

THE
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ERA

March 1980

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A bright spot

We parents pray for the reinforcement of our teachings, and the Lord gives us the *New Era!* As the mother of teenagers, I can appreciate this breath of fresh air. I'm especially prompted today to respond to Elder Thomas S. Monson's "Decisions Determine Destiny," and "The Award" by Jack Weyland, both from the November 1979 issue. Elder Monson has written a classic message in his usual articulate manner. I think his opening sentence should be inscribed in gold and mounted above every hearth in every home around the world. And as for Brother Weyland, I've decided that he must associate with teenagers daily because he seems to know them so well. He does not gloss over his characters or story lines, but develops vital youngsters facing the issues that kids really have to deal with, and he has them respond in very real and positive ways.

Thanks, Elder Monson and Brother Weyland, for helping to provide our youth with wisdom. And thank you, *New Era*, for a bright spot in a sometimes scary world.

MICHAELNE GRASSLI
 Ogden, Utah

A gift of sunshine

I would like to thank you very much for the article "A Gift of Sunshine" by Richard M. Romney in the October *New Era*. That article had a few old friends of mine in it. I met them when we lived in Frankfurt for two years. While there I got to know a very special girl, one Brother Romney quoted in his article. Her name is Rosemarie Koning. The article brought back many happy memories of the neat people I met in the Frankfurt wards. I haven't heard from Rosemarie since we moved back to the States, but I think about her often.

I love the *New Era*. It's something very special.

LYNDA SCHENK
 Salt Lake City, Utah



Adventures of a Young British Seaman, 1852-1862

by William G. Hartley

His quest for Zion carried him into battle and around the world

For William Wood the hike home across the foggy November English countryside was hard work — emotionally. The teenage butcher's apprentice had just lost his job. And at a time when good jobs were hard to find! Inside he hurt — or maybe it was anger. Hadn't he done a good job for Mr. Blaxall? Still, William was fired

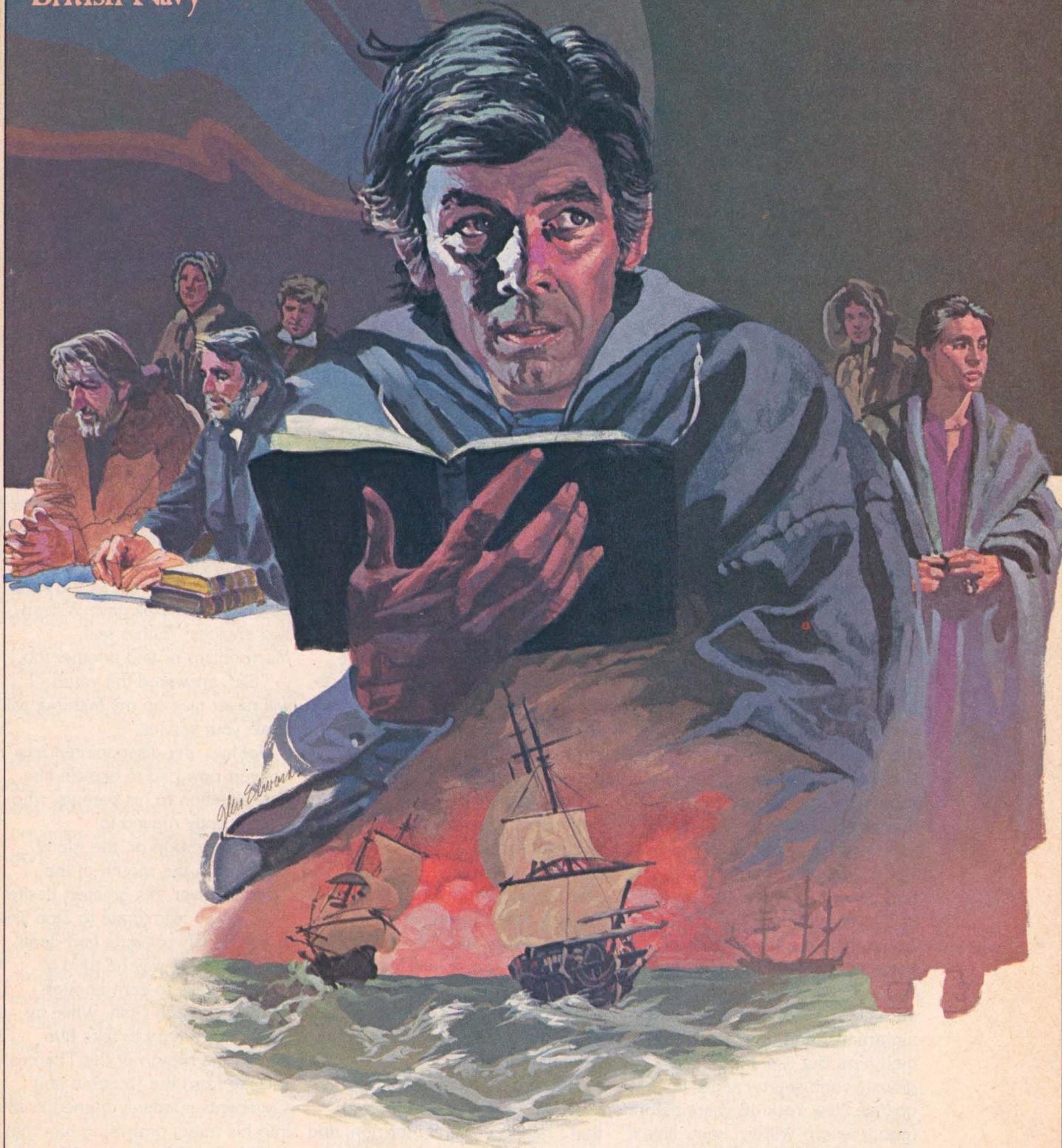
simply because he had become a Latter-day Saint. And as he trudged along he worried about his parents' reaction to his changed circumstances.

Since William's birth in 1837 his parents had raised him to be a committed Anglican. His mother, a devoted church member, enrolled him at a very young age

in an "infants' school" where, along with the alphabet, he learned "that there was a Savior who died for all men." Years of Sunday school attendance taught the boy "a reverence for divine things," as he termed it.

William's first contact with the Latter-day Saints evidently came when he was about age 13. While

PART I:
Battle Service in the
British Navy



doing an errand for his father, he stopped at a window where some curious boys were peering in. A gentleman suddenly ushered him inside where a Mormon meeting was beginning.

"I took my seat in one corner of the room," he recalled, and "thought it a very funny place, and not suitable for administering the holy sacrament." But the sacrament was passed, hymns were sung, and speakers preached. The last speaker was British convert Charles Penrose who later served in the First Presidency. His discussion of the Godhead "upset all my confused ideas of God," William noted. "If ever a sermon touched the heart, this did mine."

Year by year the challenges to William's childhood religious beliefs seemed to increase. At age 15 he left home to become a butcher's apprentice, and his first landlord, religiously an Independent, tried unsuccessfully to convert the young Anglican boarder. That experience, William admitted, "unsettled my religious views very much." He also discussed religious ideas with Catholic sisters while making regular meat deliveries to a nearby monastery. For a time he even attended morning Catholic services in addition to his afternoon Anglican meetings for many Sundays. By age 17, he later remembered, "I had become unsettled in my mind as to which church was right." About this time his confusion became enveloped by fear: he heard a sermon in his own church about damnation that gave him nightmares and continually troubled him. But like another religiously confused teenager in upstate New York 40 years before (about whom William knew little if anything), he sought divine help: "I had prayed often and frequently to my Heavenly Father that I

might be correctly impressed as to what was right for me to do."

During this troubled time William learned that his good friend John M. Bridge had joined the Latter-day Saints. William chided John for converting because Mormons then "were held in such bad repute by all the good people of my town." But after work one evening John explained some principles of the restored gospel to his former schoolmate. William felt that the teachings made sense so he agreed to attend a Latter-day Saint meeting of the Maldon, Essex, Branch. There the fellowship and doctrines impressed him:

"What I there heard I could but endorse and felt assured it was more like the gospel of Christ than my mother's religion; yet I thought the people treated it with levity, and there did not seem to be any order among them. I had been raised in the strictest order, and even in my Sunday School every mark of respect was always paid the teacher. I thought they were lax in this respect, but the warm brotherly greetings soon removed this feeling and I saw there was a peculiar union existing that I did not find in any other church. I began to feel that I wanted to be in the company of these people in preference to all my old acquaintances."

Three weeks after John first discussed Mormonism with him, William asked traveling elders Joseph Silver and John Lindsay to baptize him. So in late April 1855 he was baptized at Maldon in the Blackwater River. A short time later he was ordained a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood.

But finding religious peace had its price: "It was soon reported that I had become a Mormon; and I was jeered at and called old Joe Smith and old Brigham Young, and many things were charged to

them as well as to myself."

Friends, relatives, customers, and former Sunday school teachers tried to "show me my error." During most of 1855 he accompanied another new priest (later his father-in-law), Samuel Gentry, to conduct open-air preaching services in surrounding villages. William's relatives sometimes attended these meetings to hear, as they said, "little Billy preach," although Brother Gentry did the preaching and William assisted by giving prayers. Some relatives ridiculed him openly, but such treatment only made William "cling with a stronger tenacity to the principles of truth."

Mr. Blaxall, whose family had shared their church pew with William on many Sundays, likewise tried to reconvert his young apprentice. Deep discussions, however, changed neither person. Finally, fearing loss of such important customers as the local parson, Mr. Blaxall gave William two choices: "Either quit Mormonism or find another job."

"Sir," answered the youth, "I will never give up my faith but will leave your service."

Jobless, the disappointed new convert now had to explain his new situation to his parents, who had recently moved to Queensborough on the Isle of Sheppey in the mouth of the Thames River. His greatest desire now was to immigrate to Zion like many British converts had done, and along the way he tried to think of ways to earn enough money to reach Utah. While he waited for a ferry to take him across the mouth of the Thames, a verse from the Doctrine and Covenants suddenly burned itself into his mind, promising him that the Lord is bound when His children do what He says. William reflected upon that promise and

decided then and there to place full trust in it. He “prayed to the Lord in my humble way, and told Him I would never recant, praying that I should succeed in obtaining employment and better wages to enable me to reach Zion.”

Minutes after his ferry docked at Sheerness on the Isle of Sheppey, William was warmly welcomed by his parents to their new dwelling. But upon learning how he lost his job, they pleaded with him to quit Mormonism and to return to Mr. Blaxall’s employment. “My dear mother was broken-hearted,” William said. They fretted about his loss of wages and found no comfort in his religious optimism. “I told them I was in the hands of God and inasmuch as I had obeyed His commands I had faith that I would obtain employment.”

Putting faith to work, William job-hunted around the island with his father’s help. He discovered that the Sheerness docks were extremely busy due to the war then raging in the Crimea (across the Black Sea from Turkey) where British, French, and Turkish forces battled Russian troops. “Everything was in excitement,” he recalled. “Merchants were making lots of money. The English navy was seeking men by offering bounties, and nearly all the naval ports were full of business.”

A butcher named Fillmore, with a contract to supply meat to British military units, thought William too young and inexperienced to employ. But after watching the teenager demonstrate his meat-cutting skills, the butcher hired him. The wages? *More than double the amount paid by Mr. Blaxall!* “I believe to this day,” William wrote 60 years later, “that the increases of wages . . . was a blessing from the Lord because I would not recant Mormonism and

in answer to my prayers and for a fixed determination to gather to the valleys of the mountains.”

Before leaving Maldon, William had obtained the name of a Latter-day Saint living in Sheerness, whom he soon located. He showed Elder Hare his membership recommend and “the first Sunday afterwards he took me to the meeting and introduced me to the Saints, after which I always attended my meetings and enjoyed myself very much.”

When William later hurt his back lifting a quarter beef, he took a laborer’s job in the dockyards at the same pay. Harbor activities intrigued him, and he carefully noticed the daily comings and goings of the many ships using the docks. One day he heard that a British naval vessel, the *H.M.S. Eurotas*, soon would sail for the South Pacific, and he immediately formulated a plan for reaching Zion. He enlisted in the British navy and joined the *Eurotas*’ crew as a butcher, hoping one day to go ashore in California and make his way from there to Utah.

But once the “old twenty-eight gun sailing frigate, converted into a screw propeller” cleared port, his immigration hopes vanished. At a surprise meeting the commanding officer opened secret orders and announced to the crew: “My men, we are bound to the Crimea, the seat of war!” Uncontrolled tears rolled down William’s face—men around him thought it was cowardice or fear. Fighting deep disappointment, the Mormon sailor quietly prayed, pledging his loyalty to God, country, and parents, and asking that he might return from the war unharmed. “I then determined not to desert but to fill my five years honorably.”

Because the ship operated with

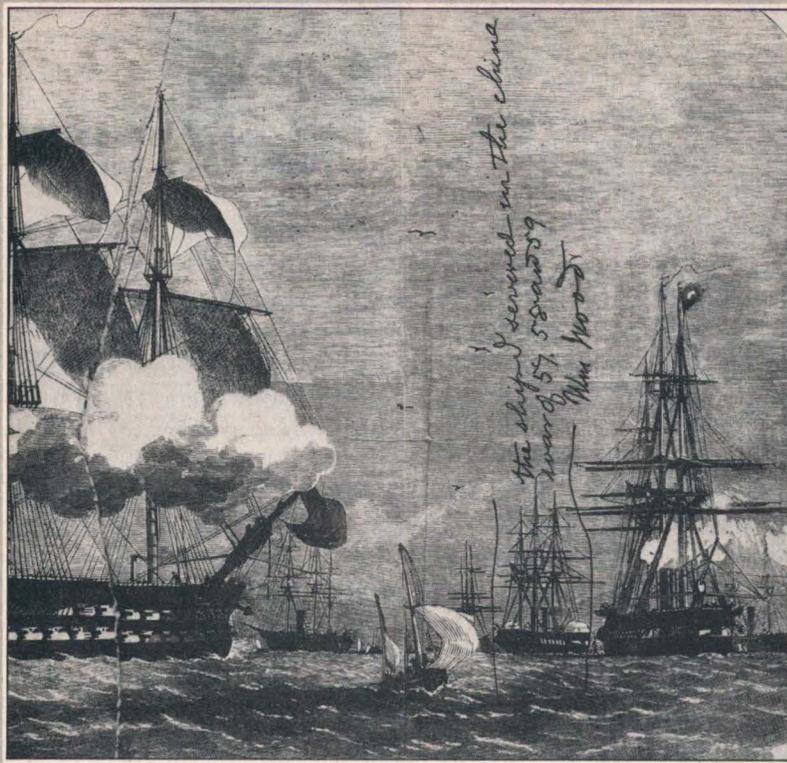


William

but half a crew, William soon learned various sailing skills. As he later wrote: “I not only had my work to perform as a butcher, but after it was done, I then had to assist the gunners’ crew in whatever they were doing. The gunners are almost invariably excellent seamen . . . I was therefore under very practical men and learned to do considerable sailor’s work which I have always found useful to me even in Utah.”

Lisbon. Gibraltar. Algiers. Malta. Constantinople. At each stop William went ashore to obtain meat for the crew. And all along the way they received “dreadful” war reports from the Crimea. They sailed past Scutari, Turkey, where Florence Nightingale gained fame the year before by nursing the war wounded. At Sinope, on the Turkish shores of the Black Sea, the *Eurotas*’s crew viewed with horror the splintered and submerged remains of what had been a proud fleet of 11 Turkish ships—British allies in the war. These had been destroyed, along with hundreds of Turks, by a Russian fleet two years before.

After cruising off the Crimean peninsula, the *Eurotas* docked near Sebastopol [Sevastopol], a city from which British and allied troops had driven Russian units at terrible cost to both sides. To William’s great joy he found that among the thousands of British servicemen camped in the area were enough Latter-day Saints for a “field church” to be established. He eagerly participated. Later he judged this to be one of the strangest religious situations of his



adventurous life, for in the same trenches overlooked by the stern, grim walls of Sebastopol could be found worshippers of Catholic, Protestant, Islamic, and Latter-day Saint persuasions, while guns blessed by the Eastern Orthodox church thundered in their ears.

When peace was declared, the *Eurotas* loaded up surplus war materials and sailed back to Sheerness. William visited briefly with his family who "were all surprised to find that the peculiar religion, as they called it, was still uppermost in my mind," and with the local Saints. He then received reassignment for the next four years to the *HMS Retribution*, coming aboard with high recommendations for his skills as butcher and seaman. The vessel, "a twenty-eight gun paddle steamer, three hundred feet over all with a fifty foot beam on the upper deck," left Britain in November

1856. Aboard was a full crew of 300 men, so William rarely had to go aloft—only during drills or emergencies.

"I had my regular duty to perform as butcher, and I had a nice little butcher shop which was entirely under my charge. Everything in it was inspected every day by the commander to see that it was in order and clean . . . in this little place I spent much of my time of four years and four months."

The *Retribution* picked up Crimean War armaments in the Mediterranean. It located a vessel that had been lost in Arctic ice. Then in March 1857 orders came to steam halfway around the world to reinforce a China squadron, with a stop along the way to help quell a rebellion in Peru. They moved south and west across the Atlantic. In keeping with maritime customs, William and other new sailors who had never before

crossed the equator, when that point was reached, received the somewhat brutal initiation into the Order of Neptune. At Rio de Janeiro the seaman went ashore to help purchase poultry, meat, and fruit for the crew, conscious of being one of the first Latter-day Saints to set foot in Brazil.

Again out to sea, the *Retribution* encountered "a most fearful tornado," forcing it to stop at the Falkland Islands for rudder repairs. The voyage continued through the Straits of Magellan, into the Pacific, and northward along the South American coast. Crossing the equator again the ship soon reached Peru where rebels threatened British mining interests. The *Retribution* patrolled off the coast, once chasing and subduing a rebel vessel that had been shelling shore towns. Its work done, the *Retribution* steamed northwest into the huge Pacific, bound for China.

On William's 21st birthday, May 1, 1858, he and the crew received shore leave in Honolulu. William heard prior to leaving Britain that President Brigham Young had sent missionaries to the Pacific islands, so the young convert tried to locate some Saints "but could find no record of them." Unknown to him the Church had called home its Pacific missionaries to help defend Zion, if necessary, against a United States army then marching toward Utah. Ironically the last elders working in Hawaii left the islands the very day that William landed in Honolulu.

The seaman, an isolated Mormon cut off from contact with the Church, continued to nourish his faith by himself. He read and reread the "works of the Church" that he had brought along. A priest in the Aaronic Priesthood, he was "posted in regard to the authority of a priest to administer

the sacrament," so he felt justified in holding his own private sacrament service in his "beef house" aboard ship. "I prayed often, to the Lord," he said, "and asked Him to acknowledge me in the administration." On Sundays, after the ship's religious service, William returned to his room where "I would place the hardtack [ship's bread] and water upon a table and then offer prayer, after which I would ask the blessing upon the bread and water and partake of it. In this way I received much spiritual strength."

His meat procurement work led to some of his mates becoming aquatic cowboys in Hawaii:

"I went ashore to select beef with the ship's steward. The steers were secured in a pen close to the landing and we selected ten of them. The natives roped them by the horns, then passed the rope to men in a boat and forced the steers into the water. Then men in the boat hauled and rowed with all their might and swam the steer along side of the ship. Then a sling was placed on the steer and by means of a tackle hoisted on board. The steer was then led to the forecastle where I had a boom rigged to make them fast. It was the greatest fun you can imagine to see sailors handle cattle."

When the *Retribution* steamed into Hong Kong a few weeks later, France and Britain were at war with China. Joining the *Cruiser, Furious, Lee, and Dove*, the *Retribution* took part in hostilities for many months. The squadron helped terminate the war by sailing up the Yangtze River to Nanking where it engaged in fierce battle, bombarding the city "till all their guns were silenced." Under fire the next day, the *Retribution* received extensive damage, and William watched in terror when a mate's leg was shot

off and another sailor, rushing to help, had an arm shot off. The *Retribution* "poured in shot and shell and canister with big twenty-four pound rockets which set large buildings on fire and people fled by thousands." Within days the Chinese government surrendered and the *Retribution* returned to British docks at Hong Kong.

Orders next came to escort a special yacht to Japan where it would be presented to the Japanese emperor as a gift from the British government. Japan had opened its harbors and commerce to westerners only four years earlier, a result of American Commodore Matthew C. Perry's famous visit there in 1854. William, one of the first Europeans and probably the first Latter-day Saint to visit that exotic land, was excited by his trips ashore. The Japanese people left a deep impression. "I discerned a remarkable spirit of reform in them, more so than any people I had met, and I felt a desire to preach the Gospel to them." Many years later as a seventy in Utah, he often prayed to be called on a mission to Japan, but he was too old for such service when Elder Heber J. Grant opened the Church's first mission there in 1901.

The *Retribution* continued its around-the-world patrol by joining the British East India squadron. The ship spent three months off the Ceylon [Sri Lanka] coast salvaging money, machinery, and other valuables from a sunken mail packet. William thoroughly enjoyed his duties there, going ashore daily at 3:00 P.M. with a small crew to purchase and butcher cattle for the ship's kitchen, then staying ashore overnight and rowing back to the anchored *Retribution* at daylight.

Soon after leaving Ceylon the

Retribution struck an uncharted coral reef that splintered the bottom of the ship. To block the dangerous leak, "we stretched a large tarpaulin under the ship and over the hole," then they steamed full speed for port. But while the vessel was in British dry dock at Bombay for repairs for three months, the crew caught cholera. "I was taken with it," William noted, "and taken to the hospital ship. I prayed to the Lord to spare me." He recovered and then helped nurse others among the stricken crew.

The repaired *Retribution*'s last major assignment was to help two large steamships lay the first underwater communication cable from India to the Red Sea—from Karachi to Aden. Then orders came in October 1860 to return home. William's ship steamed southwest across the equator again, around the Cape of Good Hope, up the west coast of Africa, across the equator for a final time, and completed its three-year, around-the-world mission by docking in Portsmouth, England, on December 20. At that moment William Wood, young British seaman, became one of the first—if not the first—Latter-day Saints to have traveled completely around the world. With a medal for gallant service tucked in his pocket, he hurried home and surprised his family just as they sat down to eat Christmas dinner.

William was happy to be safely home again and to be honorably released from the navy. But he felt disappointed that he now was no closer to Zion than he had been five years earlier. His immigration adventure soon followed, but not before he had time to meet and fall in love with a young convert girl who would immigrate with him to Utah and there become his wife.



44

William Wood's teenage years ran out while he was serving in the British navy. Now, after war experience in the Crimea and China, and a three-year voyage around the world aboard the *HMS Retribution*, the sailor enjoyed being home again on the Isle of Sheppey, near the mouth of the Thames River. He relaxed and became reacquainted with his relatives, none of whom had appreciated his joining The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints five years earlier.

After being home two weeks William looked up the local branch of the Church. His sister went along, thinking he was just going for a walk. They ended up at a Mormon meeting in Sheerness held in "a little upstairs room in a dirty back alley." William received a hearty welcome from the branch president and the few Saints who had known him before. They called on him to speak at the meeting and tell about his sea experiences. His sister was surprised, he noted, "at finding me still a Mormon and hearing me preach."

To supplement his discharge pay of 80 pounds sterling, William found work as a butcher. He was hired at good wages by none other than his former employer at Maldon, Mr. Blaxall, the man who fired him years before for joining the Latter-day Saints. William returned to Maldon and worked for about a year, during which period he had two pressing goals: emigrating to Zion and "selecting me a wife." At first he dated his

employer's wife's sister, Lucy Gipp, but their romance cooled when she would not join the Church. Mr. Blaxall once took William aside and offered to set him up in a good meat business if he would relinquish Mormonism and marry Miss Gipp. William told him, "I could never do that because I know Mormonism is true, and I would never marry a nonmember of the Church."

Early in 1862 the seaman met and fell in love with Elizabeth Gentry, the attractive, 16-year-old daughter of the branch president in Maldon. Her mother had joined the Church in 1853, Elizabeth in 1854, and her blacksmith father the next year. Brother Gentry and William, converts the same year, had served together as priests at preaching services around Maldon before William's navy service.

When William and Elizabeth became engaged, they counseled with traveling elder Francis M. Lyman about immigrating to Zion. Elder Lyman, later a member of the Council of the Twelve, advised the couple to join the emigrating company he was then organizing. They agreed. The Gentrys felt sad to have their teenage daughter leave them, but they too planned to emigrate as soon as their funds would allow it. Before departing, William introduced his fiancée to his family. "They all treated us kindly," he recalled, "but expressed their sorrow that we were led away by such a disreputable people."

The couple joined other emigrating Saints at London and then the group traveled to Liverpool and boarded the old sailing ship *William Tapscott*, which had been specially chartered by Church emigration agents. For the voyage the vessel received one of the largest Latter-day Saint companies ever to emigrate together

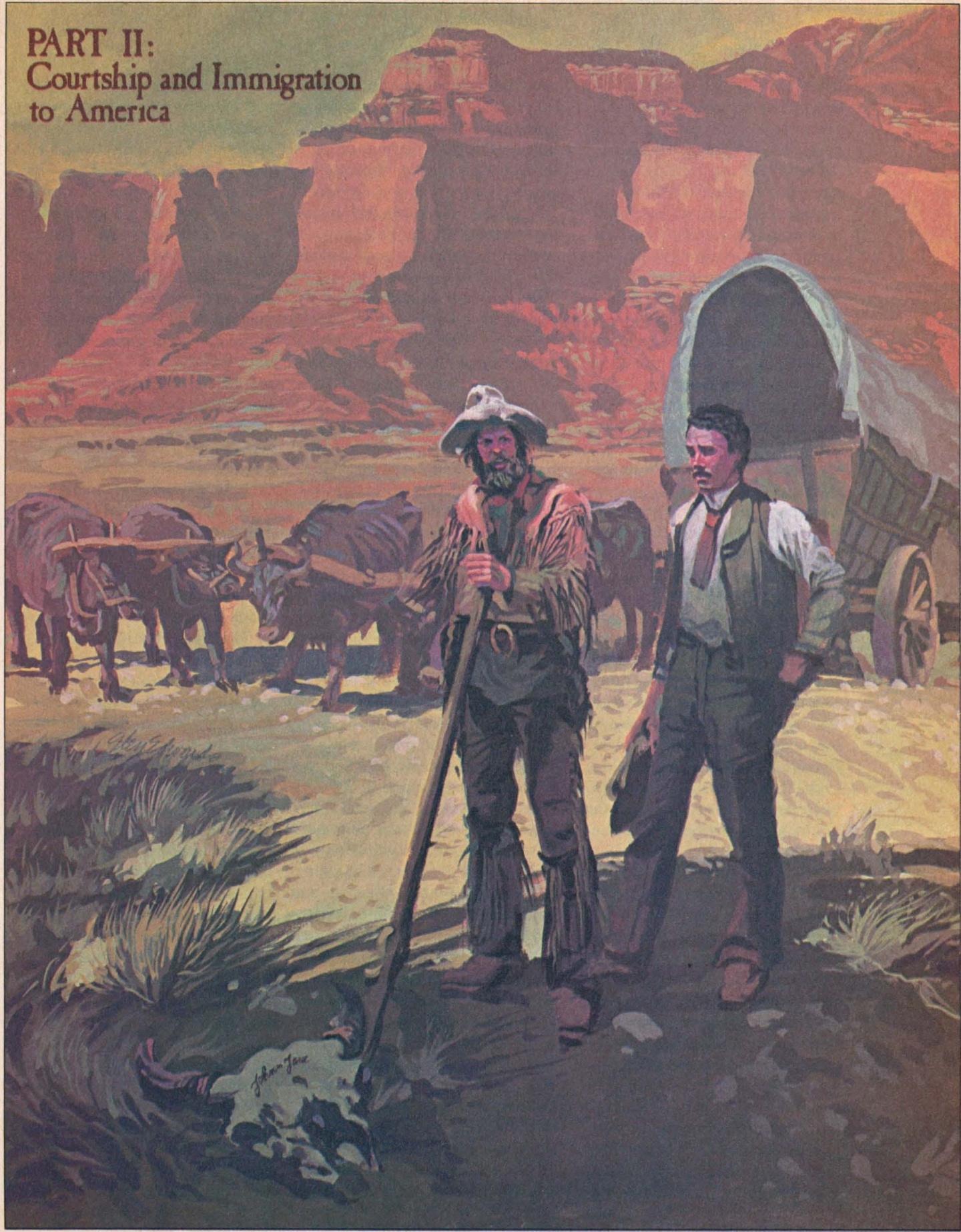
across the Atlantic, numbering 800 souls from the British Isles, Denmark, and Sweden. "It was an interesting sight," William reported, "to see the Saints boarding the ship with all kinds of tin utensils tied in bunches and some were carrying their straw mattresses on their heads, while others were loaded down with all kinds of parcels and lunch baskets. Some had old pieces of furniture . . . or some old picture of great-grandparents."

William thought it remarkable how quickly the large crowd, divided into shipboard wards headed by specially appointed presiding elders, became orderly. "I do not think the same number of non-Mormons would have settled down to such order," the veteran of shipboard life observed. "Nothing but the Spirit of the Lord would produce such harmony." The ship cleared Liverpool docks on May 13, 1862.

Ward teachers were assigned to each family, and Elder Lyman requested William to be responsible for the welfare of seven emigrants, including Elizabeth. The seaman obtained their rations, arranged for their food to be cooked, and performed other needed services. The slow, six-week voyage, characterized by rough seas and much seasickness, ended at Castle Garden in New York. The company passed health inspections, then boarded trains for St. Louis. Because the American Civil War then was escalating, "we were routed and changed about a number of times. At one place we were hustled on board of a freight train. The cars had been loaded with hogs and they had not been swept or cleaned out, thus we were choked with the dust and could taste it for days afterwards."

At the Missouri River they trans-

PART II:
Courtship and Immigration
to America



ferred to a small steamboat. It arrived near Council Bluffs very late at night, and passengers and baggage were unloaded helter-skelter in the darkness. At daybreak the weary travelers located their scattered luggage, then assembled at the Church's emigration campground. There they were organized into companies of tens, fifties, and hundreds by Church emigration agent Joseph W. Young. William, being a military veteran, was named captain of the guards.

Wagons and teams had to be readied, baggage loaded, food supplies purchased and packed, and teamsters trained. While this outfitting was underway, the camp was struck by a violent storm with high winds, torrential rains, and vivid lightnings. Cattle broke loose and stampeded, doing great damage. Lightning killed at least two Saints and badly injured several others. Floods washed gullies ten feet deep in places. During the storm William, as captain of the guards, was called on to help a sister give birth under a collapsed tent—and both mother and son remained his lifelong friends in Utah. The company needed two or three days to recover from the storm, and many Saints never found boxes and bags washed away by the flash floods.

A Brother Cooper, noticing William's skill with cattle, hired him to break his teams to yoke and then drive them to Utah. In return William and Elizabeth were promised free transportation. A few days later, however, their employer announced that he did not intend to go to Zion but wanted them to help him farm nearby. When William refused, he and Elizabeth were ordered out of the wagon and left without food or water.

Elizabeth wept bitterly. William's thoughts focused on his 50-foot

rope that Cooper had taken. Then, with his fiancée following to calm him down, William hiked the half hour to Cooper's evening camp. When he approached the cow to which his rope was tied, Cooper "drew a beeline on me with his old Yorker." Without hesitation, William cut loose the cow, coiled his rope, then marched up to the disagreeable man and announced: "Mr. Cooper, I am going to lay off my religion and give you a licking so you won't forget me." Which he did.

Fortunately for the stranded couple, Elders Lyman and Charles C. Rich rode in from the West and found them that evening. They arranged for Elizabeth to ride to Utah with a family named Wardell for 40 dollars. Elder Lyman, however, asked William to return to Florence to help with the D. F. Kimball freight train. The fiancée agreed to this separation reluctantly:

"I think this was the greatest trial I ever underwent—to leave my betrothed and go back. However, I submitted and kissed my girl good-bye and gave her a half sovereign, all the money I had in the world, and jumped in the buckboard and off we went, I with a sorrowful heart and a mind full of reflections as to the outcome of it all. Brother Rich found I was in tears and told me to cheer up and have faith and all would be well."

At Florence the freight train was being fitted out by young men William had met aboard the *William Tapscott* and by some young Utahns dressed in fringed and tasseled buckskins—"rough looking Saints they seemed to me," he said. But after hearing one of the Utahns pray, the Britisher became convinced of these frontiersmen's faithfulness. William received three assignments to perform during the trip to Utah: drive

four yoke of cattle, stand guard half of every night, and grease every wagon every 60 miles. For his labors he would receive 30 dollars per month.

His first night in camp provided the other men with a good laugh then and for years after. William, preparing for bed, reached in his bag for what he thought were duck sailor overalls and instead he held up "some sort of ladies' unmentionables trimmed and adorned with lace." His comrades roared. He had taken his sweetheart's bag by mistake instead of his own! But perhaps the seaman had the last laugh: while the freight company members slept on hard ground every night for three months, William rested comfortably in his sea hammock, slung each night between two wagon wheels. On rainy nights he simply covered himself and hammock with canvas.

Day by day the scenery and travel grew increasingly tiresome. Near Chimney Rock some of the cattle became diseased and died, forcing the company to double team the wagons and make shorter drives each day. William began to think he would never get to Utah and rejoin Elizabeth. He became particularly depressed when the company passed places on the plains strewn with bleached bones upon which messages—including declarations of love—had been written by previous companies. "I began to worry that someone would pick up a rib with 'Miss E. Gentry loves someone or married someone or is to be married to someone.'"

Cattle continued dying, so the company was forced to send for assistance from the valley. Finally one October Saturday, William's company descended the hills above Salt Lake City, awed by a beautiful sunset across the Great

Salt Lake and by the splendid square-blocked city stretched out below them. As they approached the city, an occupant of a nearby cabin called and waved to William. It was Sister Wardell, the woman with whom Elizabeth had traveled to Utah! William hurried to her, but his anticipation was instantly crushed. She informed him that Elizabeth no longer loved him and planned to marry a local polygamist! "This was like a bolt of thunder to me," he recalled. Heartsick, the young man continued with the company to the valley floor, then returned that night to the Wardells. The woman tried to persuade William to marry her daughter, but he was not interested. "I formed a resolution that I was going to have the 'love of my youth,'" he said.

Friends from Maldon lived in Centerville, so early the next week William hiked 12 miles to locate them. He arrived at night, and "to my great joy the girl of my heart was found lying asleep on an old home-made lounge and looking fine although almost in rags. She awoke, and her joy was unbounded." Elizabeth then explained that the Wardell woman had tried to marry her to her own son. That failing, the mother turned the girl out and kept all the clothes and bedding until Elizabeth's 40-dollar fare was paid in full. The woman then had made up the story about Elizabeth's loss of affection for William, hoping the navy veteran would marry into the Wardell family.

William returned to Salt Lake City and drove his freight team to Springville where he received his three months' wages. Then he walked back to Salt Lake, paid off the 40-dollar debt, obtained his and Elizabeth's belongings, and then got a ride back to Centerville. Two weeks later the engaged

couple were married. It was a joyous celebration, William remembered, thanks to neighbors who "came with their old-fashioned squash pies and ground cherry tarts, and . . . sweet cake and roasted all their roosters, and had roast pork and roast bear and lots of other good things."

Hard work brought the young couple a fine brick home and prospering meat business in Salt Lake, enabling them to pay for the immigration of Elizabeth's family in 1867. But the next year the Woods gave up home and career to fill a difficult colonizing mission to Arizona. They returned destitute four years later and took up residence in a tumbledown dugout within sight of their former home. When asked her reactions to this strange turn of fortune, Elizabeth told her husband, "I am glad you filled your mission, and would rather be in this dugout with your mission filled, than in that fine house with your mission unfilled."

William again left his prospering business and a growing family in 1880 to fill a proselyting mission to his home country. Near the end of that otherwise successful mission he reported:

"I preached the Gospel to my dear ones, my father, mother, brother, and sister, and although none of my own kindred have obeyed, they had to acknowledge they could not confute the doctrine, and they feel to-day that I am not what they judged me to be twenty-seven years ago. When a boy . . . I obeyed the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They would then say, 'I believe William is a fool, or he is crazy to join such a deluded people,' and at the same time say 'What a pity such a good boy should leave his father, mother, and all to follow after such things. They forgot the blessings which



Elizabeth

Christ promised should follow all who would take up the cross and follow him. . . . All my dear relations have treated me with marked kindness, as they have any of the Elders that called upon them at the time. I know God will bless them for that."

Six years after he returned from his mission, his beloved Elizabeth gave birth in her 42nd year to their 13th baby, but within days both mother and baby died. William later remarried, and he and his families went on to gain prominence in Canada where the Wood name became linked with extensive ranching and meat packing interests. William's son Edward J. served for many years as a stake president and temple president in Alberta.

The year before William died, he wrote up his impressive life story, hoping his example as convert, sailor, pioneer, and missionary might teach young people in the Church that "should their lot be cast away from where they have been taught the gospel . . . never to yield to any invitation that leads to intemperance or immorality. Always petition the Lord, whether you are called by the servant of God to preach the Gospel or surrounded by the horrors of war—never forget to offer a silent prayer to your Eternal Father. He will not forget you."

In his youth William Wood received a specific promise by the Spirit that the Lord would be bound to help him if he did what the Lord asked. On his deathbed William acknowledged that during his adventurous life that promise had been generously fulfilled. ❏