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A GOOD BOOK IS LIKE A GOOD NAME—BETTER THAN RICHES

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"What you young people want, is a magazine that will make a book to
be bound and kept, with something in it worth keeping."

President John Taylor.

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Clay model of Monument to the Handcart Pioneers to be erected on the
Tabernacle Block.

A MONUMENT TO THE HANDCART PIONEERS

BY ELIZABETH CANNON PORTER

What the Battle of the Marne was to the world war, the Handcart Expeditions were to western immigration. They proved a costly victory. No greater martyrs are found in history than the men who pulled the handcarts until their last day of life. These literally died in the harness. Brave allies were the women and children who trekked by their side. The survivors played their part in the "winning of the west;" the dead paid the "price of the prairie."

A monument to the handcart pioneers has been modeled by the Norwegian sculptor, Torleif S. Knaphus. This will be cast in bronze and placed on the Tabernacle grounds in Salt Lake City. Subscriptions to this have been raised by a committee of ladies of the society of the Daughters of the Handcart Pioneers. The late President Seymour B. Young was active in support of the monument. The aid of the presiding bishopric will make its completion possible.

The rough sketch in clay as I saw it at the sculptor's studio on Richards' street presented an interesting ensemble. A rickety cart, with much-worn wheels is depicted. From one side of it sags a ragged quilt, from which protrudes a frying pan. On the seat sits a small child; in the traces toils a man, bearded and inured to hardship. By his

side walks a woman, trim in sunbonnet and basque. There is also a boy and a dog.

"Do you know if they brought any dogs?" the sculptor asked me anxiously.

"I don't know," I replied, "but I think that if I had a dog, and were starting on a western trip, I'd bring him."

Mr. Knaphus presents a fine head on massive shoulders. He is about forty years of age, and already has achieved much. He had a three years' scholarship in art at Christiania, (Oslo), Norway. He afterwards studied at the Academie Julian in Paris where he took honors for his monument designs. He also spent one year at the Art League in New York.

He deprecated that he had not done more. "But," he said with a characteristic shrug of the shoulders, "one must live."

Since coming to Zion he has done notable work on the new temples. He helped decorate the beautiful temple at Hawaii, famous for its terraces and gardens. He moulded the gigantic bas relief that stands at the entrance to the temple at Cardston, depicting the Savior at the well with the woman of Samaria. He showed me a picture of the baptismal font of the Canadian temple. The heads of the oxen that support the tremendous bowl of crushed granite are interpolated with water lilies.

Sculptor Knaphus was enthusiastic over the work on the Arizona temple at Mesa. In collaboration with the artist A. B. Wright, instructor of art at the L. D. S. University, he moulded eight bas reliefs near the corners of the southern temple depicting the gathering of all nations by the gospel. Among the various groups of figures different modes of transportation are shown such as ships, Indian packhorses, Hawaiian shark fishing canoes.

The handcart migration is an epic of the west. Taken as a whole it was wonderfully successful, and made it possible for many old-world people to come to Utah who otherwise must have waited. Ten companies numbering about 4,000 people largely from England and Wales crossed the plains with handcarts in the years 1856-60. These came about a decade after Brigham Young led the first ox-cart company into the Salt Lake valley.

Says Andrew Jenson: "In the thirteenth general epistle of the First Presidency of the Church, dated Salt Lake City, October 29, 1855, the Saints were advised that an opportunity would be given to the poor to cross the plains on foot, thus saving the almost prohibitive expense of wagons and teams. A plan was outlined by which it was shown that, provided with handcarts upon which to carry their tents, food, clothing, bedding, etc., the journey might be made with safety. Provisions were made for such as, through age or infirmity, might be unable to walk, to be carried in wagons which would be sent with each company. It was also stated that, through the Perpetual



A Rough-draft Front View of Monument to the Handcart Pioneers.

Emigration Fund; those who were unable to pay the expense of the voyage across the ocean, and the journey to Iowa City, Iowa—the outfitting post—might receive assistance.”

The movement was launched at the earnest solicitation of the Saints of Europe, many of whom had despaired of ever reaching the “Promised Land.” In 1855 the crops in the Salt Lake Valley had been almost a failure, due to drought and grasshoppers. The Church was embarrassed financially and not able to purchase wagons and teams as it had done heretofore.

Five companies left Iowa City for Utah late in the season of 1856. Iowa City is 260 miles east of Omaha, and Omaha is 1,031 miles east of Salt Lake City. It took the first companies four weeks to reach Omaha, as they averaged less than ten miles a day.

The captains of companies were Edmund Ellsworth, Daniel D. McArthur, Edward Bunker, James G. Willie, and Edward Martin.

The companies of Ellsworth and McArthur made the trip successfully. They arrived at the mouth of Emigration canyon September 26, where they were joyfully received by the Saints of Utah, with feasting and acclaim; Bunker's company, composed mostly of Welsh people, was accompanied by a wagon train part of the way. They arrived October 2.

The last two companies of this season, commanded by Willie and Martin, suffered terrible hardships, largely because of the lateness of their start, and the fact that an unusually early winter set in that year. They were immigrants who arrived late in America. Because of their numbers, difficulty was experienced in providing them with handcarts.

Willie's company, which contained aged people, women, and children, reached Florence, or old Winter Quarters, August 10, where they rested a week. Levi Savage urged that they remain the winter there, but such was their zeal that they preferred to push on. In the journey across Iowa many of the wheels went to pieces. The travelers used their bacon grease as a lubricant. Despite their heavy loads, fifteen miles a day were made. Songs and laughter rang out. The handcart people had a little song of their own:

"For some must push and some must pull
As we go marching up the hill.
So merrily on the way we go
Until we reach the Valley O."

At Wood river, Nebraska, after they had gone a distance of about 172 miles, they found the plains alive with buffalo. One evening the cattle were stampeded. They had oxen to haul the tents and heavier camp equipment: each one hundred persons and twenty handcarts, five tents, and one wagon drawn by three yoke of oxen. When the cattle were rounded up thirty were missing. This left but one yoke of oxen to each wagon. •Much time was lost in trying to utilize milk cows and heifers for draft animals. As this failed they were compelled to load more supplies on the already overlaid handcarts.

At the North Bluff Fork of the Platte, they were overtaken by Elder Franklin D. Richards of the Council of the Twelve, who was returning from Europe with a party of missionaries. These pushed on ahead to have additional provisions sent to the "voyagers." At Laramie, after an advance of 522 miles, they found that they still had 509 miles to go. The ration of flour was cut from sixteen ounces down to twelve for adults. On approaching the mountains they found

them mantled in snow. The nights were cold, their seventeen pounds of clothing insufficient, and the old and feeble began to droop and die. Scarcely a camp was left in the morning without a funeral or two.

They received notification that aid was being sent. As they approached the Sweetwater they were forced to wade streams while the snow swirled around them. The sick and weak were put into the carts and pulled by the men. Says Captain Chislett: "Many pulled their carts in the morning, gave out during the day, and died before next morning. And they died with the calm fortitude of martyrs."

While toiling on to reach firewood for the nights' camp they were delighted to meet two young men, William Kimball and Stephen Taylor, sent out in the van of the supply train for their relief. The weather-beaten pilgrims greeted them effusively. That night they went into camp in the willows. In the morning they were under a foot of snow and five persons had passed from sleep to death without intervening consciousness. They were all buried in one grave. That morning they killed two of the cattle and distributed the meat. Their flour was now exhausted. They were reduced to two barrels of dry bread, some rice, a few pounds of sugar and some dried apples. Captain Willie pushed on to meet the relief train. He was gone three days, the same storm that had overwhelmed the handcart pioneers had forced their rescuers into camp.

When they appeared on the evening of the third day over the brow of the hill the women rushed out and embraced their deliverers. Quilts, blankets, buffalo robes and clothing were distributed, followed by food, and such is the resilience of human nature, again the songs and laughter rang out that night. Yet they encountered other difficulties. The vitality of some was so lowered that they succumbed to the cold that they had yet to endure. They advanced through the snow knee deep when they reached the divide, and it took collective effort to move each cart. Some were so sunk in lethargy that they could not be roused. At the camp on Willow Creek thirteen persons were frozen in the night. Their grave was protected from the wolves, and two more died before the camp was vacated.

Of the four hundred who embarked, sixty-seven persons lost their lives on the journey. Willie's company arrived in the valley, November 9. Martin's company, which did not get in till the end of that month, was worse overwhelmed with the snows.

Two more companies came in with handcarts in 1857, one in 1859, and two in 1860.

A company of missionaries going to their fields of labor in the east or to foreign lands, crossed the plains with handcarts very successfully in 1857.

In 1869 came the railroad, the "iron horse" that tore through the Rockies, and from that time travel was made easy.