance, came

off victorious. The affair caused me much trouble of mind, for as yet a little spark of love and respect for my father remained, and it seemed very strange that my parents, who once lived happily together in our village home, should now be enemies.

Mother became very much alarmed lest Father again try to take me away, and it was a source of great anxiety, as I had become her great friend, companion and helper. She, therefore, sought for me other employment, finding it at a drugstore. My duty here consisted in keeping the place clean, running errands, and sometimes working at the mortar. I found it an agreeable change, my hours shorter, the work less tedious, and my remuneration sixpence more per week. My master also made me little presents of clothing that I might appear neat and tidy in the shop. I worked at this place for some time. My master was very kind to me, and I became much attached to him. By some means, my father again learned of my whereabouts, and though I did not like to leave, Mother thought it safest for me to change.

I next commenced to work at a tailoring establishment on Bishopgate Street as an errand boy, getting the same wages as formerly. My master soon increased my wages to three shillings and sixpence, for which I was extremely grateful. The lady of the house was also kind and good, often giving me a basket with nice food in to take home to my mother, and occasionally articles of clothing that were found very useful.

About this time, my mother became desirous that I should be baptized, after talking to me on the subject, and at last arrangements were made with Brother Owens, president of the Hagerston Branch, who baptized me. This was in April, 1853.

Mother was still afraid of Father's taking me away from her, and one day asked me how I would like to go to Utah. The idea was a very pleasant one, as I thought it would be fine to ride on the train and the ship such a long, long way, little dreaming of the hardships I would have to pass through and of the lonesome time away from Mother in a strange land. I readily signified my desire to go, and Mother immediately began saving as much from her earnings as we could possibly spare to pay my fare. Many sacrifices were required before the desired amount was obtained, and when it was finally accomplished and our goal within reach, Mother's heart failed her at the thought of separation. In despair she would say, "My boy, I cannot let you go after all. I may never see you again." Then she would cheer up and say, "We shall not long be parted. I shall soon follow you."

In the spring of 1855, arrangements were made with a gentleman who was leaving with a company of Saints to take care of me. At length the time had arrived for me to take leave of my mother and go alone over the stormy sea. On the morning of April 6, 1856, after a sad farewell, I boarded the train from Euston Station for Liverpool and on the twelfth of the same month we sailed on the Samuel Curling for New York, landing in safety after a voyage of thirty one days. We traveled by rail to Pittsburg, from there to St. Louis by boat, then to Atchison or Mormon Grove, as it was then more commonly called. The city of Atchison, Kansas, with its fine buildings, as it now stands, could hardly be associated in one's mind with the wild timbered country we saw then. We left the grove early in July, the company consisting of thirty four wagons drawn by oxen. Moses Thurston was captain of the group.

I found it very hard crossing the Plains and began to think more seriously of Mother and my brother in London, almost wishing I was back with them, though many of the bretheren were very kind to me. On September 19 we arrived in Salt Lake City. The brother I came out with moved into the county north, leaving me in the city; however, I fell into good hands. Brother George Openshaw, who lived in the Nineteenth Ward, took me in for the winter and was indeed kind to me, though I

was too small to help him much. That year the grasshoppers had taken nearly everything, so he had very little for his own family, but as long as the flour lasted I shared it with them. Very often we went hungry, living for days on the few segos we could dig on the bench. Not very nourishing to a famishing boy, they were nevertheless highly acceptable when nothing else could be obtained. I well remember one day, as I was digging over the potato patch to see if I could find some potatoes that had been overlooked and lain all winter, when I heard someone calling me. I looked up and saw Mrs. John Haslam, a neighbor, who was motioning for me to go to her. To my great surprise and unspeakable joy, she gave me two large slices of bread and some meat! None but those who have suffered the gnawing pangs of hunger can realize how delicious was the taste of that food. It was the most thankfully received of any present I was ever given.

Thoughts of Mother, brother and home now began to crowd thick and fast on my lonely little heart, and many a night my pillow was wet with tears as visions of the happy fireside and well filled table of the days long past floated through my mind. I had grown thin for want of food; my clothing had become nothing but rags; my feet had been bare for months, and I must indeed have been a pitiable sight.

Brother Openshaw, not being able to care for me longer himself, now advised me to go and see if Bishop Hunter could find me a place. So one morning early in April I started out, but when I had proceeded as far as the south east corner of the temple block, the sense of my desolate position came over me so strongly that I lost all courage and sat down unable to control my sobs or keep back the blinding tears. How I wished I could write to Mother and tell her of my misery, my rags, and the gnawing, biting hunger that almost consumed every other thought! But no, even that comfort was denied, as I had never learned to write, being too young while our home was happy and united, and having to help earn my bread at the age I should have been in school. Perhaps this was a blessing after all, because the knowledge of my sufferings would have only added to her already weighty burden of trouble.

While I sat there, Brother John B. Maiben, who knew Mother and myself in England, came along and inquired the cause of my distress. I related my story to him and he took me home, provided me with a good breakfast and kindly told me as I departed that if I found no other home, his would be open to me. I wandered back to the Nineteenth Ward and it being a warm day I sat down on the ditchbank on account of a great uncertainty which way to direct my steps, and began amusing myself. I had not been there long when a man who was ploughing in a lot close by called to me and inquired what was my name and why I sat there so disconsolately. I told him my condition, and in broad Scottish words he said, "Well mun, come awa o'er the fence, an' tak' thy stick and drive the cattle for me." I complied with alacrity, and when noon came he told his "gude" wife all about the "boy." After a consultation, they informed me I could stay with them, as they had corn bread and milk in plenty. In the fall, however, he became dissatisfied and went back to Iowa.

Once more I felt friendless and alone, the longing to hear from my mother coming with renewed vigor. Was she dead, sick or in trouble, that she did not send me one word of love or comfort? These questions racked me sorely, but no word came until the spring of 1857, when my mother advertised for me in the Deseret News. She also spoke to a gentleman coming out to look me up and write to her of my whereabouts. This he did, but it proved of no benefit to me, as he and his family were very unkind, often abusing me.

I had to labor very hard, early and late, getting no remuneration whatever. My own clothing was by this time completely exhausted, and the wardrobe he furnished

was not very extensive, consisting of a jeans cap, factory shirt of curious color and make and an old pair of my master's pants with the bottoms cut off, and the whole completed with a leather belt around my waist in place of suspenders. I possessed only one shirt, so was forced to retire to my couch when it was washed. Thus poorly clad, I had to go alone to the canyon for wood, with an old pair of shoes on my sockless feet.

One day I went to Red Butte Canyon for a load of wood that the man I stayed with had bargained to sell to someone in another part of the city. While I was gone, it both rained and snowed, so that when I arrived at the place I was to deliver the wood, I was in a very sorry plight, drenched to the skin by the rain and suffering intensely from the cold. The gentleman who received the wood looked at me with pity and asked me if I had been sent to the canyon in that condition. I told him I had. After the wood was unloaded, he said, "Take the cattle home and feed them, then come back to me and I will see what I can do for you." Needless to say, I readily complied. I thought any change could not be a worse one. He proved a friend indeed, furnishing me with respectable clothing and shoes, as soon as he could get them, besides giving me the best home I had known for a long time. The family was kind to me, and I felt very comfortable and as happy as it was possible to be, when so far away from a mother and dear ones.

It was in the spring of the year that the people moved south, and the city for a time was almost deserted, only a guard of a few hundred men being left in readiness to burn everything in case of necessity. My friend, being a prominent businessman with interests in the city, did not move his family away, and I stayed with them for company.

One day while in the garden, we heard great cheering and commotion on another street, now known as First South, about Fourth East. The lady became very much alarmed, fearing the soldiers had suddenly come into the city, so I quickly ran to ascertain the cause of the disturbance and relieve her anxiety. Upon arriving at the corner, I saw about one hundred men on horseback, with a train of pack animals. The men were in civilian clothes, so I stopped until they rode up, when I recognized among them Brother William Kimball, whom I had known in London. To my unutterable joy, he had a letter from my mother! I learned then that my mother was well, and also, news that made me sad in spite of what had happened, the death of my father. Farther on, the letter from my mother said, "I expect to go to Boston sometime during the summer." This was the crowning of my joy. It seemed too good to be true. I said it to myself over and over again in a paroxysm of delight.

The trouble with the government was settled shortly after this, and people moved back from the south. Food and clothing became more plentiful, and times brightened up considerably. The family I resided with took great pains to teach me to read and write, also a little about arithmetic. I lived thus very happily with them until the fall of 1860, when my mother came to the valley, and I had the great pleasure of again seeing her dear face and being reunited with my two brothers. This was to me one of the most joyful occasions of my life. Shortly after, Mother moved north to the Weber River, where she had friends, and I hired out there for the year. In the spring, however, she moved back into Salt Lake, thinking she would be more likely there to get work at her trade. The man I was working for went to Box Elder County about this time, where I accompanied him, remaining until the spring of 1864, when I was called to drive a team across the Plains. I afterward worked for President Woodruff for three months, at the expiration of which time the man I had gone north with came after me, and I returned to Box Elder County with him, working out by the year.

In the spring of 1867, after a happy courtship in which the old, old story

became new again, I married Miss Elizabeth Welch. We lived in a little log house on some land I rented. My furniture was rather scant, as everything was so high priced at this time. The Lord blessed me with a good wife, however, who was both economical and industrious, and we struggled on in unity and contentment for a few years, when I built a log house on my own land, hauling the logs and doing most of the work myself. It was indeed a great pleasure when we first became ensconced in our neat little home with our three healthy boys around us, and we felt that Providence had favored us.

The first ten years of married life I spent at farming, and at the end of that period was called by President Snow of Brigham City to travel with my team to buy produce and sell groceries in the interest of the Brigham City Co-op. I hesitated considerably at the idea of this, because it looked like making a peddler of myself, the very thought of which was extremely distasteful to me. I tried to induce President Snow to release me, but all to no purpose, so I laid the matter before my mother, soliciting her advice. Her answer was, "I do not like to see you make a 'hawker' of yourself, but I believe, my boy, I would try; all will come out right in the end."

Accordingly, I began the necessary preparations, and in a few days actually started out. The first day was a very sorry one for a beginning, as I had only taken in twenty cents. I started home, disgusted with my occupation, determined to find Brother Snow and resign at once. When he had heard me through, he remarked, "Well, which would you rather do, take a mission in your native land or continue on with this?" "The mission in my native land," I replied quickly. "Ah, well," he said, "try this first, and the mission afterward."

I again started out, but felt very disheartened and indifferent about it, not caring if the results were satisfactory or not, thinking I would soon be relieved of what I considered a very unenviable position. Before long, however, I began to see that it was of no avail to shirk my duty, so I began in earnest. Although I found it rather uphill work, my not having any education except the little I had picked up now and then, the Lord prospered me, and in three years I was put in superintendent of the co-operative store in Brigham City. I remained there seven years, giving, I believe, entire satisfaction to my employers.

I was called from here in the fall of 1884 to a two year mission to England. Accordingly, I put my affairs in order, resigned my position, and bidding a sad farewell to my wife, four sons and two daughters, I left my dear, comfortable home and started to preach the gospel. I felt keenly the parting from my dearly loved wife and little ones, also from my mother, whose health was not very good on account of a paralytic stroke she had suffered the spring before. But she was very proud, she said, to see me go back to her friends with the glad message of life and salvation. I very much feared, not with standing her cheerfulness, our "goodbye" would be one for life, though I hoped for the best.

After a pleasant journey of some sixteen days, we landed in Liverpool on October 29, 1884, where we met Brother John H. Smith at the old quarter, 42 Islington Street. It was a cold, wet, dreary day and looked rather cheerless to a homesick missionary. After a sojourn of one night at the office, I was assigned to labour in the London conference, and immediately left that place. On arriving at London, I was given the privilege of visiting my relatives. The old time bitterness against the Mormons still existed, the only difference being in the positions I occupied, and with myself. The first time I had gone with my mother to plead for shelter; now I came independent, but as a minister of the doctrines they held in such abhorrence. We had a very pleasant visit, talking over old times, but my relatives would not listen to a word of the gospel as taught by the Latter-Day Saints and they strictly enjoined me to leave no books lying around for fear some of the servants might see they were sheltering a Mormon, which they

felt would prove a great disgrace.

After visiting the scenes of my boyhood and my native town, I started my labors in the Berts and Wilts district, where I had been assigned, all alone. At first I felt very much my inability to accomplish anything of worth in this vast field, so I sincerely prayed to the Lord to bless me with his spirit and fit and prepare me for this great and noble work. The Lord heard my prayers and truly blessed me, inasmuch as I was the means, in his hands, of bringing many an honest heart to the knowledge of the truth, some of whom are now happily settled in their own homes here in the valleys of the mountains.

After I had been absent a little over two years, I was released from my mission and returned home. I found my family all well and prospering, but my dear mother had died fifteen months before my return.