

U. S. House, New York

IN THE SAGE BRUSH COUNTRY

*BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE SNAKE
RIVER VALLEY MISSION IN THE
DISTRICT OF LARAMIE*

THE Missionary District of Laramie was created by the General Convention in 1898. It includes the western part of the State of Nebraska and the eastern part of the State of Wyoming.

The Bishop is the Right Reverend Anson R. Graves, D.D., consecrated Missionary Bishop of the Platte, as the western part of the State of Nebraska was then called in 1890.

STATISTICS

Clergy: including the Bishop, 26.
Parishes and Missions: 90.
Communicants: 2,172.
Baptisms, last year: 323.
Confirmations: 277.
Sunday-school scholars: 4,475.
Contributions: \$27,717.23.

Most of the clergy care for several missions, and one has as many as 13 in charge. On a recent visitation of 12 days he travelled 360 miles; made 100 calls and held 16 services. Much of the travelling is done by stage and wagon, sometimes a drive of 40 miles or more being necessary.

LARAMIE'S NEEDS

Men: One man particularly for the mission described in this leaflet, the present missionary having volunteered for service in the foreign field.

Money to develop the present work. The appropriation for Laramie is at present \$7,000 including the Bishop's salary and travelling expenses and \$300 from the Woman's Auxiliary United Offering.

THIS pamphlet may be obtained from the CORRESPONDING SECRETARY, 281 Fourth Avenue, NEW YORK, by calling for Pamphlet No. 932. ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

D All offerings for MISSIONS should be sent to MR. GEORGE C. THOMAS, Treasurer, Church Missions House, 281 Fourth Avenue, NEW YORK. ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

D THE DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES, 281 Fourth Avenue, NEW YORK. ♦ ♦ ♦

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The Spirit of Missions

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"I take this occasion to say how improved The SPIRIT of MISSIONS seems to me to be and how much interesting and well selected matter it contains."

—ALFRED T. MAHAN, Captain United States Navy.



KANE'S RANCH, WHERE THE MISSIONARY LIVES

In the Sage Brush Country

THE SNAKE RIVER MISSION IN THE DISTRICT OF LARAMIE—A VALLEY WITH
OUT A CHURCH—HOW A WYOMING RANCHMAN STARTED A MISSION—
WANTED, SOMETHING TO REPLACE THE SALOON—EIGHT-YEAR OLD COWBOYS

A SEVENTY mile drive through a sage brush country is a fine lesson in patient endurance.

Throughout its course, there is but one thing to be seen through the clouds of dust, and that is sage brush. Before, behind, everywhere, are the dull green bushes with not a spear of grass to relieve the monotony. After such a journey, the little, snake-like patch of green which meets the eye on reaching the Snake River Valley is a most welcome relief. The only stream of any importance in the distance of 200 miles, Snake River, winds its crooked way through a narrow valley, rarely more than half a mile wide, from the Great Divide down through the Red Desert to its junction with Bear River.

A most unlikely place to find settlers—one is surprised to find every foot of available ground taken and every acre made productive by an immense outlay in irrigation ditches. From Three Forks to Sand Creek, the whole valley is given to the raising of hay for winter feeding, principally timothy and alfalfa. The dark green of these, with the bright yellow of the oat fields, makes an attractive contrast with the sage brush of the hills. It is not strange, therefore, that we find gathered in this narrow valley every one whose cattle or sheep are ranged on the hills to the north or south. The climate, too, is delightful. Never hot in summer, the valley is protected from the possibility of blizzards in winter by the high mountains on either side.

Owing to these causes, the valley is as closely settled as an eastern state, and here, seventy miles from the nearest rail-

young cattle are fed, having been collected into the different ranches, but the steers are driven off to the desert, where the snow is light and the pasturage is sufficient to carry them through the winter.

If the cattle need little care, it is far different with the sheep. Herders are employed to be with them constantly. The herders live in comfortable wagons, fitted up with a bed, cook stove, and many conveniences for which you would not imagine room could be found. The sheep must be kept together and guarded from coyotes and wolves.

The valley has a cosmopolitan community, including many Englishmen. The wild, free country seems very attractive to them, and they are uniformly successful when they avoid the saloons.

Mormons are here in considerable numbers. Most of them have broken away from the organization, but the other settlers are very suspicious of them.



THE MAIN STREET OF THE TOWN BAGGS

road station—Rawlins, Wyoming, on the Union Pacific—we find a wide-awake, enterprising community.

The business interests of the valley are centred in the raising of cattle and sheep. All have heard of the strife between the cattle and sheep men, which is caused by the fact that sheep crowd cattle off a range. In this valley the matter is amicably settled in the following manner. The river follows the State line very closely, and the sheep men are allowed the range north of the river, while the cattle range south in Colorado.

The cattle need comparatively little care. During the summer they range at will over the mountains, where they find abundant fodder. In July, the cowboys scour the range in search of cattle which are in condition for shipment. These are gathered in the round-up, driven across country to Rawlins and shipped to Omaha. In the winter the cows and



FEEDING SHEEP IN THE SNAKE RIVER VALLEY

The sheep-herders are, to a large extent, Mexicans. By far the largest part of the people came from Missouri. Many of them either served in the Confeder-

ate Army or their families were ruined by the endless succession of armies passing back and forth. These men found an asylum here away from the world, and in their solitude have found success. The settlers are men of thrift, and there are but few poor people to be found. There are three small towns or supply depots and post-offices. There are seven school districts, each with one teacher. From a worldly point of view the valley is in a flourishing condition.

Four years ago, Mr. J. Cambreth Kane, an Irish ranchman, who had lived in the valley twelve years, was, in some

fore entering our ministry. After his arrival, he found many of the people suspicious of our Church, and one morning calmly announced that he was now a Methodist minister. His character, as revealed by this action, gradually showed itself in business matters, and he was compelled to withdraw. It is very hard to estimate what a setback the mission received from this first failure, especially among those opposed to all mission work.

The following summer, the Rev. William Toole, a graduate of Seabury Divinity-school, came out to try to re-



ON THE WAY TO KEEP APPOINTMENTS

way, brought back to his early religious life, and determined to start church services. For, strange to say, though the valley is so well settled and the people are, in general, so prosperous, it does not contain a single church building, nor was there a religious work of any kind until Mr. Kane undertook his mission. He began by holding services himself, as a lay-reader. Then, obtaining a guarantee of salary from the people, he appealed to Bishop Talbot, then Bishop of Wyoming and Idaho, for help. A lay-reader was sent out from New York City, who, it would seem, was a minister of some other denomination, who was waiting the canonical time be-

establish the work. Surrounded by difficulties and harassed by suspicions on all sides, Mr. Toole toiled along for two years, and once more raised the mission to a place of esteem and confidence in the eyes of the people. In June, 1901, the Rev. Alfred A. Gilman, a graduate of the Philadelphia Divinity-school, became the missionary.

The work is one of peculiar difficulty, and yet one of great possibilities. It is the only religious work in the whole valley. Every Saturday, the missionary drives twenty-five miles east or west from Mr. Kane's ranch, his home at present. Sunday morning, he has service and sermon, either under the

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shadow of Battle Mountain, at Battle Creek, or on the edge of the desert, at Sand Creek. Then, while eating his luncheon with one hand, he urges his horses forward with the other, in order to reach Baggs or Savery, fifteen miles away, in time for an afternoon service and sermon. From this service he must hasten home to get his supper before the evening service at Dixon. During a part of the summer, the missionary was his own cook.

Other Christian organizations have recognized the propriety of leaving the work unified and have consented to give

collectors of the missionary's salary, who are necessarily numerous, owing to the extent of the parish, are two Presbyterians, one Roman Catholic, one Methodist, and one frank unbeliever.

But the hard work is in contending against the irreligious proclivities of a large number. Most of the men have been fortunate in this world's goods and a large number seem to be indifferent to the call of anything higher. They resent the coming in of the Church and, in some cases, refuse to permit their children to attend, not because it is Episcopal, but because it is religious.



BATTLE MOUNTAIN

the Church a free field. The task is before the Church of commending itself to the people.

Some conception of what this means can be gained when it is stated that not ten persons in the valley were raised in the Church. We now have twenty communicants, most of whom have no religious antecedents and two of whom are of Mormon parentage. Yet the missionary was able to name from memory 475 souls to whom he ministers in his parochial visitations. The members of the older churches, Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Presbyterians, all take an active interest in the work. The

The open opposition comes from the saloon element. It was reported that a Dixon saloon keeper would like to contribute to the church building fund. When Mr. Gilman approached him on the subject, he replied: "I believe in churches all right, but I will not give a cent to a denomination which is trying to ruin my business." If there is one blot on this valley, it is found in the saloon. The sheep-herders and cowboys come in with their hard-earned wages, perhaps the accumulation of six months. There being no other place to lounge, they drift into the saloon; after a few drinks, they are inveigled into a card



THE SCHOOL-HOUSES WHERE SERVICES ARE HELD IN THE SNAKE RIVER VALLEY MISSION

Savery
Dixon

Sand Creek
Battle Creek
Baggs

game, and in the morning they go back to the range penniless.

Through such obstacles, the work must be carried. An attempt is being made to build churches at Dixon and Baggs. Not until these are built will the mission be thoroughly established. But, after years without any church work, the people give very sparingly. They contribute \$450 a year to the missionary's salary and about \$600 have been collected in each district for the church

buildings at Baggs and Dixon. Some help must come from the outside, to insure the completion of the church buildings. Mr. Gilman also wants to erect in Dixon a log house which shall serve as a rectory and, especially, as a guest hall for sheep-herders, cowboys and ranchmen, in opposition to the saloon. The latter building would cost but \$250.

It is a work looking to the future. If the Church can be maintained in such a way that the children shall be trained

in its ways this valley will become an object lesson of great value. Many of the people are kindly disposed. They will come to the services

and bring their children, but they have not yet arrived at the point of liberal support. In fact, this generation never will learn to give largely, but with a younger generation trained up to love and revere the Church, the work here will become strong and vigorous.

The last illustration shows one of our boy men. For such are all of our boys. As soon as they can walk, they are on a horse and riding after cattle. One of my young friends will ride out with the men all day and then after supper he will crawl up into his mother's lap and go to sleep. Though babies, they must be treated like men, and the difficulty in directing their lives aright can hardly be appreciated. It is with the idea of reaching these cowboys of from eight to fifty years that the guest hall is to be erected. Strangely enough, all the people, including the cowboys, are very fond of reading, and it is believed that the establishment of a miniature club will do much to strengthen the work



THE MISSIONARY AT WORK HAULING LUMBER

ley Mission. It is to be hoped that the Church will take a sympathetic interest in this mission and that at this time funds may be forthcoming to establish the work on a solid basis.

THROUGH the kindness of the members of the Woman's Auxiliary, in Washington, in sending them a box of toys, games and pictures, the children of San Juan, connected with St. John's Mission, had an unusual treat on the Feast of the Epiphany, or "The Three Kings' Day," as it is known in Porto Rico. Under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Van Buren a festival was planned, to which 200 tickets of admission were issued. On the festival day the mission hall was crowded, as no one who had received an invitation had neglected to accept it. Great enthusiasm prevailed, and one of the men, who had brought his children, remarked to Mr. Van Buren, as he passed out: "Next year you will have to have 500."



ONE OF THE YOUTHFUL COWBOYS OF SOUTHERN WYOMING