

BY HELEN MAR WHITNEY.

Lately in looking over some of my old letters I found one written by my mother to her step-mother who, previous to marrying my Grandpa, we had learned to call by the endearing name of Aunt Fanny. She was then living in the Town of Winchester, Scott Co. Ill. She had gotten this far on her journey from Kirtland to Missouri when she heard of the Saints being driven out. Grandpa left her there to go back in company with my father to pay a visit to his children in the state of New York, where he died soon after. The letter contains items that may prove interesting to some of the old time Saints, particularly so to Bro. Evan Greene and his wife Susan whom she speaks of; his mother, as well as Aunt Fanny, were sisters to President Brigham Young. It was a daughter of Bro. Evan Greene's who first edited our WOMAN'S EXPONENT. This letter is dated "Nauvoo Feb. 16th, 1841. "Dear Mother:—I am glad to hear from you, once more that you are yet alive and as comfortable as what you are. We had anticipated much pleasure in having a visit from you this winter but in this have been disappointed. I still hope that you will come the first opportunity. I have spent this day at Bro. John P. Greene's; his children were all at home and I had a good visit with them; but there is a vacancy there, that never can be filled. I have not been there before, since the day that dear Sister Greene was buried. I regretted that you could not have come before she died, it would have been such a satisfaction to her and you too; but do not cast any reflections upon yourself about it for I am sure that you would have come had it been in your power. Sister Greene and I had many a good visit together since we came to Commerce; although her health was so poor, yet I would sit down by her bedside and we would take sweet counsel together. We often wished that you were here with us. She has now gone to rest and we have nothing to regret, but the loss of her society which is very great. She had everything for her comfort that she could have had; if Brother Greene had been worth thousands and you know he is one of the best nurses in the world; her children were all as kind as they could be, especially Rhoda; she merits praise from every beholder. I never saw such unceasing care and tenderness as she manifested for her mother during her whole sickness."

"I shall not be particular to write all the news as Evan and Susan can tell you more than I can write. * * * I have not had any news from Victor since receiving those letters which I shall forward to you by Evan. I have perused them with great satisfaction and feel perfectly reconciled and thankful that father was there instead of here. If he had died here, perhaps the children would have cast reflections upon us for fetching him to this sickly country; so I feel that it is all for the best. As for myself and family we enjoy comfortable health this winter. I received a letter from Heber last week bearing date of Dec. 12th; he and Brigham and the rest of the brethren were usually well, with the exception of George A. Smith, his lungs are so affected that he raises blood; he is not able to preach. The work is still rolling forth in mighty power and persecution increasing as the work advances. Heber says if things continue as they have for a short time past, they shall be driven from that land—Joseph has been afraid of it by the spirit and has written for them to come home in the spring. He says they will make their escape and that is all."

"I have many anxious feelings about them but try to commit them into the hands of the Lord and look forward with anticipation to the time when we shall meet and rejoice together. We have

many things to cheer and gladden our hearts while sojourning in this vale of tears. The Lord is again revealing his will to the Church through his servant Joseph; there has been a very lengthy revelation given of late concerning the building up of this place; also concerning all the different Quorums in the Church. The Lord says there has been a day of calling and now cometh a day of choosing—I understand that the revelation is to be read at the April Conference. I hope that you will be here. I must now close as I have promised Helen one page to write you."

Yours affectionately, Vilate Kimball.

On the 6th, of April 1841 the corner-stones of the Nauvoo Temple were laid which I had the privilege of witnessing,—it was a day the Saints had anxiously looked for and was ushered in by peals of artillery calling together the Nauvoo Legion consisting of fourteen companies and two volunteer companies of militia from Iowa. The military were first reviewed by Lieutenant General Joseph Smith then the procession was formed and marched to the Temple grounds in the following order, which I copy: Lieut. General Smith, Brig. Generals Law and Smith, aides-de-camp and conspicuous strangers, general staff, 2nd Cohort (infantry) ladies eight abreast, gentlemen eight abreast, 1st Cohort (cavalry.)

The oration was delivered by President Rigdon. The S. E. corner was laid by the First Presidency; the S. W., by President Don Carlos Smith and his Counselors of the High Priest Quorum; the N. W., by the High Council, representing the Twelve Apostles who were in Great Britain; and the N. E. corner by the Bishops. The vast assembly then separated, the whole having passed off in harmony and no contention or discord having appeared. A great many strangers from other parts were present on this occasion and all lost sight of their prejudices and entered into the enjoyment of it with the Saints.

On the 1st day of July my father with President Young and Brother John Taylor arrived at home from their mission; the families of the latter who were left in Montrose sick, were then living in Nauvoo on the Flat enjoying a more comfortable degree of health. My brother, who was still living at the landing was the first to meet and embrace my father. The Prophet and many more were there ready to greet and welcome them home again, Joseph would have them go home with him to dinner and William hastened home to tell us the same; we thought this almost an unkindness for it seemed so long a time to us who were waiting and watching with impatience to see him but soon we discovered a company of horsemen coming with all speed and when my mother saw them she made a hasty retreat behind the door to hide her confusion, where in a moment after father found her overwhelmed in tears. Joseph it seemed had ordered several horses to be saddled while they were eating and by the time dinner was served, which was a hasty one, the horses were at the door and he with Brother Hyrum and three or four brethren accompanied my father home. My mother felt the presence of others at such a time almost an intrusion but Brother Joseph seemed unwilling to part with my father; and from that time kept the Twelve in Council early and late, and she sometimes felt nearly jealous of him but never dreamed that he was during those times revealing to them the principles of Celestial Marriage and that her trials and sacrifices which she had flattered herself were nearly over, had scarcely begun, and they little realized the meaning of his words when he said "he was rolling off the kingdom from his own shoulders onto the shoulders of the Twelve."

A few days after their return to Nauvoo the Prophet's Brother Don Carlos Smith died, and he being an officer in the Legion as well as a freemason

he was buried with Masonic and Military rites. Those of the Masonic fraternity marched next to the family to the grave which was in a little grove at the foot of the hill south west of the Temple. My mother's baby being too sick for her to leave I went in her stead and marched with my father in the Masonic procession; and may I be pardoned for saying it, but when he gave me his arm as we started from home that Sabbath morn I felt justly proud of the honor of walking with so fine a looking gentleman as was my father and not only that, but knowing that his constant humility and faithfulness to his duty had won for him the love and confidence of the Prophet and all who knew him. Besides the sorrowing family of Bro. Don Carlos he had a host of sincere mourners and I felt deeply impressed by the grand and imposing ceremonies that I witnessed that day. The Legion and a large procession of citizens formed near the Temple, and as they marched in slow and solemn order to the house of the dead the Martial Band with muffled drum beat to the notes of a dead march.

The following from Sister E. R. Snow's Poem describes the scene:

"I gazed upon the grand procession, till
It disappear'd amid the dwellings which
Stand thickly cluster'd near the river's edge.
I listened! all was still the music notes
No longer sounded on the pensile breeze:
But hark! the notes awaken'd, and I saw
The mighty host returning with the same
Slow, melancholy tread! A hearse was borne
Along with solemn yet bold martial pomp,
That plainly signified a mournful one.
One of no ordinary rank, had fallen!"

In nature's temple with no other wall
Than the horizon, and no other arch
Than the broad canopy of heaven, shaded
With clust'ring boughs whose foliage waves around,
Is rais'd an altar to the living God!
There the procession march'd; it halted there.
And in the front of weeping relatives, I saw
The hearse of him who plac'd who there in life
Had been a fervent constant worshiper.
His arms and armor on his coffin lay,
And other swords than his lay crossing there,
His brother officers, who form'd with him
The noblest military staff our land has e'er
Columbia has to boast, were seated by,
In shining armor clad."

In the morning I remember that the sky had looked somewhat threatening but it cleared away until near the close of the service, dark clouds began to gather over the city and as the procession was again forming to follow his remains to their last resting place, the rain fell in torrents but this did not prevent us from standing by his grave while his brethren, one by one, deposited therein a green bough, as a last tribute of respect to one, whose life had been free from blemish, and whom Zion deeply mourned.

To be continued.