

CHAPTER XV.<sup>1</sup>

PRACTICAL POLYGAMY.

*Open evils and hidden sufferings—Miss S.E. Carmichael's testimony—Mormon sophistry—The sexual principle—Its objects—Theory and facts—Monogamist vs. Polygamist—Turk, Persian and African vs. the Christian White—The same effects in Utah—Jealousy and misery—Children of different wives—Cultivated indifference—Hatred among children—Brigham's idea of parental duty—Are the Mormon women happy?—Submission and silence—Degradation of women—Mormon idea of politeness—Heber C. Kimball and his "cows"—"My women"—Slavery of sex—Moses and Mohammed outdone—Incest—Marrying a whole family—Kobert Sharkey—Remorse and suicide—Uncle and niece—Bishop Smith and his nieces—Mixture of blood—Horrible crimes—Half-brother and sister—The Prophet "sold"—The doctrine of incest—"Too strong now, but the people will come to it"—Now openly avowed—Brothers and sisters to marry for a "pure priesthood"—Testimony of William Hepworth Dixon—Father and daughter may marry—Effects upon the young—Infant mortality—Large average mortality—Fatal blindness—The growing youth—Demoralization—Youthful depravity—No hope for young men and women—Sophistry and madness—Ancient sensualism to be revived.*

THE worst period of polygamy has passed, but its evil effects continue in full force to the present. At the outset I meet with a difficulty in describing its greatest evils. As formerly stated, the virtues of Mormonism are all easily seen, while its vices are, as much as possible, hidden, and this is peculiarly the case with polygamy.

We can see its evils in a political point of view, in their laws, to some extent in their society, in the mixture of population and the blood of near kindred; but who can enter into the *penetralia* of the affections, weigh and estimate woman's anguish, count the heart-drops of sorrow, and say, here is so much misery, or there is so much resignation.

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<sup>1</sup> Original chapter page numbers: 354-380.

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This last is by far the greatest evil of polygamy, and though it may be felt, and to some extent seen, it can never be described.

Miss Sarah E. Carmichael, now Mrs. Williamson, who was reared at Salt Lake, says: "If I were a man, as I am a woman, I would stand in the halls of Congress, and cry aloud for the miserable women of Utah, till the world should hear and know the wrongs and miseries of polygamy." The Mormons argue that the laws of nature, physical nature, point out polygamy as the natural condition. There may be some argument in its favor in the physical organization, but when we come to the soul and mind, the mentality of woman points unerringly to monogamy as her only possible state for domestic happiness; and any system which attempts to establish unity in the household by dividing one man's care and affection among two or three women, is founded upon a total misconception of the sexual principle. For, why was that principle so deeply implanted in the human nature? The Mormons would tell us "for the one purpose only, that men might increase." But a sound philosophy, and the history of mankind, show that this is but one of many reasons, though necessary and important, yet not all either of man's duty or happiness.

In the nobler view this principle has at least three manifestations, and three objects to fulfil.

First and lowest is a mere amativeness—the feeling which the male animal has for the female—common to man with the brutes. Its object is reproduction, its nobler uses, the perpetuation of our species.

But far above this is a second division of the great principle, companionship, society, love of a congenial associate. With it is connected the admiration for beauty, grace and refinement, mutual help and protection, and the interchange of kind offices. Its public benefits are in the founding of families and establishment of communities, and by it alone can the State be established, on aught approaching sure foundations. In this view then, marriage is not, as certain theorists would persuade us, a matter strictly between the individuals; the State has the highest interest in its regulation, and justly determines from the experience of the past what is best for the stability of our institutions. But he who should stop at this point in the inquiry would have at last but a

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poor and mean view of the sexual principle or the marriage relation.

As man is not all animal, but also a member of a family and community, one helping and needing help, a citizen and a debtor to the public weal; so he is not all man, not all citizen, communist or worker; he is, in part, divine, he has a nature in common with the angels. And in this depar[t]ment of his nature, the great principle manifests itself as a high and holy affection, a pure regard for what is pure, a silent adoration for that which is divine in the human; its exercise and reward alike are in a complete intercommunion of soul and interchange of pure affection.

And its very essence is duality; a divided affection is utterly at war with “that sweet egotism of the heart called love,”<sup>2</sup> that divine selfishness of choosing *one* being apart from all the world, perhaps the *only* form in which selfishness is approved of God. And the object of this principle is a higher development of the whole man, male and female; this is the most noble object of the marriage relation, and by this alone is it sanctified. Can the wildest fanaticism or most earnest sophistry claim that aught of this can be found in the polygamic order? The Mormon is but one-third married; he has in such unions provided for but *one-third*, and that the lowest, basest part of his nature. But, it may be said, this last is only a theory. Let us then briefly examine a few facts. That this indication is to be followed rather than the other, is abundantly shown by a comparative view of polygamous and monogamous nations. The Indian and native African know nothing of the softer sentiments which make life amiable and agreeable; to them woman is merely a superior beast of burden; they can purchase as many wives as their means command, and are, by nature, habit and religion, thorough-going polygamists. Coming a little higher to the partially civilized races, we find a great im-

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<sup>2</sup> The phrase “*that sweet egotism of the heart called love*” is poetic and metaphorical. It suggests that love can be a form of self-love or self-importance, but in a positive way. According to an article in *Psychology Today* (see “*4 reasons why love is both egoistic and altruistic*” by Aaron Ben-Zeév, Ph.D., 14 February 2023), love can be both egoistic and altruistic. The article explains that while love can be self-serving, it can also bring out the best in each other, create a sense of uniqueness, and lead to self-fulfillment.

provement, but nothing like Christian ideas. The Hindoo considers this such a poor world for women, that it is thought no particular harm to drown a female infant, though a heinous offence to thus dispose of a boy. The same is true, to some extent, of the Persians, Turks, and Mohammedan races, generally. Home, as understood by us, is an unknown institution; the harem takes its place, and polygamous customs have destroyed, to a great extent, the valor and energy of the men and the attractive graces of woman.

In the march of progress, these nations are fast falling behind and sinking beneath the hardy vigor of Western Christians. History scarcely records an instance where an organized nation of monogamists has fallen before polygamists.

The monogamic Greeks, with a little army of forty thousand men, overran all the proud empires of Southern Asia; the effeminate Persians and Hindoos could not stand before the hardy valor of that people, who held, as a fixed principle, that the dignity of woman is the strength of the State. Monogamic Rome completed what Greece had begun, in destroying the power of the Western Asiatics. For six hundred years the honor and dignity of the Roman matron were the subjects of unwearied praise, till Rome herself was corrupted by the nations she had conquered. The reign of the first Asiatic, who wore the Imperial purple, marks the beginning of a great decline, and Rome, in turn, fell before the hardy monogamists of Northern Europe. The Mohammedans easily overran Asia and Northern Africa, but in Europe their course was soon checked. The hosts of Abderahman melted like snow before the stout arms of the German nations, who left the plains of Poitiers [*sic*] covered with the corpses of three hundred thousand polygamists.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The *Battle of Tours* (also known as the *Battle of Poitiers*) occurred in 732 A.D. between the Franks, led by Charles Martel, and the Umayyad Caliphate forces led by Abdul Rahman Al Ghafiqi. The battle was a significant event in European history as it halted the advance of the Islamic Caliphate into Western Europe. However, the claim of three hundred thousand polygamists being killed in the battle is not supported by historical records. Additionally, the casualty figures provided are likely exaggerated, as the total number of soldiers on both sides combined was probably much lower.

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But it may be said these comparisons are unfair, as setting civilized nations against semi-barbarians. But this fact makes a better comparison impossible, that the lowest nation of monogamists is far above the highest of polygamists. The white inhabitants of Utah are the only branch of the Caucasian race that have adopted polygamy within many hundred years. Of course we would look for certain results there, and if not seen at once, many would conclude that Utah was an exception to the general rule. But it is to be remembered that polygamy has been practiced among them but twenty-seven years. Nevertheless it has shown a marked and rapid tendency towards evil; and in many of its features probably worse than in any Mohammedan country.

The first result to be noted is a universal, and worse than Moslem jealousy, both among men and women. I have the testimony of dozens, brought up in the midst of the system, and several of them children of second wives, that such a thing as a harmonious family of many wives is unknown in their acquaintance. Others say there are such, but all admit they are rare. I am speaking now of the women and young people's testimony; the men will often claim the contrary, even when their own families disprove it. Among my acquaintances in Salt Lake City is a young lady, who is the daughter of a second wife, whose history illustrates this matter very forcibly. Her mother had lived in polygamy for fifteen years, and finally became convinced that it was as sinful as she had found it miserable.

The troubles of her mind brought on a mortal sickness, when she called her daughter to her bedside, and told her that she had lived in misery, and was dying without hope; that she was now convinced of her sin, and only desired her daughter to escape from it.

The daughter as required, took a solemn oath never to enter polygamy. The mother told her to be firm, and her mother's spirit would protect her. Soon after she died, and the daughter left her father's house, at the age of fourteen, to reside with a relative who had apostatized, and though twice taken back, is now permitted to live there unmolested. The father stands high in the Mormon Church, and still has four wives. During the first month of my stay in Salt Lake City, the second wife of a well known Mormon

left him, and went to work in a hotel. After a short stay there, she took her child and started to Montana, when the husband took out a writ of *habeas corpus* for the child; the Sheriff overtook her thirty miles North, when, seeing him coming, she ran for the mountains, distant half a mile. She was overtaken and the child torn away from her, and brought to the city, which, of course, induced the mother to return. She was going with some emigrants who dared not assist her, for fear of Mormon vengeance.

Instances of like nature might be cited at will; and it is only too plain, that the system results in the utter destruction of domestic love and harmony. The Mormons themselves hesitatingly acknowledge, that the "thing called love among the Gentiles" cannot exist under their system; but claim that they have instead, a purer feeling of respect, support and friendship.

Hence, it is quite the custom among the Mormon leaders, to speak of domestic affection and endearments with a sort of sneer, or as something to be but rarely indulged in, and rather unworthy of the manly character.

The Mormons claim that a man *may* love equally half a dozen women, as well as a mother may the same number of children, and that the women are satisfied with this divided affection; but that this is not, and never can be the case, I need say to no one who has the slightest knowledge of the female heart. For a man to love six women, equally well, is manifestly impossible; but it is possible for him to be equally indifferent to all. And to this does the teaching of the leaders directly tend; rather than create a jealousy, or show a marked preference for one, they are to cultivate a mere equal respect for all. Nor is it often possible for a man, whose care and affection are divided between three or four women of varying charms and tempers, to regard equally the children of all; if he have common affection, the most affectionate child will become his favorite, and engross his attention; and thus jealousy, far from being confined to adults, rages equally in the bosoms of the young. This is seen and noticed in almost every family, and the story of Jacob's partiality, and his children's jealousy, is repeated every day in the year. So greatly do these troubles multiply in the larger families, that in spite of their inclination to

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secrecy, the parents are forced in bitterness of soul to make known their grievances.

In one sermon, preached while I was at Salt Lake, Brigham Young made this remark: "The women are every day complaining of what they have to suffer in plurality. If it's any harder on them than it is on the men, God help them. Many of them seem to think a man in plurality has nothing to do but listen to their troubles, and run at their beck and call. I believe I have wives that would see me damned rather than not get every little furbelow they want."<sup>4</sup>

But the smaller families are happy in comparison, and it is within the walls of the larger harems, according to all reports, that the demon of jealousy reigns supreme. Female nurses of Salt Lake say that it is no uncommon thing, in the better class of polygamous households, for a child to be born to one wife and all the others to remain sullenly in their rooms, unless specially called, apparently without interest or concern for the result.

At first view it seems incredible that any woman should be indifferent under such circumstances; and yet we can readily understand that a woman would be far from pleased at the birth of a child which was her husband's, but not hers. From the torment of such feelings there is no refuge but in a cultivated indifference, and such seems to be the ideal of all thorough Mormons in regard to the affections.

Brigham Young himself is personally one of the coldest of men. According to one who knows his habits, he usually sleeps alone, in a small room behind his office; and a woman who lived many years in his family, tells me she never saw him caress or pet but one of his children. In speaking to one of my Mormon acquaintances, Brigham gave the following as his idea of fatherly duty: "I pay no attention to the children, but leave that to their mothers, according to the law of nature. The bull pays no attention to his calves."<sup>5</sup>

In this sentence is embodied the social perfection of polygamy, as it will be "when the Lord has healed the Saints of all their old

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<sup>4</sup> Original source of this quote is unknown.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

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Gentilish traditions." The question will, of course, be asked: Are the Mormon women happy? It must be remembered that only one-third or one-fourth of all the women in Utah are in polygamy, either as first or subsequent wives; and, as to the rest, there is no particular cause for unhappiness from that source, except the constant dread that their husbands will take additional wives. These exceptions noted the testimony, as far as it can be had, is universal, that Mormonism is a "hard faith for women." Again, it may be asked: What do the women say about it? Generally, they say nothing. It is "sound Mormon doctrine," that the "first duty of a woman is submission, and the second silence;" and, certainly, the majority of Utah women would gain heaven on those conditions. The most noticeable fact to a Gentile traveling through Mormon settlements is the strangely quiet way in which women discharge their household duties.

They stand behind the guest at the way-side hotel, replenish the table and attend upon his wants, but never enter into the conversation, venture not the slightest observation or inquiry, and very rarely answer his questions in anything more than monosyllables. And those questions are few, for it is almost, if not quite, a capital crime in the Mormon code to "interfere with our women." Such principles and such practice can tend only to the degradation of woman; and this I note as the second great evil of polygamy. To Eastern minds it is quite impossible to convey a full comprehension of the many ways, the thousand little expressions, the tone of public and private manners, and the daily incidents in which is manifested this general lack of respect for women. This is so marked that it is a common subject of talk, even among themselves. Said a young Mormon woman, who had just married a Gentile, to me: "I don't know half a dozen men here who really respect their wives. It is a constant wonder to us, the way the Gentiles treat their women."

I have often been amused at the appearance of their young women who were attending Gentile balls for the first time. That a gentleman should bow so reverently to his partner, that he should offer a lady his arm just to cross the room, that he should esteem it a pleasure rather than a favor, to bring a glass of water or the like, seems to excite their amazement. Social lines were



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closely drawn the winter of my stay in Salt Lake, and no young woman could venture to associate with the Gentiles, without losing her standing among Mormons entirely. Still, many found their way into Gentile society, though if they persisted in it, they were usually “cut off and dis-fellowship[p]ed” by the Church authorities.

The fanaticism of the Mormons is so great that they consider a woman “lost” if she associates with Gentile men; it is concluded at once that she can have no pure motive in so doing, and among their own people they possess the power to ruin a woman’s character entirely. An old Mormon, at whose house I visited occasionally, seldom failed to give me his views of the absurdity of our common ideas of woman. His favorite style was to give me a burlesque representation of our mode of addressing ladies, and when he got warmed up on the subject, it was highly amusing to see him skip about the room, hat in hand, bowing and grimacing to the chairs, and imitating the dandified address of an exquisite. Most of the polygamists habitually speak of their wives as “my women” and in his jocular moments, while preaching, the late Heber C. Kimball often spoke of his facetiously as “my cows.”<sup>6</sup>

I must say, however, that all of this is not due to polygamy, but much of it to the women themselves. Nearly all of them are of foreign birth, English, Welsh, Scotch and Scandinavian, and of that class, too, among whom men have never been accustomed to respect women very highly. I am sure polygamy could not have been established in a purely American community, and the Mormons themselves say that all the trouble and opposition comes from the American or Irish wives, though there are but few of the latter.

But the vileness of Mormon polygamy, which gives it infamous pre-eminence over that of Jews, Turks and Hindoos, is yet to be described, and consists in the grosser forms of incest, the intermarriage of near relations. In their general revolt against the ethics of Christendom, and attempt to found a society upon the

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<sup>6</sup> Heber C. Kimball, according to several witnesses, commonly referred to women as cows, reportedly saying: ‘I think no more of taking another wife than I do of buying a cow.’ See Richard Abanes, *One Nation under Gods* (New York, NY: Four Rooms Eight Windows, 2003), 295.

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most primitive models, they have disregarded alike the laws of Moses and Mohammed; and if they have any example in modern times, it must be in the Utes and Shoshonees [*sic*] who surround them. To marry a mother and one or more of her daughters is even thought meritorious; and the Mormon authorities often advise a man to marry sisters, as they usually agree better than others.

Robert Sharkey, a merchant of Salt Lake City, married three sisters, one of whom was divorced from her first husband to marry him. They all lived in one house, and quite happily, it is said, for several years, when in some strange manner they all became convinced that polygamy was wrong. One of the sisters started East, but soon returned and endeavored to make some arrangement for him to put away the other two. There were difficulties in the way, and Sharkey's trouble was so great on the subject that his mind became disordered, and in August, 1868, he committed suicide by shooting himself through the head. The widowed sisters still live together, and are determined opponents of polygamy. Two of Brigham Young's favored wives, Clara [Clarissa Caroline] Decker and Lucy [Ann] Decker Seely, are sisters, the second having been the widow of Dr. Isaac Seely, of Nauvoo, Illinois. One family within my knowledge consists of two men and four women, the men's first wives being sisters, and their second wives each a sister of the other man, all living in one house. Or to state it mathematically: A and B, first marry sisters, then A marries B's sister, and B A's sister. Here is no marriage of blood relations, and yet it looks like a terrible mixture somewhere.

The question arises for lawyers: Suppose each of the women to have children, what akin are they respectively? And which of them could lawfully marry according to Leviticus and Chancellor Kent? If polygamy continues, these mixtures are nothing to what must take place in the next generation, for without a chemical analysis no "heraldry Harvey" could ever succeed in finding the consanguineous circulation, to say nothing of the collateral. As it now is, it seems as if half the children in the city are related in some way or other to the Kimballs, the Pratts or the Youngs, and many to all three. If it stopped here, some faint excuse might be

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made; but the marriage of uncle and niece has occurred often enough to establish it as a Mormon custom. Bishop Smith, of Brigham City, numbers *two of his own brothers daughters* among the inmates of his harem, "sealed " to him by Brigham Young, with a full knowledge of the relationship; and in the southern settlements several such cases exist. As already stated, polygamy is but a mild affair north of Salt Lake City, compared with the southern settlements; and in the latter are found all the worst features of Mormonism. There the bishop is absolute, spiritual guide, temporal governor and social tyrant; there are collected the most ignorant and degraded of the foreign converts; the doctrines of Mormonism coincide fully with the people's natural habits of thought; respect for woman, who is practically a slave, is a thing unknown, and the marriage of near relatives is so common that to remark on it would itself be considered remarkable. The marriage of first cousins is common, but I have heard of no case of aunt and nephew. The following affair seems too horrible for belief among any people in America; but is as well proved as any fact can be by human testimony, particularly that of the woman herself who went out of the Territory with a military expedition fitted out under General Connor.

Some sixteen years ago, a young Scotchman came to Salt Lake City in company with his half sister, who commenced keeping house for him. After a time he went to Brigham and professed a desire to marry the girl, citing the example of Abraham and his half sister Sarai. Brigham owned there was something in it. Abraham was an example in favor of polygamy, and why not in this? He finally sent for the girl, and finding her handsome and lively, solved the problem by marrying her himself; the half brother yielded to the Prophet's superior claim, and all was well. But in a few short weeks the lady's delicate condition showed too plainly that the amorous half brother had anticipated marital rights, and Brigham found himself in a fair way to have an heir *de jure* that was not *de sanguine*. Here was a problem. It would never do for the Prophet to acknowledge himself "sold," so he sent for the brother, told him he had reconsidered the matter, divorced the woman from himself, and delivered her to the brother, who dutifully received her from the arms of the Prophet. She lived with

her half brother a few years as his wife, and bore him three children, but finally saw the degradation of her position, and left for the States. This man still resides in Salt Lake City, is a prominent citizen, and seems to have neither blame nor shame attached to him.<sup>7</sup> When I first heard of this and other instances of like nature, and heard the horrible doctrine of incest attributed to the Mormons, I could not but think it an invention of some bitter enemy of the sect; but since then I have heard it fully avowed by the same prominent Mormon, whose testimony is given in chapter ninth. Referring to the cases above, he said: "That is the law of God under the new dispensation. Things are allowed under one dispensation which are not under others. As it was with Abel and Abraham, so it will be again. The day will soon come, when brothers and sisters will marry. Shouldn't I prefer my own blood to any other? Don't I love my own blood best?"<sup>8</sup> Still another Mormon avers, that "to have a pure priesthood, we may in time have to follow the *example of the doves in their nest*, as Christ meant it to be understood." This doctrine was first advanced by Brigham from the pulpit several years ago, but was received with such undisguised manifestations of surprise and disgust, that he ceased to pursue it further, closing with the remark: "Well it's a little too strong doctrine for you now; but the time *will* be, when you will take it in fully." Since then the subject has generally been avoided "at head-quarters," but cannot be altogether denied. Brigham has never favored but one Gentile with his views on the subject, viz.: Wm. Hepworth Dixon, who gives the following statement in his late work entitled "New America:"

"Perhaps it would not be too much to say that in the Mormon code there is no such crime as incest, and that a man is practically free to woo and wed any woman who may take his eye.

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<sup>7</sup> Wm. Hepworth Dixon mentioned a man with the last name "Wall" (see below), but there is a possibility that he may have been referring to "Watt." This speculation arises because George Darling Watt, a notable recorder and developer of the Deseret Alphabet, was known for marrying his half-sister, Jane Brown. Both George and Jane had the same mother, Mary Ann Wood. See *New America - Vol. I* (London, England: Spottiswoode and Co., 1867), 310.

<sup>8</sup> This quote seems to be from Elder Victor Cram, since the author states "*the same prominent Mormon, whose testimony is given in chapter ninth.*" Cram is quoted in Chapter IX.

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“We have had a very strange conversation with Young about the Mormon doctrine of incest. I asked him whether it was a common thing among the Saints to marry mother and daughter; and, if so, on what authority they acted, since that kind of union was not sanctioned, either by the command to Moses or by the ‘revelation’ to Smith. When he hung back from admitting that such a thing occurred at all, I named a case in one of the city wards, of which we had obtained some private knowledge.

“Apostle Cannon said that in such case, the first marriage would be only a form; that the elder female would be understood as being a mother to her husband and his younger bride, on which I named my example, and in which an elder of the Church had married an English woman, a widow, with a daughter then of twelve; in which the woman had borne four children to this husband; and in which this husband had married her daughter when she came of age.

“Young said it was not a common thing at Salt Lake.

“‘But it does occur?’

“‘Yes,’ said Young, ‘it occurs sometimes.’

“On what ground is such a practice justified by the church?” After a short pause, he said, with a faint and wheedling smile: ‘This is a part of the question of incest. We have no sure light on it yet. I cannot tell you what the church holds to be the actual truth; I can tell you my own opinion; but you must not publish it—you must not tell it—lest I should be misunderstood and blamed.’

“He then made to us a communication on the nature of incest, as he thinks of this offence and judges it; but what he then said I am not at liberty to print. As to the facts which came under my own eyes, I am free to speak.

“Incest, in the sense; In which we use the word—marriage within the prohibited degrees—is not regarded as a crime in the Mormon Church.

“It is known that in some of these saintly harems, the female occupants stand to their lords in closer relationship of blood than the American law permits. It is a daily event in Salt lake City for a man to wed two sisters, a brother’s widow, and even a mother and daughter. [A saint named *Wall* has married his half-sister,

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pleading the example of Sarai and Abraham, which Young, after some consideration, allowed to be a precedent for his flock.] In one household in Utah may be seen the spectacle of three women, who stand toward each other in the relation of child, mother and grand-dame, living in one man's harem as his wives! I asked the President, whether, with his new lights on the virtue of breeding in and in, he saw any objection to the marriage of brother and sister. Speaking for himself, not for the Church, he said he saw none at all. What follows, I give in the actual words of the speakers:

"D.—'Does that sort of marriage ever take place?'

"YOUNG.—'Never.'

"D.—'Is it prohibited by the Church?'

"YOUNG.—'No; it is prohibited by prejudice.'

"KIMBALL.—'Public opinion won't allow it.'

"YOUNG.—'I would not do it myself, nor suffer any one else, when I could help it.'

"D.—'Then you don't prohibit, and you don't practise it?'

"YOUNG.—'My prejudices prevent me.'

"This remnant of an old feeling brought from the Gentile world, and this alone, would seem to prevent the Saints from rushing into the higher forms of incest. How long will these Gentile sentiments remain in force?"

"You will find here,' said Elder Stenhouse to me, talking on another subject, 'polygamists of the third generation; when these boys and girls grow up, and marry, you will have in these valleys the true feeling of patriarchal life.'

"The old world is about us yet; and we are always thinking of what people may say in the Scottish hills and the Midland shires."<sup>9</sup>

Morally the reader may be shocked, but logically he should be prepared for all this; for if we are to restore a line of prophets and follow the example of the patriarchs, then incest and polygamy are from the same high source. The examples of Abraham and Sarai, half brother and sister; of Lot and Judah and earlier wor-

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<sup>9</sup> William Hepworth Dixon, *New America - Vol. I* (London, England: Spottiswoode and Co., 1867), 308-312.

thies are to be repeated. As one Mormon said to me, "the world could never have been peopled without this practice, and the foremost nations of antiquity maintained it;" and it is darkly hinted at Salt Lake that father and daughter may form an allowable union. And why not? If "the souls in the spirit world wait earnestly for tabernacles," to furnish them is a mere mechanical act, and may be performed by one person as well as another.

Thus polygamy, incest and blood atonement grow as naturally from Mormon theology as three branches from the same stock.

The mind revolts from the pursuit of these disgusting details, and to the credit of the Mormon people be it said, they are far from being universal in approval of these later doctrines.

Will it be credited after all this that the Mormons claim to be the most virtuous people in the world? Yet such is the fact; and they never weary of pointing to the prostitution of our great cities, claiming that it is their appointed destiny to remove all such evils, and make woman universally pure. This, then, is the self-proclaimed task of Mormonism: to save a few by reducing all to a level; to abolish prostitution by legalizing concubinage; to promote conjugal purity by multiplying the husband's temptation and opportunity, and to improve the condition of woman by making her a mere life-giving machine.

Perhaps the most saddening feature of Mormon polygamy, is the effect it has had upon the young. The medico-theologians of Utah claim that polygamy tends to a more rapid increase of population, as well as to the physical and moral improvement of the species. The former claim may well be questioned, and that the latter is a serious mistake, is plain to any unprejudiced observer.

Salt Lake City already shows its bad effect on the offspring. The site is forty-three hundred feet above the level of the sea, in a dry and bracing climate, equally free from extremes of heat and cold; and consequently it should be one of the healthiest cities in the world.

Exactly the reverse is the fact. The death rate, of all ages was for years a little more than twice that of the State of Oregon, and greater than that of New York, or any city north of the Gulf States. When we come to children, the disparity is still more frightful.

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By actual statistics it is shown that the mortality among children was, for many years, greater in Salt Lake City than any other in America, and the deathrate of Utah only exceeded by that of Louisiana. The Mormons have greatly exaggerated the population of the city, which really contains a little less than eighteen thousand souls, and in this small number the sexton's report for October, 1868, the healthiest month in the year, and my first in the city, gives the interments at sixty, of which forty-four were children. Last year was unusually healthy, and yet the death rate exceeds that of any other State or Territory west of the Mississippi. The Mormons explain this by saying that their people are generally poor and exposed to hardships, but much of that poverty is directly traceable to their religion. Another sad fact is the general neglect of medical care, or rather a general tendency to run to wild and absurd schemes of doctoring. They claim that "laying on of hands and the prayer of faith" will heal the sick, and, yet, no people within my knowledge are so given to "Thomsonianism," "steam doctoring," "yarb medicine," and every other irregular mode of treating disease.

One day, during my residence there, three young children died in the seventeenth ward of scarlet fever. In neither case was a physician called; the Bishop came and "laid on hands with the holy anointing," and an old woman treated two of them with a mild palliative, such as is used for a sore throat. If the patients live after such treatment, it is a "miracle;" if they die "it is the will of the Lord." Two-thirds of the polygamists do not and cannot attend properly to their children.

The bishop of one ward, the fourteenth, has thirty children living, and nearly twenty dead. Joseph Smith had a dozen spiritual wives; but three sons survived him—all of his legal wife.

When Heber Kimball was alive there were five men in the city who had together seventy wives; they had, all told, less than a hundred and fifty children.

A Mormon grave-yard is the most melancholy sight on earth. One bishop of the city has seventeen children buried in one row, and the longest grave is not over four feet. If these men have but the common feelings of humanity, how fearfully are they punished for the crime of polygamy! Brigham's children are generally



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healthy, except that the girls mostly have weak eyes, and two of them are nearly blind; but they are well fed, housed and clothed. But such is the exception, and I could mention a dozen men whose houses are full of women, but their children are in the grave.

The Asiatic institution was never meant to flourish on American soil, and has resulted here in a "slaughter of the innocents," which is saddening to contemplate. As only the most hardy survive, they generally grow up robust and active; but the effects of their social bias are seen in a strange dullness of moral perception, a general ignorance and apparently inherited tendency to vice. If the testimony of Oscar Young, of the oldest son of the Elder Stenhouse mentioned above, and of numerous other young Mormons, can be relied on, youthful demoralization certainly begins at an earlier age in Salt Lake than in other places. In many cases of poor men in polygamy, the husband, two wives and their children occupy the same room; in many instances the husband and two wives have but one bed, and when we consider the scenes and conversation to which these children are witnesses, it would seem that no exalted ideas of purity could ever enter their minds. Taken from school at an early age, or only permitted to enter it at all during a few winter months, they are often put in extreme youth to herding cattle on the "bench," or beyond Jordan; there they hear the slang of older youths, and from hearing learn to repeat, observe and imitate; demoralization spreads and moral decay seizes upon the very bloom of youth.

From what they so often hear at home, they become precociously prurient and premature observers of the brute creation; and from personal observation and the testimony of many young Mormons, I am convinced there is no part of America where youthful vice, of the peculiarly destructive and degrading kind, prevails so extensively as in Salt Lake City. And this is but a natural result; for polygamy is tenfold more unnatural with such a climate and race than in Southern Asia or Africa.

Strange and paradoxical it is that in a barren land and temperate or harsh climate, they have succeeded in setting up a practice which social philosophy had decided to belong only in regions of

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abundance, in voluptuous climes where soft airs incline to sensual indulgence.

Stranger still, in the attempt to found a purely religious community, they have begun by utterly reversing every idea which the experience of three thousand years had proved to be valuable; and in the very inception of a young society, which was to be fresh, vigorous and pure, have adopted the worst vices of an old and worn out civilization. But to them these arguments are idle; "the mouth of the Lord hath commanded it;" and it is theirs not to study results but to leave it with the Lord: so, beholding all around them the furious revenges of nature on those who violate her most important law, they shut their eyes to these facts and pronounce them false; and bearing in their own bodies the effects of physiological sin, impiously claim a divine sanction to violate the laws of nature.

When, leaving the mere youth we come to young men and women, we observe two curious effects of polygamy. The first is a growing tendency to single life; polygamy to some extent necessitates celibacy, for the number of the sexes being about equal, even in Utah, if one man marries two wives, some other man must do without his one. Polygamy is in fact the worst kind of robbery, and for the twelve young women whom Heber C. Kimball married after reaching Utah, some of them not over eighteen, twelve young men must remain single.

This tendency is now greatly on the increase, particularly among the girls, and it is a common remark with them that they will never marry till they can leave the Territory. And this accounts in part for the second, a general desire among the unmarried to get away and settle out of Utah. The world would be surprised at the constant losses to their population from this source; there has been for years a constant leak from the territory in every direction, and in one sermon I heard Brigham Young enumerate a score of places in California, Nevada, Washington and Oregon, settled entirely by recusant Mormons. In spite of a steady immigration from Europe of from one to four thousand per year, it is still a debatable question whether the Mormons have gained faster than by natural increase for the last five years.

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Indeed, Utah offers but few inducements for a young Mormon, if he possess more than average intelligence or enterprise; and such, it will generally be found, make their way to some other locality. Much has been claimed by the Mormons for the virtue of their young women, and more said against it by some of their opponents. From the best evidence at my command I think their virtue will average as well, or nearly so, as that of any very poor and ignorant people; but the fatal error of the Mormons is in allowing for no virtue except that by constraint and constant watching. No dependence whatever is placed upon the innate moral sense, and apparently no effort made to cultivate or strengthen it; it is not supposed that virtue is founded in aught but dread, and every thorough going Mormon acts as if he expected his daughters to go wrong the very first opportunity.

The jealousy of the men is even greater than that of the women. Nine-tenths of them take it for granted that a Gentile can have no good purpose in addressing a Mormon girl; and it is not uncommon to hear a Mormon say, "I will shoot any Gentile I see walking with my daughter."

It must be confessed, they have some foundation for this harsh judgment, as in former years hundreds of Gentiles merely came there to winter, and often left their wives in the spring; and it is a sad fact that of all the women who have left the Mormons, the majority have turned out badly. When the California volunteers left there, they took off a great many with them, of whom the majority were not married. The Mormons, of course, attribute this to the immoral character of the Gentiles; but it is plainly attributable to their system of forced virtue, by means of constraint and constant watching. "The virtue that must be guarded is not worth the sentinel,"<sup>10</sup> and these girls, who have been brought up in such strictness and seclusion, with the idea that none of their Mormon companions would dare attempt their virtue, are but poorly prepared to encounter the seductive arts we know to be common in the Gentile world. If there is such a thing as trust between the sexes in Utah, I have witnessed no manifestations of

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<sup>10</sup> From the Indiana Constitutional Convention, *Report of the Debates and Proceedings of the Convention for the Revision of the Constitution of the State of Indiana, 1850 - Volume 2* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1850), 1215.

it; society has already assumed the same air of jealous distrust so often remarked among the Moslems, while austerity and reserve are considered the noblest graces of woman.

It is gratifying to state, however, that the grossness of sentiment and language which prevailed ten years ago, is slowly yielding to something better, and plain spoken as the Mormons now are, they would hardly listen quietly to the indecent harangues once so common from Heber C. Kimball. Though they constantly insist that they care nothing for the Gentile world, and will not be moved by its opinions, yet the Mormons are being slowly improved in spite of themselves; they have adopted Sunday schools, daily papers, and lyceums from the Gentiles settled among them, and a more healthy sentiment is struggling weakly against the tide of corruption. But with all present mitigating features, polygamy still remains the foulest blot upon America's fame, and the Mormons still defy every law of God and man in their doctrines, and, to some extent, in their practice. Such, in brief, is Mormonism. While all the world is striving to move on to a higher, more spiritual plane of religious truth, they have turned back to the gross forms and symbols of the time when religion was in its infancy. It is as though the old mathematician should throw aside his acquired learning, and go back to the sticks and balls with which he learned to count. While the Christian world is rejoicing, that Christ has freed us "from the yoke which our fathers were not able to bear,"<sup>11</sup> they go back two thousand years, and seek all their examples from a barbarous age and a stiff-necked and rebellious people. And their practice is like their faith. Claiming a religion which will elevate men to gods, they plead for examples the base instincts of the brute creation; with snow in sight the year round, they pattern their domestic life after that of inter-tropical barbarians, and vainly hope to produce the vigor of hardy Northmen from the worst practices of effeminate Asiatics.

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<sup>11</sup> John Tillotson, *The Works of the most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson, late Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, England: Goodwin, Tooke, and Pemberton, 1714/7<sup>th</sup> edition), 327.