

CHAPTER IV

AFTER JOSEPH'S DEATH. — BRIGHAM YOUNG ELECTED PROPHET.

Kindness of the Gentiles.—Strangers in a Strange Land.—My Parents join the Saints in Nauvoo.—They Purchase Land in the City.—Are shamefully Defrauded.—Joseph's Unfaithful Friends.—My Parents left almost Destitute.—I am Born in the Midst of Troubles.—The Saints Bewildered.—Who should succeed Joseph?—Sidney Rigdon's Claims to the Presidency.—He returns to Nauvoo.—Has Dreams and Visions.—He Promises to "Pull Little Vic's Nose."—The Apostles hear of the Prophet's Murder.—They hasten to Nauvoo.—Brigham begins his Successful Intrigues.—He Settles Sidney Rigdon.—An Extraordinary Trial.—Brigham's Idea of Free Voting.—Woman's Suffrage in Utah.—Why Brigham gave the Franchise to the Women.—My own Experience as a Voter.—Brigham dictates what I'm to Do.—I obey Quietly.—How Sidney Rigdon was Deposed.—Brigham Rules the Church.

UPON the arrival of the Saints in Illinois they made Quincy their first stopping-place, and thence the majority of them went to Nauvoo, the new gathering-place.

My parents did not accompany them, but remained in Quincy two months. They reached that city in a state of almost utter destitution, with barely clothing enough to render them decent, certainly not enough to make them comfortable. Their reception by the residents of the city, indeed

by the people of Illinois generally, was very cordial, and my mother often says she

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STEAL A
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shall never forget the kindness she received at their hands. Literally, she "was a stranger and they took her in, hungry and



they fed her, naked and they clothed her." And not only her, but her little ones.

My mother was energetic and willing, and she found work in plenty, and managed to get together some of the comforts and necessaries of life, when, after a two months' sojourn amid these hospitable people, they removed to Payson, where my father built a carriage manufactory and once more commenced business. After three years of remunerative labor, during which time he had got his business fairly established, he concluded to leave it and join the Saints at Nauvoo; he and my mother both—the latter more especially—desiring to be once more in Zion with the "chosen people." My father had purchased five acre-lots in the City of Nauvoo, and felt that he had a material as well as a spiritual hold upon Zion. The deeds were properly executed, and after making sure that everything was right during a visit to the city, he made instant preparations to move his family hither.

When he returned with his family and prepared to take possession of his property, he found it claimed by Dr. Foster, a friend and favorite of Joseph Smith, who pretended to have made a verbal contract for the land two years before. This, of course, brought the property into a dispute which could only be settled by the church authorities, Joseph himself presiding. As a matter of course, there was but one decision, and what would be my father know very nearly as well before it was given as he did afterwards. Joseph would not decide against his friend; the rest, seeing how his mind was made up, dared not; and the land was declared to belong to Foster, who, by the way—such were his regard and gratitude for his leader—apostatized not very long afterwards, attached himself to Law and his party, and finally removed from Nauvoo, denouncing the religion and its Prophet, and, indeed, carried his enmity so far that

89 CONTEST FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE CHURCH.

he joined those miscreants to whose violence may be attributed the death of Joseph Smith.

My father was again stripped of his property, by the treachery and unjust ruling of the very man whom he had so faithfully served. He had enough money remaining, however, to purchase other lots, and on the land thus obtained he built two very comfortable houses, in one which I was born, as I before said, on the 13th of September, 1844, at the most tempestuous and most critical period in all Mormon history.

Joseph Smith had been assassinated the previous July, and his death, sudden and violent as it was, had almost paralyzed the people, who were thus left without a leader, and who were ill fitted to govern themselves, since they had for so long a time given up their wills to the

Prophet, following his instructions as obediently as the most tractable children do their parents' behests. They had for so many years depended upon him to guide them that they were unfitted almost to think for themselves. Life was a hopeless muddle, and they saw no way of making it clearer. Then their former friends had turned to enemies, and they began to fear that they should be driven from their pleasant homes in Illinois, as they had been from Missouri. And with all the disturbance outside the church, there were heresy and schism among themselves.

The question who should be the leader in Joseph's place was exercising the church. The "First Presidency" was composed of Joseph Smith, his brother Hyrum, and Sidney Rigdon. Hyrum Smith was killed in prison with his brother, and Rigdon, although he had not apostatized, had grown cool in the faith, left Nauvoo, and was living at Pittsburgh, PA., enjoying life outside of Mormondom, and seemingly finding much pleasure in Gentile society. After the Missouri episode his enthusiasm was very much chilled, and he indulged in fewer rhodomontades against the government. When Joseph made his advances to his daughter

90 PULLING "LITTLE VIC'S" NOSE!

Nancy, Rigdon was very much offended, and left Nauvoo at once. As soon, however, as he heard of Joseph's death he made all haste to return and secure for himself the "office" of "Prophet, Seer, and Revelator," to which he claimed he had been ordained. He was not received with enthusiasm by the Saints,



and he very soon discovered that whoever might step into the dead Prophet's shoes, he, for a certainty, would not be allowed to wear them. There was nothing then remaining for him to do but to assume that Joseph's mantle of prophecy had fallen upon his shoulders; consequently, he revealed in visions and dreams of the wildest and most fanatical kind. His prophecies were the most wonderful that ever were heard, and were so very incoherent and inconsistent that serious doubts of his sanity were entertained. There were to be tremendous battles; blood was to flow until the horses waded in it up to their very bridles. All the powers of the earth were to assail the Saints, but Rigdon was to lead the faithful to certain victory. All the strength of earth

was to bow before this band of people and their consecrated leader, and he was, as a final act of triumph as he returned from the battle of Armageddon, to call in England and "pull the nose of little Vic."

What the young queen, then in the full flush of popularity, had done to raise this modern Bombastes' ire, remains to this day a mystery. It is needless to say that the battles have never been fought, nor has her majesty's nose been maltreated by Rigdon or any other crazy Mormon fanatic.

91 BRIGHAM SHOWS THE CLOVEN HOOF!

At the time of the assassination of Joseph Smith nearly all the apostles were away on a mission. On hearing the evil tidings from Zion, they hastened there without delay, and Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Hyde, and Herber C. Kimball arrived soon after Rigdon made his appearance, and while he was in the midst of his "revelations." From the moment of their arrival his chances were smaller than ever, although he still maintained, but not so public a manner as at first, that he held "the keys of David," and that he intended to persist in the maintenance of his claims, even if obliged to do so forcibly.

The man for the situation appeared at this juncture in Brigham Young. Ambitious himself for the position which Rigdon so earnestly coveted, fortune seemed to have placed him exactly in the situation to attain it. He was—so it happened by the merest chance—the senior apostle, and that gave him authority. Thomas Marsh, who was at one time the senior, had apostatized; Patten, the second apostle, had been killed by the mob, and this made the third apostle the first or senior of the "twelve." The third happened to be Brigham Young; so that, after all, it was a mere chance that placed him where he is. Both the Pratts were far superior to him in intellect; and they and Orson Hyde were far ahead of him in mental attainments, such as they were. He was a very plain man, entirely uneducated, and had been noted for nothing except his fidelity to the Prophet and the church and his hard-working disposition. But he was shrewd enough to see his opportunity and to seize it, and yet to do in such a manner that neither his associates nor the church itself had the least suspicion of his real plan.

The first move was to have Rigdon's case settled. He was summoned for public trial before the High Council, and eight of the apostles appeared as witnesses. Brigham Young played a very important part in this trial; he opened proceedings by accusing Rigdon of a determination to rule the church or ruin it, and followed up the accusation by

declaring that he should do neither. All the events of his life were passed in review, and although he was not present, being detained, it was said, by illness, the case was by no means deferred, and he was tried without an opportunity of defending himself. At the motion of Brigham, he was "cut off from the Church of Latter-Day Saints, and delivered over to the buffetings of Satan, in the name of the Lord; and all he people said, Amen."

There were about ten persons who ventured to vote in favor of Rigdon, and they were immediately "suspended" from the church for their temerity. This is the way in which persons are served even now who venture to disagree with Brigham Young. There is absolutely no such thing known among the Mormons as a free expression of opinion. Whether it be on religious or political subjects, the decision of the people is governed by the wishes of the President. The manner of voting in public assemblies is never varied. Brigham prefaces all ceremonies of the kind by an address, in which he manages to let the people know exactly how he feels upon the subject under discussion, and they understand that they are to feel the same way; and as there is no question of choice, they make themselves fancy they do believe exactly as he does. If they have any question of doubt, they stifle it very quickly, and, if they are very good Mormons, take themselves to task for their wickedness in entertaining a thought contrary to the opinion of their Prophet. After the address, Brigham calls for a show of uplifted hands, and requests every one to vote. The "contrary minds" are then called; but such in the singular unity of this people that there is never a "contrary" mind among them. To make this ceremony of voting more humorous, the Prophet, in requesting all the people to vote, wittily adds, "in one way or another." This piece of pleasantry on Brigham's part is quite appreciated by the Mormons, and the "one way" receives all the saintly votes, to the utter exclusion of "the other." Let any one attempt to take the

93 THE PROPHET BRIGHAM'S LITTLE TRICKS.

Presidential joke *au serieux*, and it becomes anything but pleasant for him. He is looked upon with suspicion, regarded as an enemy of the church and its ruler, and if he escape serious persecution he may be considered especially fortunate.

In politics there is about the same freedom of opinion, or of its expression, rather. Although a semblance of independent action is kept up, since the people are not publicly told which way they must vote, yet the bishops and ward-teachers manage to make it understood very decidedly what is expected of "the Faithful" at the elections. The expectations, it is perhaps needless to state, are always re-

alized.

I have often heard ladies in the East say that they considered Utah way in advance of the age in one respect at least; that there the equality of the sexes was so far regarded that the ballot was in the woman's hands, and that there they had received the right of suffrage. And I know that for this one act Brigham Young is commended by some of the leaders of the Women Suffrage party, and he is viewed by them with a lenient eye, in spite of all his other acts of gross injustice. If these same radical reformers only understood the reason that the franchise was extended to Utah women, and the peculiar "freedom" and intelligence with which they are allowed to exercise this privilege, I think they would not be so scathing in their denunciations of the Poland Bill. To the men and women engaged in this reform there seems to be no possibility that there can be cases where positive harm would ensue when the ballot was given to women; they evidently believe that with universal suffrage will be ushered in the millennium.

It may have that effect in other portions of the States, but in polygamous Utah, ruled over by a treacherous tyrant, this very right, which they claim will loosen the legal and political shackles by which women are bound, and render them absolutely free, only binds the chains the tighter and makes them grater slaves than ever. And the most hate-

94 HOW BRIGHAM MAKES THE WOMEN VOTE.

ful part is, that they are helping to tighten their own bonds, and are doing it, too, under compulsion.

The reason of this wonderful act of "justice" on Brigham Young's part can easily be given. When the Union Pacific Railroad was completed, and the influx of miners and other outsiders from the Gentile world began to flood the Territory and make homes for themselves in the very midst of Mormondom, the chiefs of the Mormon hierarchy grew very fearful and apprehensive lest the power should pass from their grasp into Gentile hands by the gradual change of population. By adopting female suffrage they would treble their voting power at once. There was no longer any hesitation; the measure was adopted, and so general and generous was it, that in Utah to-day every person of the female sex, from the babe in the arms to the oldest, bedridden, imbecile crone, has the right of elective franchise, and is compelled to use it.

To illustrate the intelligence with which women vote, and the freedom of opinion in political matters which is allowed them, I think I can do no better than give my own first experience in exercising the prerogative of a free woman.

It was the first election-day that occurred after the right of suffrage had been, not granted, but commanded. I was standing in front of my husband's office, talking with a

friend, when he came out. His first question, put before he had offered either myself or my friend any greeting, was—

“Have you voted to-day?”

“No, Brother Young, I have not.”

“Then I suppose you intend doing so at once.”

“Not at all,” I replied; “I have no intention of voting at all.”

“And why not?” he asked somewhat angrily.

“Because I have not yet sufficiently acquainted with the political situation to understand what it is best to do, and I prefer not to vote ignorantly.”

“But I wish you to vote,” was his peremptory reply.

95 HOW BRIGHAM'S WIVES ENJOY THE FRANCHISE.

“Excuse me, please, Brother Young,” pleaded I; “I don't know who or what to vote for, and I really had much rather not.” I was quite in earnest. I did not know anything then of politics, and I must confess I had no interest in them.

“Get in the carriage,” commanded he, so sternly that I knew I must obey, and further parley would be useless. “I want you to vote, and at once. Mr. Rossitur will take you to the polls and tell you how to vote.”



Mr. Rossitur, to whose care I was committed, was Brigham's coachman, and was to be my political instructor. All the information I gained will never harm nor help me very materially. I was driven to the polls, a ticket was handed me, and hustled along without the opportunity of examining it, and to this day I am in blissful ignorance of what

or who I cast my only vote for. I know, however, that among other officers they were electing a delegate to Congress, and I suppose I must have voted for George Q. Cannon. There is an encouraging and inspiring picture for the advocates of female suffrage, who are jubilant over the triumph of their cause in Utah. A polygamous wife of the President of the church conveyed to the polls by her husband's coachman, and be compelled to cast the vote he gives her without an opportunity of exercising her judgment or her choice, and ignorant even of what she is doing. By all means let us have the suffrage in Utah, in spite of Judge Poland.

After the Council had disposed of Sidney Rigdon to its satisfaction, and “all the people” had signified theirs by saying “Amen,” he turned about and prepared to fight

96 HOW THE “PROFIT” OF THE CHURCH BEGAN HIS REGIN.

them. His resistance, however, was short and feeble. He returned to Pittsburgh, and attempted to resurrect the “*Later-Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*,” a Mormon publication that had died some years before. His attempt was futile, and he gave up the contest with his failure to revive that sheet, and Mormonism has known little or nothing of him since.

In the mean time the Twelve Apostles were to rule over the church until such time as a change in the Presidency should seem necessary. This was Brigham's first step, and the purposes he was as much the ruler of the Mormons as he is now, although he did not then arrogate so much to himself. He knew very well that it would not do to declare himself too suddenly; so he quietly worked and waited until he found himself in the position which he now holds—a position which has never been contested by his followers.

He was always a hard worker, quite successful in making converts, and the steady determination of his character, which amounted to decided obstinacy, united with a scheming cunning, helped him very much at this period of his life.

He was shrewd enough not to attempt, as Rigdon had done, to play the prophet; he knew very well that in that should take Joseph's place, and to this day he maintains to those who remember what he said then, and contrast his past assertions with his present position as head of the church—“No one can take the place of Joseph; he is in his place as the spiritual head of the church, and will always be there, through time and eternity.”

“I am no prophet and Revelator, as Joseph was,” he used to say to the Saints: “but Joseph left revelations enough for you to follow for twenty years; in the mean time, the Lord will reveal Himself to those among you whom He may

97 HE HAS AN EYE TO THE CASH!

choose so to honor, and there is no reason why you should not all have revelations.”

But, revelations or not, one thing he insisted upon: that was, that the Saints were to “build the kingdom up for Joseph,” and that he kept constantly before them. He next proceeded to make the church self-sustaining in a pecuniary sense. Each member was to tithe himself or herself one tenth of all their property, and place it in the hands of the “Twelve” for use of the church. This tithing fund Brigham had absolute control of—a control that he has taken pains

never to lose. He instituted other “reforms” in the church, and everything he proposed the people acquiesced in with a surprising readiness. They yielded to him, seemingly, without being aware that they were yielding, and he had his own way without opposition, while poor deluded Saints thought he was carrying out their ideas, in part at least. They came under Brigham’s yoke without knowing when they bent their necks to receive it, and in less than six months after the Prophet’s death his mastery over the church was as assured as it is to-day.