

SELTZER SALTS SAINTS

"I remember sometime back, in the late nineties, I guess it was, the brethren sent Brother J. Golden Kimball up to help us get the Mutual Improvement Association better organized in some of the smaller wards clear out in the valley. He had been assigned for sometime as one of the general authorities working with the young people. He was about the best liked man in the Church, but he had some shortcomings and was sometimes chided by the brethren when he wasn't too particular about his language. He was tall and lanky and spoke with a high pitched squeaky voice. If he'd had a wart on his face he'd have been about as handsome as Abraham Lincoln. But there was nothing uppity or high falutten about J. Golden, and he was a plain talker."

Just prior to the arrival of the visitor from headquarters, there had been some concern throughout the Church over the widespread and increasing use of seltzer salts as a remedy for stomach upset. Since it could be purchased in small bottles many people had become accustomed to carrying it in purse or pocket for convenience sake. The fact that it contained a bromide as well qualified it as a sedative and as treatment for headaches.

Some were admittedly becoming addicted to its use and it was at this point that instruction from Salt Lake had been received concerning the matter. It was strongly recommended that the people cease this pernicious habit and keep their bottles on the shelf of the cupboard. the contents "to be used sparingly and with judgment and skill."

Clem had had his bout with the seltzer bottle but had given up carrying it around with him in keeping with the admonition. Still, there were times when for his stomach's sake, he wished he had a dose handy. In anticipation of just such a possibility, he decided to make an exception to his new rule and take the seltzer along on the overnight journey with Brother Kimball out to Snowville. The trip had to be made with horses and carriage and was a tiresome. all-day journey through desolate country.

The two men were accompanied by two ladies representing the women's branch of the organization. In keeping with the custom of theirs, the men-folks furnished the 'transportation and the ladies brought the food for a noon lunch. At about the half-way point in the journey Clem pulled off to the side of the road where they could take advantage of the shade of a lonely tree.

The meal was finished and they were preparing to resume their journey when one of the horses suddenly began to convulse. Very soon the animal was lying on the ground in the harness, writhing and groaning. In all his experience with horses, Clem had never before seen a case of colic to equal this one. In a matter of minutes it had bloated almost beyond belief.

"That's the damndest thing I've ever seen," said Brother Kimball remembering too late the presence of the ladies. He apologized immediately and the sisters nodded as though they assumed that such a predicament called for strong language.

After about an hour of waiting with no apparent help coming on the road from either direction, Brother Kimball observed that the horse seemed to be in the last throes. One of the sisters suggested a word of prayer, and Clem agreed. He prayed not for a miracle 'but for the Almighty to give them the good sense to know what to do for the tormented beast.

In a few minutes it was clear that there was no change in the horse's condition and the other horse was getting spooky in the harness with all the goings on. Clem said, "we can't dilly dally another minute, we've got to do something" With that he proceeded to unhitch the other horse and lead it away from its distressed team mate. As he brushed against the leg of the horse he felt the seltzer bottle in his pocket and suddenly he had an idea. Without attempting to justify it in the least, he took the bottle "from his pocket and showed it to his companions. It might not be enough to do any good, but if, perchance, any of the others had a bottle too, that might do the trick. Brother Kimball happened to have one in his valise, and by strange coincidence each of the ladies was able to produce a bottle from her purse.

Using his leg for leverage, and by sheer exertion, Clem was able to hold up the horse's head and keep its mouth open while Brother Kimball poured the contents of four seltzer bottles as far into the throat as possible and added all the water that was left to wash it down. Then they waited for a few minutes in anticipation of the combined results of meditation and medication.

"All at once there was a powerful eruption like the collapse of a big balloon, and the wind and the noise that went out of that horse was more than a fellow can talk about. He was up on his legs in no time and I hitched up the other horse and we were on our way before he changed his mind again. He was stepping lively and we were already a good piece down the road before I realized I'd have to hold him in for the sake of the other horse.

Everyone was quiet for a spell and then I remember Brother Kimball saying 'Hell, after what it did to that horse I'll never buy another damned bottle of seltzer again as long as I live.' And come to think of it I haven't either."