

# CHAPTER XVIII.

## INCREASE OF POLYGAMY.—MIXED-UP CONDITION OF MATRIMONIAL AFFAIRS.

Christ alleged to be a polygamist.—The Men to save the Women.—Making “Tabernacles” for little Spirits.—The Story of certain Ladies who were Deceived.—They Discover a Mystery.—Their Fate.—Orson Hyde’s False Prophecy.—Throwing Mud at Apostates.—Death Preferred to Polygamy.—Frightful Intermarriage.—Married his Mother-in-law.—A Man who Married his wife’s Grandmother, Mother, and All.—Marrying a half-sister.—Marrying Nieces and Sisters.—How Emigrant Girls were Married Off.—Frightful Story of a Poor Young Girl.—Polygamy and Madness.—One Woman’s Love too Little.—How English Girls were Deceived.—How Claude Spenser committed a Damnable Wrong.—A Girl who was Martyred for her Religion.—How the Bereaved Husband Acted.—A Man with thirty-three Children.—“They never cost him a cent.”—A Many-Wived Saint.—Mixed-up Condition of Marital Affairs.

**T**HE “Reformation” was productive of nothing but evil. The most revolting and blasphemous doctrines were taught, and between Blood-Atonement, Mas-



sacres of the Gentiles, and the worst phases of Polygamous Marriage, there was nothing good in the Territory. The whole system of Mormon religion was a mass of revolting crime and wickedness. Bigotry was at flood-tide, and fanaticism ruled reason. The very thought of it brings a shudder. The most horrible things were

taught from the

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pulpit, and decency was outraged every time a Mormon

leader opened his mouth to speak.

They were all maniacs on the subject of Celestial Marriage, and the lengths to which they carried their advocacy of it did not stop with mere absurdities; it became the most fearful profanity. There was not a pure character in all the Bible history which their dirty hands did not besmear, and their foul tongues blacken. Not content with bringing up “Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob,” and David and Solomon, as their examples in the practice of polygamy, Brigham Young, in one of his sermons, delivered during the intensest heat of the excitement, declared that “Jesus Christ was a practical polygamist; Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazurus, were his plural wives, and Mary Magdalen was another. Also, the bridal feast at Cana of Galilee, where Jesus turned the water into wine, was on the occasion of one of his own marriages.

They appealed to women through their maternal as well as through their religious natures. Not only did they teach them that they could never be saved except by the intervention of some man, who should take upon himself the duty of resurrection them at the last day, but they were also told that floating through space were thousands of infant spirits, who were waiting for bodies; that into every child that was born one of these spirits entered, and was thereby saved; but if they had no bodies given them, their wails of despair would ring through all eternity; and that it was, in order to insure their future happiness, necessary that as many of them as possible should be given bodies by Mormon parents. If a woman refused to marry into polygamy, or, being married, to allow her husband to take other wives, these spirits would rise up in judgment against her, because she had, by her act, kept them in darkness.

No one dared to neglect the counsel of the priesthood. Whoever ventured to do so was charged at once with apostasy. Men and women alike were ruled by the arbitrary

### 308 MAKING “TABERNACLES” FOR LITTLE SPIRITS.

will of one man. There is no despotic monarchy in the world where the word of the sovereign is so absolute as in Utah. And never, in the whole history of Mormonism, has the despotic rule been so arbitrary as it was during the period of, and for a short time after, the Reformation.

It was a terribly trying time for women—a time that they have never forgotten. More misery was crowded into a few months than they had endured before in a lifetime, and the misery that began then will be life-long. No one outside of Utah and Mormonism can understand it in the least, because nowhere else it there a possibility of such wretchedness to exist. Only women living in a polygamous community, under the rule of a religion whose fun-

damental principal is the plural-wife system, can full take in the utter helplessness and hopelessness of the situation—a situation from which escape, at that time at least, was next to impossible.

If they did escape, the tongue of calumny pursued them relentlessly, and the vilest reports that the tongues and hearts of vile men could devise were spread concerning them.

In 1856, during the Reformation, and when converts were pouring into Zion almost from every quarter of the earth, were several lovely and refined ladies, who had been drawn thither by the seeming earnestness and deep religious fervor of the Mormon people whom they had seen. Especial pains had been taken to bring these ladies into the church, for they were a much finer type of women than are found generally found among the latter converts, and nothing was ever told them of the existence of the plurality system. Among the converts were a Miss Potter, Mrs. Brownhead and three daughters, and Miss Stayner, who were filled with enthusiasm concerning their new faith, and came to Zion most zealous Saints.

But when, on their arrival, they discovered that polygamy was in open practice, they were distressed beyond

### 309 ORSON HYDE'S LYING PROPHECY.

measure, and sought immediate refuge in the military camp. They were women, all of them, of fine social standing, and had left happy and luxurious homes to come to Zion, impelled by a sense of religious duty. The beastly god which the Mormons so devoutly worshipped had never been even alluded to in their presence.

As a matter of course, their flight enkindled Mormon wrath, and for a while it burned fiercely. They heaped every term of opprobrium upon them that they could think of, and defamed them in every possible way. There was nothing too gross or too indecent for them to say concerning them; and in addition to this wholesale defamation of their characters, they were properly cursed, according to the Mormon liturgy, and all manner of evil was prophesied concerning them. Orson Hyde was inspired one Sunday, in the Tabernacle, to foretell their fate, and he prophesied that they would perish miserably on the way to California, where they had gone under the protection of Colonel Steptoe and his command. It was, no doubt, a great disappointment to the Apostle that, in spite of his prophesies, they arrived safely in California, were married to men of wealth and position, and are now happy wives and mothers, with no thought of Mormondom to mar their happiness, except an occasional burst of thankful feeling that they succeeded in escaping from it. It may be a satisfaction for my readers to know—it is certainly for me to tell—that he not only proved

a false prophet, but was publicly punished by one of the officers for the scandalous reports he had put in circulation regarding these ladies.

Calumny and scandal are among the readiest of the Mormon weapons, and its leaders are specially skilled in their use, as every person who has ever thwarted Brigham Young, or one of his satellites, knows to his or her sorrow. They not only lie themselves, but they hire others to do it for them. Occasionally, in this game of mud-throwing, they get bespattered, but not until they have bedaubed their

### 310 MARRIED HIS OWN SISTER!

victim very thoroughly. It is no wonder that suicides have been so common among the Mormon women: if they left "Zion," it must be at the sacrifice either of life or reputation, and in the hopeless apathetic state into which they were sunk, it was easier to die than to struggle.

One woman, who arrived from England during the "Reformation," and who was rushed into polygamy, actually killed herself rather than become a plural wife: she had been given to Mr. Goodsall, and was living in his family, awaiting the time when she was to be sealed; and one morning, but a few days before the time appointed for the ceremony, she was found with her throat cut, a razor lying by her side. She saw nothing but wretchedness before her, and put an end to her life rather than to face the misery life would bring.

Even the laws of consanguinity [**Relationship by blood or by a common ancestor**] were not respected at that terrible time, and relatives intermarried in a manner that would shock even the most lax-moralled community. Uncles and nieces were married; one man would marry several sisters; and it was a very common thing for a mother and daughter to have the same husband. In one family, at least three generations were represented among the wives—grandmother, mother, and daughter; and a case actually occurred in Salt Lake City where a man married his half sister, and that, too, with the knowledge and approval of Brigham Young. The man stood high in the Mormon Church, and George D. Watt was quoted all through the Territory as a good Saint. He certainly availed himself of his privileges to the fullest extent. He has since apostatized.

Bishop Smith, of Brigham City, married two of his own nieces. Bishop Johnson, of Springville, outdid his brother bishop, and married six. The first one was the daughter of an elder brother; the other five were sisters, and daughters of Lorenzo Johnson. He first married the eldest one,

311 HOW PATRIARCH BROWER  
WENT A-COURTING!

Mary, who was only fifteen at the time; then he asked that all the other might be given to him, to be sealed to him when they should grow up. The youngest one was only two years old at the time that her father promised her to her uncle, and she was only about thirteen when she was sealed to him.

All this is sanctioned by the President; else, of course, it would not occur; and he does not hesitate to say that he sees no reason why persons who are nearly related should not marry; they certainly ought to think more of each other than of strangers; and all that he can see that in the way of such marriages being of very frequent occurrence is popular prejudice. He has said that he, as far as he is personally concerned, would not enter upon such a relationship, but prejudice alone, and not principle, would restrain him.

There are many families where two or more sisters are plural wives to one man. This in the case in Brigham's own family. Among his first plural wives were Clara Decker and Lucy Decker; and two of his daughters, Luna and Fanny, are the wives of George Thatcher; two, Mary and Caroline, were married to Mark Croxall, and two, Alice and Emily, to Hiram Clawson.

Among the early emigrants were two Scotch girls, sisters, named McDonald. They had been but a few days in Salt Lake City, when a Mr. Uriah Brower, a would-be patriarch, presented himself before them with an offer of marriage. One of the girls favored the suit, but the other was more capricious, and not so easily suited with the proposing of a polygamous life. She hated the man for proposing marriage, herself for being an object of his patriarchal passion, and was annoyed at her sister for her willingness to accept him. She had yet to learn that women are by no means free agents in Utah, and have very little voice in the settlement of their own affairs; their destinies are in their own hands, but are entirely at the mercy of

312 STORY OF A DESOLATE WOMAN.

some man's caprice, or the commands of the priesthood.

Her lover was determined; and seeing that it was absolutely of no use for her to go on saying "No," since she must succumb, sooner or later, she gave an indifferent consent, and was sealed to him at the same time with her sister. She was miserably unhappy, and the very next day she applied for a divorce from him, saying she could not, and would not remain his wife. She obtained the divorce; but, having no parents and no home, she was forced to live wherever she could, and she found existence anything but

an easy or pleasant task. In a short time another good brother, seeking to enlarge his kingdom, offered to take her; and she, poor girl! Not knowing what else to do, and almost desperate in her loneliness and desolation, consented to marry a second time in polygamy.

Her new husband already had three wives, and she was placed in the same house with them. Her situation then was worse than even before. Being in the last comer, all the rest turned against her, and she had to endure the hatred of them all. She was ill-treated in every way, but for a long time bore all the wrongs which were inflicted upon her in silence. After the birth of her child, she determined to leave at all hazards; so again applying for a divorce from her second husband, which was as easily obtained as her first one had been, she took her child and went away to earn a living for herself and him. She went out to service; she did washing and cleaning; indeed, she left no stone unturned to obtain an honest livelihood, and bring up her child properly.

After a time her first husband presented himself, and told her that as he married her "for time and eternity," he should hold her to the first marriage contract; that he could do so, since her second husband was no higher in the priesthood than he. He insisted on her returning to him; and the poor woman, seeing no way of escape, was

313 INSANE!

sealed again to him, and was taken to his home, a miserable, comfortless place, where he had five wives already living in poverty and the most terrible degradation. Huddled together like so many animals, they respected neither the laws of decency nor morality. Hannah was there but a short time before she became hopelessly insane. She is living still, but the light of reason has gone out forever, quenched by the horrors of a system which she always loathed. Her sister, Margaret, still drags on a miserable, hopeless existence, not much better off than the poor, unfortunate maniac. She is a moral and physical wreck, and owes her depraved condition to the cause that made her sister a mental ruin.

Life opened brightly enough for these girls in their home among the Scottish hills, but the curse of Mormonism found them out, and then there was nothing but wretchedness and despair for them.

Incidents like these have multiplied from the beginning

314 CLAUDE SPENCER DOES  
THE DEVIL'S WORK.

until now; and yet, in the face of all this misery, the world

is assured the Mormon women are comfortable and content; and that they find no fault with polygamy; indeed, that they prefer the system rather than dislike it; and the world, against all reason and common sense, believes what it is told.

Elder Orson Spencer, now dead, one of the strong pillars of Mormonism, whose letters and theological works



are much quoted among the Saints, while on his first mission to England became the guest of a gentleman of considerable property and good social position, and the father of two interesting daughters, both of whom were recent converts to the Mormon faith. The young ladies were finely educated, possessed of more than ordinary talents, and had always been tenderly attached to each other.

When the young missionary from Zion became an inmate of their father's house, they, with all the zeal of new and enthusiastic converts, vied with each other in showing him every hospitable attention, for the sake of the glorious gospel which they supposed he came to preach, and before very long the elder of the sisters found herself becoming deeply interested in him for his own sake.

The interest was apparently mutual; it ripened into love. Mr. Spencer made a formal proposal to the father for the daughter's hand, and very soon after the lovers were married. The young wife was perfectly happy; she was devoted to her husband, and it seemed to her that life could hereafter hold nothing but happiness for her, she rested so securely in her husband's love, that his care would compass her about, and his strength sustain her, all through her days. She was living her first romance, and sweet enough she found it. Ah, if the hard reality had not been so soon to follow it! But Mormonism marriage soon kills all the romance of a woman's nature, and either kills her at the same time, or leaves her hopeless, apathetic, her finer

## 315 MAKING LOVE TO A SISTER-IN-LAW.

nature crushed within her, bearing life because she must, and not because it holds anything for her of love, or care, or sweet tenderness of any kind. It is oftener this way than the other; alas, for the poor victims that such is the case!

Mr. Spencer had lived among a people who teach and practice the doctrine of a plurality of wives. His own father had brought home eight brides to grace his domestic circle, four of them in one day. The high-priest of his religion, the man to whom he had always listened as the mouth-piece of God, not only preached that it was the privilege and duty of every Saint to wed many wives, but practiced what he preached.

No wonder, then, that the disciple believed he should be living beneath his privileges if he contented himself with the love of one woman. His sister-in-law was a remarkably pretty girl, and fervent in her devotion to the new faith she had espoused. In time, perhaps, if caution was exercised in the manner of teaching, she might be won to a cordial belief in the doctrine of plural marriage—a doctrine which the missionary Saints, with damnable wisdom, had not proclaimed openly in England at that date.

This young brother, imitating the prudent course of his colleagues, preached only those truths which he thought would be received most readily. Such portions of the gospel as might be considered hard doctrine by the new converts he left to be learned by them after their arrival in Zion. His growing admiration for his charming sister-in-law he kept to himself; but when the time arrived for his return home with his new wife, he had succeeded in making arrangements for her sister to accompany them. In the mean time, however, another young lady, also a new convert, had attracted his favorable notice, and as she was to form one of a large company who were about to start for America, he kindly, and disinterestedly, of course, offered to take her under his own care.

## 316 DEATH TO THE SOUL!

During the voyage across the ocean, and the hurried journey through the States, nothing worthy on note occurred. True, Mr. Spencer was very attentive to the young ladies who were traveling under his protection; but his young wife loved him too well, and believed in him too implicitly, to have any thought that he was actuated by other motives than brotherly affection and Christian kindness. At the Missouri River, where the emigrants took leave of civilization, and commenced their long journey over the plains, the members of the little party were thrown more closely together than before; and new even the all-confid-

ing wife could not fail to see that her husband demeaned himself as a lover towards the two girls—her sister and her friend,—and that they by no means discouraged his attentions.

Her reproachful questioning regarding his conduct brought out an explanation of the doctrines of plurality, and an avowal of his intention to marry the girls as soon as they reached Salt Lake. He said that they had both embraced the great truths of their religion fully, and were willing and anxious to be sealed to him as their savior for time and eternity. The poor wife, with all her faith in her husband, her sister, and her religion, shattered in one blow,—but, alas for her, with a heart throbbing with a love that could not die,—never rallied from the shock she received when her doom was thus pronounced by the lips of the one dearest to her.

Day after day, as they continued their toilsome journey, her strength declined, and it was evident, even to the eyes of strangers, that she was dying. Her husband, however, saw nothing, was troubled with no anxieties. He was too much absorbed in his love for the two girls, whose souls he proposed to save, to have any time or thought to spare for his dying wife. The days lengthened into weeks, and still the lamp of life burned lower, while the love had outlived faith and hope was yet strong enough to torture

### 317 LAST HOURS OF A DYING WIFE.

Her with vain longings to hear again the tender words that were never spoken now, and to lean, in her mortal weakness, on the arm that she, so short a time ago, had fondly hoped would be her support, even down to the brink of death. It is easy to say to love unworthily bestowed,

"I would pluck it from my bosom,  
Through my heart were at the root;"

but many a wronged and forsaken wife could tell you that these are only idle words.

Many may wonder if the dying girl's sister had no compunction, no remorse for the part she was playing in this tragedy. None; for so completely was she carried away by the fanaticism with which she had been inspired, that she actually believed she was doing God service in trampling on the holiest feelings of her own nature, and inflicting upon her sister the most cruel wrong that one woman can suffer at the hands of another.

The weary journey was ended at length, and the wanderers reached the Valley which was henceforth to be their

home. The wife lived only just to enter the city, of which



she once fondly dreamed as a heaven upon earth. From the Zion of her earthly hopes she passed on to the true Zion, where the mercy and love of a God kinder than the one she had been taught to worship healed every earthwound, and brought infinite peace to the broken heart.

Just two weeks from the day of her death there was a double bridal in Salt Lake City. The bereaved and sorrowing husband was united in marriage to the equally afflicted sister and her friend, the young lady who accompanied them from England. I have often wondered if there was a ghost present at that bridal, and if the white, dead face of the wronged and murdered wife did not look in sad reproach at them all as they took upon themselves the vows that bound them together, not only for time, but for eternity.

In a party from England which followed this other company very shortly, was a family named Right, who had, among other children, two lovely daughters. Such girls as they—bright, refined, and pleasing in manner and disposition—could not remain long without lovers in a place where marriageable men were so plentiful as in the Mormon Zion. They were very intimate with Brigham Young's family, and it was not long before the elder became the plural wife of David Candland, a prominent Mormon elder, and a confidential friend of the Prophet. He had thirty-three children, who, he boasted, had never cost him a cent, and the pretty young wife was installed as "mother" over his not very promising brood. He was, as he was pleased to term himself, an "aristocrat," and would not descend to the performance of menial labor; but, as the family must live somehow, the wives have to get along as best they can, but they live in the depths of poverty and degradation, while he enjoys prophetic favor, stands high in the church, and is a

Beau Brummel in dress. He has recently commenced the study of law, probably at the Prophet's instigation.

### 318 HOW LITTLE GIRLS WERE MARRIED.

The other sister became the fourth wife of Mr. Charles Bassett, at that time a prominent merchant in Salt Lake. The third wife was cast aside to make room for her, and for some time she was the favored one, indulged in every whim, and petted and flattered until her head was nearly turned. But, as it happened with other favorite wives, her reign was short, and she was compelled to stand on one side and see another take her place. Mr. Bassett, when he tired of fourth victim, married his niece and adopted daughter—a mere girl, only fourteen years old. She is the present favorite, and everything that she can possibly desire is lavished upon her—nothing is too fine or too expensive for her; and, in the mean time, the women whose place she took—and who was herself the usurper of another woman's kingdom—goes out to work to support herself and her children. Her eldest daughter—a girl just in her teens, not much older than her father's new wife—has been compelled to go out to service.

This is the fate (and not an uncommon one) of two young girls who supposed they were marrying two of the best men in the "kingdom." These men were popular preachers, as regular as the Pharisee in attending to all their religious duties, and loud and earnest in their defense of the glorious institution of polygamy, which "institution" they so brightly adorn.