

## THE DEATH OF POLYGAMY IN UTAH.

YEARS after Joseph Smith founded the Mormon Church, he declared that the Almighty had revealed to him that polygamy was right, and he adopted it as a doctrine. He and some of his followers commenced the practice. But in obedience to public opinion, based upon the moral sense of the American people, and according to their own reason and conscience, I presume, our national law-makers in 1862 enacted a law defining plural marriage as a crime, and fixing the punishment. In 1882 they made another law, more stringent and comprehensive, defining and punishing unlawful cohabitation also as a crime. And in 1887 still another law was passed designed to be yet more stringent and effectual. The courts of the Territory of Utah began the enforcement of the two acts first mentioned in September, 1884, and of the last law as soon as it took effect. After more than thirteen hundred men had been sent to prison for their violation, Wilford Woodruff, the president of the Mormon Church, made and published an official declaration termed the "manifesto," in which is found the following language:—

"We are not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter upon its practice. . . . Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the court of last resort, I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws and to use my influence with the members of the church over which I preside to have them do likewise. . . . And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land."

At the General Conference of the church on October 6, 1890, Lorenzo Snow, the oldest of the living apostles except President Woodruff, offered the following resolution:—

"I move that, recognizing Wilford Woodruff as the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the only man on earth at the present time who holds the keys of the sealing ordinances, we consider him fully authorized, by virtue of his position, to issue the manifesto which has been read in our hearing, and which is dated September 24, 1891; and that, as a church in General Conference assembled, we accept his declaration concerning plural marriage as authoritative and binding."

At the time this resolution was adopted, George Q. Cannon, the first counsellor of the president, in explanation of their action with respect to the manifesto, among other things, said,—

“So far as I am concerned, I can say, that, of the men in the church who have endeavored to maintain this principle of plural marriage, I am one. In public and in private I have avowed my belief in it. . . . But a change has taken place. . . . After the occurrences of the past six years have been witnessed, . . . and upwards of thirteen hundred men have been incarcerated in prison, going there for various terms, from one month up to years, . . . the time came when, in the providence of God, it seemed necessary that something should be done to meet the requirements of the country, to meet the demands made upon us, and to save the people. President Woodruff and others of us have been appealed to hundreds of times to announce something. . . . But at no time has the Spirit seemed to indicate that this should be done. We have waited for the Lord to move in the matter; and on the 24th of September President Woodruff made up his mind that he would write something and he had the spirit of it. *We had prayed about it, and besought God repeatedly what to do. At that time the Spirit came upon him, and the document that has been read in your hearing was the result. I know that it was right,* much as it has gone against the grain with me in many respects, because many of you know the contest we have had upon this point. . . . Some have wondered, and said, ‘Why did not his counsellors sign it? Why didn’t others sign?’ Well, I give you the reason,—because he is the only man on the earth that has this right, and he exercised it, *and he did this with approval of all of us to whom the matter was submitted after he made up his mind, and we sustained it; for we had made it a subject of prayer also that God would direct us.*”

At the same time President Woodruff said,—

“I want to say to all Israel that *the step which I have taken in issuing this manifesto has not been done without earnest prayer before the Lord.* I am about to go into the spirit-world like other men of my age. [He was then more than eighty.] . . . If we do our duty to one another, to our country, and to the Church of Christ, we will be justified when we go into the spirit-world. . . . I say to Israel, the Lord will never permit me, nor any other man who stands as the president of this church, to lead you astray. . . . If I were to attempt that, the Lord would remove me out of my place, and he will any other man who attempts to lead the children of men astray from the oracles of God and from their duty.”

I have made these quotations to show that the president of the church advised its members to obey the law prohibiting polygamy and unlawful cohabitation; that the advice was given after prayer before the Lord, as he and his first counsellor said, and that they also said the manifesto was written and the advice given when the spirit of the Lord was upon its author; that the church declared he was the only person having the authority to give the advice, and that it was binding upon all its members; that after prayer it was approved by the

first counsellor and other high officers before it was submitted to the conference; and that he declared he knew it was right. All this must be taken as equivalent to the declaration that the manifesto was the expression of the Almighty by means of the Spirit, and that it should be regarded by Mormons as the will of God so manifested to Woodruff, and declared by him to all the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In effect, the manifesto is declared to be a revelation by means of supernatural power. It and the expressions of the president and his first counsellor, and the resolution and the circumstances attending them, are more significant and solemn to the mind of the Mormon than to some of us who have but little or no faith in the interposition of Infinite Wisdom and Power in supernatural ways, or to a great many others who do believe in supernatural manifestations of Power and Wisdom, but do not believe that the Lord communicates his will especially to the Mormon.

The Latter-day Saints, like the members of other churches, are usually sincere. During a period of nearly six years before the action of the church above shown, it became my duty to sentence several hundred Mormons who had been convicted from time to time of polygamy or unlawful cohabitation. In the beginning it appeared probable that a large number of men, law-abiding aside from their polygamous practices, would be imprisoned under the law. Believing that the object of the law was the protection of society from the evil effect of the crimes defined in it, I determined to take into consideration, before sentence, any promise that I might believe made in good faith by the defendant to obey the law. I came to this determination in the hope that the example of the man in making the promise before the public, and his subsequent obedience, would be as effectual for the purpose aimed at by the law as severe punishment. To that end, I always asked the person to be sentenced to make the promise. During the two or three first years, I suspended sentence on such as made the promise, and liberated them. But, if the promise was not made, the defendant in unlawful cohabitation cases was sentenced to confinement in the penitentiary for six months, and to pay a fine of three hundred dollars—the maximum punishment in that class of cases. Greater punishment was imposed in polygamy cases. A few at first agreed to obey the law, and were liberated; but afterwards nearly all refused, saying generally that the doctrines of their church sanctioned the practice, and that they considered those doctrines binding. After sentence, the prisoners would pass out of the

court-room, in the custody of the officer, to the penitentiary, followed sometimes by a distressed wife and children. Some wore the air of martyrs, while others appeared very meek. The immediate effects of the law often appeared very sad, and, to justify it, it was necessary to look away, and ahead to a social system with a family consisting of one husband and one wife and their children, and the affections that arise from such relations.

But the next morning after the manifesto was issued, it became my duty to sentence several men who had been convicted of violating this same law. They were asked, as usual, if they would obey it, and they all answered unhesitatingly that they would. Among these men was a bishop who had been sentenced before for a violation of the same law, and who had refused then to make any promise. I asked him if he had changed his mind as to whether polygamy was right, and he said that he had. I then asked him when and by what the change was induced. He answered, that he changed his mind when the church changed its doctrine, and that he had changed because he believed that it would not be right, after the manifesto, to enter into polygamy, or to practise unlawful cohabitation. Since then I have examined many more—probably more than a hundred—who came before me for sentence, or who were applicants for admission to citizenship, and they have universally said that they would obey the law, and when asked, would say that they would regard it as wrong to violate the doctrines of their church. Some have said that they regarded polygamy as legally wrong after the courts had declared the law against it constitutional and valid, but that they did not believe it religiously or morally wrong until the appearance of the manifesto. By that action I am convinced that the Mormon Church abandoned polygamy, and that it will never adopt it again in the United States.

There was in this Territory a political organization, composed of Mormons and those who sympathized with them, known as the "People's" party. It, of course, always nominated and voted for men of its own party. It was also termed the "Church" party. To oppose this was an organization made up of non-Mormons, and it was known as the "Liberal" party. It was opposed to the church and the party representing it. The Mormons were asked, "Why not disband your party and join the Republican or the Democratic party, and divide upon national party lines, if you do not insist on church rule?" The territorial committee of that party and the various county committees were called together, and they adopted resolutions declaring the party

disbanded; and its members were advised to divide on party lines according to their convictions. The leaders in the organization of the Democratic party of the Territory were mostly non-Mormons, and an organization was soon effected; but the organization of the Republican party of the Territory was strenuously opposed by men of the Liberal party who believed in Republican principles. This was particularly so in Salt Lake City. When the election was held in August last, the Republican organization was very imperfect; and the result was, that the Democrats polled about fourteen thousand votes, the Republicans nearly seven thousand, and the Liberals a few hundred more than the Republicans. This light vote for the Republican candidates as compared with the large one for the Democratic candidates was pointed to by the Liberals as an evidence of bad faith on the part of the Mormons. I confess that I was surprised at the result, and was inclined to regard it as an evidence of insincerity, and of a disposition, on the part of the Mormons, to vote together under the name of "Democrats." But after hearing from the entire Territory, I reached the conclusion that a desire to defeat the Liberals and to prevent possible disfranchisement was the true explanation. Quite a large number of non-Mormons who had favored the organization of the Republican party, and would have voted for its candidates, became fearful that the Democrats would carry the cities of Salt Lake and Ogden, and, to defeat that party, voted the Liberal ticket; and a very large number who had been members of the People's party were told by Democrats not to throw their votes away, that the Republicans would be beaten, and by their help the Democrats could succeed. And certain Liberal stump-orators were reported to have said that they favored disfranchising the Mormons. This fact, however, appeared, that the non-Mormons on the Republican and Democratic tickets received as many votes as the Mormons on the same tickets: the Mormons did not scratch the Gentiles, and vote for the Mormons. In the Territory, outside of Salt Lake City, the Republican candidates received upwards of three thousand more votes than the Liberal candidates. Since the August election, a Republican territorial convention has been held, and delegates from nearly all the counties were in attendance. The party is being more thoroughly organized, and I am quite confident that the Republican vote will be largely increased at the next general election.

Some oppose organization on party lines, as in the other Territories and in the States, because they fear that statehood would soon

follow. So far as I have been informed by the leaders of the movement, the purpose is not to hasten the admission of the Territory into the Union. The advocates of this division believe that it is for the common good to divide the people according to their convictions upon national issues, in the hope that the distrust and hate, the criminations and recriminations, of the past and present, may cease or be greatly lessened, and that different sections of the people may more effectually co-operate for the good of all. By such a division the people will have an opportunity to show their attachment to sound principles. But there is no haste for statehood. When Congress shall determine that the Territory should be admitted, it will pass an enabling act imposing restrictions and conditions as it shall believe to be right. And in the mean time, by a course of political discussion and division here, where heretofore there has been no political antagonism, except upon a local issue which has now been removed, the voters of the Territory may be fitted to do their part well when admission does take place.

There are probably a hundred and fifty thousand Mormons in this Territory; but of that number many are only nominally so. Amid the contentions between them and the Gentiles, many have sided with the church in which are their parents, relatives, and friends, without embracing its faith. It is idle now to think of disfranchising the Latter-day Saints. They are an industrious, temperate people, as a rule; and my observation has led me to believe that they are law-abiding since the church took its stand under the law against plural marriage. I am aware that now and then individuals will report violations of that law since the manifesto; but upon investigation such charges are seldom sustained. It would be strange if there were no breaches of it: there are some such cases among non-Mormons. I do not believe that such marriages have been authorized or sanctioned by the officers of the Mormon Church since the manifesto. With the exception of a comparatively few polygamists, the male Mormons of proper age, who are citizens of the United States, have the right to vote, and do so. They will not vote for Liberal candidates. They must divide, as the members of other churches generally do, or all vote the Democratic or Republican ticket. They ought to divide on national party lines, and, if they choose to do so, no man or set of men is authorized to say they shall not. Who shall say that any number of American citizens having the right to vote shall not organize a Republican party in Utah, nominate a ticket, vote for and elect



it, if they can by fair means? The rights of such men are as sacred as the rights of those who would deny them.

Gentiles have said to the Mormons, "When your church abandons polygamy, and you take a stand in favor of obedience to the law, and disband your party, we will welcome you in with us politically." But when the church declared against polygamy and in favor of obedience to the law, and the "Church Party," as it was termed, disbanded, and its members proposed to unite with the national parties, the Mormons were charged with hypocrisy in so doing, and were told that they could not be believed, and that their object was political ascendancy for the church through statehood. They were asked to do what was patriotic and right; and when they did as asked,—without an opportunity to show by their conduct that they were in earnest, and without any evidence since then that they were not,—they were charged with sinister designs upon the rights of those not of their religion, in fact, with a purpose to gain political power that they might deprive the Gentiles of their political and civil rights, and heap wrongs and indignities upon them. In view of the multitude of counsel, of the disapproval and denunciation that the Latter-day Saints were receiving, the venerable man at their head remarked to his brethren, that he often thought of what Lorenzo Dow once said of the doctrine of election. "Said he, 'It is like this: you can and you can't, you will and you won't, you shall and you shan't, you'll be damned if you do and you'll be damned if you don't.' That," he continued, "is about the condition we as Latter-day Saints are in."

The Mormons, in organizing their church as it was founded, embraced beliefs that were opposed to the convictions of their fellow-men. Later Joseph Smith and his followers assailed an institution revered by millions of the human race as the fountain of purity and virtue, of domestic harmony and happiness,—the beneficent relation between one husband and one wife, from which family influences emanate, and around which cluster the holiest affections and hallowed memories,—the sure source of patriotism, stability, national grandeur, and glory. The claims and practices of the church aroused resentments that were followed by violence. Joseph Smith and his brother were killed by a mob; and other unlawful acts, attended with numerous indignities, were perpetrated upon the Mormons. Under these circumstances they left their homes behind them, passed beyond the bounds of civilized society, settled in these valleys and mountains, and sought to establish an independent State. For a number of years

they were isolated from the rest of mankind, excepting a few men and women of other beliefs. Here they held almost absolute sway. Under such circumstances they became intolerant towards those who differed from them in belief. The president of the church and his subordinate officers became arbitrary, and visited many wrongs and indignities upon those who were bold enough to take a stand against them. Amid such contentions, confidence disappeared, and prejudice and hate overpowered better motives.

From the realities of the past, among conditions differing widely from those of to-day, many Gentiles fear that the Mormons will return to the old practices and ways of Brigham Young and others of his time. To these people I say that the face of Utah is toward the sun. The darkness is at her back. She is not on the retreat. We are climbing the hills of progress: higher plains and brighter lights are ahead, and I trust we shall all get clearer and better views of human duty.

The Mormon is with us. The same nature is common to us all. A Power higher than ourselves has so ordered. So far as he and we obey the law, we are all equal before it. The forces of nature are changing the most durable objects in the finite world. Our natures and our beliefs are changed by the influences around us. So of that organization of which we are units,—society. A better feeling is growing; prejudice and hate are loosing their grip, slowly it must be conceded. But I have no doubt that confidence, good-will, and harmony will be restored sooner or later, and that ere long these valleys and mountains will be the home of a patriotic, harmonious, progressive, and great people.

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## THE PROFIT OF GOOD COUNTRY ROADS.

I WRITE of the American common road. If you will examine a detail map of any important county within the United States, you will be likely to be impressed first by the great number of intersecting roads which seem to be spread like a huge network over all the accessible land of the county, and which all lead, with more or less directness, to the market-towns and to the larger channels of trade. If you will then take the trouble to measure the length of these roads by means of the printed scale, you will develop some surprise with the progress of your work, for your column of mile totals will soon run from tens into hundreds, and not unlikely into thousands; while your study, if pursued to further fields, will soon show you that the common roads in either of many counties exceed in length the aggregate mileage of all the railroads in the State, and that three of our States can be easily selected in which the total length of public roads, exclusive of town and city streets, is greater than the combined mileage of all the railroads in the world.

If you will travel one of these roads, going out as near as may be in a radial direction from the market-town, you will be interested in noting the gradations of thrift from good to bad as your journey proceeds. Leaving the town limits there will first appear the comely homes, and kindred evidences of comfort, which commonly belong to the suburban farmer. The market is just beyond his door-yard, and no condition can be imagined so calamitous as to sever the industrial value of his location. A distance of two or three miles will lead you to a more scattered population, living in homely and more secluded structures, and, in spite of their evident sobriety and industry, surrounded by certain signs of unrequited toil; while the further progress of your journey will introduce you in due time, and with tolerable certainty, to a region of hovels and abandoned farms. Wherever you go, the rule is much the same; and it is no exaggeration to say, that with the enlargement of concentric circles surrounding every American inland town is to be found an apparently undue diminution of agricultural population, wealth, and thrift. I used the word "undue" with deliberative purpose; for I believe it will never be as-