

# CHAPTER XXV.

## MY EARLY MARRIED LIFE.—MY HUSBAND AND MY MOTHER!

My early married Life.— We go to live with my Mother.— Incompatibility of Temper.— How my Mother had opposed our Marriage.— My Husband does not Admire her at All.— He goes after the Girls.— I don't like it at All.— I become extremely angry with Him.— He is advised to "increase his Kingdom."— How promises to Wives are broken by Mormon Men.— How Women are Snubbed and Undervalued.— I become Anxious and Watchful.— How Herber comforted his Wives.— My Husband subjects me to personal Violence.— He is afraid of Results.— My first Baby is Born.— Zina Young Marries into Polygamy.— Contrast between Mormon and Gentile Husbands.— "The Bull never Cares for the Calves."— My Husband nearly strangles me.— I leave him, and go to my Parents.— Brigham gives me some good Advice.— I obtain a Divorce.— I rejoice at being free Again.

**W**HEN I was first married, we went to live in the house with my mother, greatly to her delight, as she could not bear a separation from me. We



FAMILY JARS.

had always been together so closely, more like sisters than like mother and daughter, and both of us dreaded very much to have this sweet relationship broken. I had been her comfort when every other stay had failed her; her hope when she was almost utterly hopeless. She had lived in me and for me,

### 399 LIVING WITH A MOTHER-IN-LAW.

and my happiness and welfare had been her constant thought. She had opposed my marriage as a duty, and because she thought she saw only misery for me in the rela-

tion; not for a want of sympathy for me, for it really hurt her more to oppose me than it did me to persist in spite of her opposition. I had been her companion if all her wanderings, and the confidante alike of her sorrows and joys, and it was hard for her to think of parting from me, even though I might be not very far away; still our interests were naturally somewhat divided when I came to give the first place in my heart to another.

My husband owned a house, but it was rented; so until it was vacated we had a part of my mother's house, where we kept house quite cozily, and should have been very happy, had not my husband's temper and desire to torment me made life almost unbearable. I tried, as far as I could, to hide my unhappiness from my mother; but I did not succeed. Her motherly eyes were too keen, her maternal instinct too unerring, to be deceived by my silence, although she respected my reticence, and said nothing to me; but she showed her sympathy in a hundred nameless ways. My husband knew of her opposition to our marriage, and he did not like what he termed her interference; though why a mother cannot look after her daughter's interest without being accused of interfering in even now a mystery to me, especially when, seeing that her advice in not regarded, she withdraws all "interference," and makes the best of the matter that she can. But some persons never forget, and my husband was one of those; and it used sometimes to seem to me as though, in his treatment of me, he was revenging himself for the opposition shown to him by my friends.

I used to hear of his attention to other girls, and I was furious, while I knew I was powerless. My visitors—many of whom came only when they had anything to tell—used to tell me that they saw James at the theater with this young lady, or met him going home with that, or that he

### 400 STORMY INTERVIEWS.

passed them walking with another, until I was madly jealous of every girl of my acquaintance. I no longer took pleasure in their society, for I saw in each one a probable rival, and a possible addition to our household. It was no consolation to me to remember that my husband had promised me never to take another wife; I had learned what the promise of a man living under polygamic laws amounts to. It is given as a sort of sedative, and if it soothes temporarily, that is all that is required of it. It is considered no sin to break a promise of this kind; indeed, it would rather seem that it is accounted sin for him to keep it; and I knew that my husband was, as well as other men, occasionally reminded that it was his duty to make his kingdom larger as speedily as possible, by taking another wife, or more than one if he liked.

We had many very stormy interviews on this sub-

ject; he used to discuss my callers, and especially the pretty girls, as most Mormon men discuss women, with reference to their "points," as jockeys would talk of horses, or importers of fine stock. Polygamy does not tend to enhance the value of womanly dignity and grace, and very little respect for them is either expressed or felt by one brought up under its baneful influence.

It is strange how quickly men, in a polygamous community, lost that chivalrous courtesy which characterizes men elsewhere. It seemed so strange to me to see the deference shown to my sex when I left Utah, and came, for the first time in my life, among people living under monogamous laws. I was particularly struck by the tenderness and consideration which men showed towards their wives and children; and I wondered to see the women, claiming, with a confidence that assured me they were used to it, and considered that it belonged to them, their husbands' attention and care. It was strange, too, to see the deference shown to a woman by the young men and boys; and when once, in a car, I saw a manly little fellow, about twelve or thir-

#### 401 MY HUSBAND AND I.

teen years of age, rise with a rare grace, and give his seat to an old lady, the tears sprang to my eyes, such an unaccustomed sight was it. I contrasted that boy with the youth in Utah, and I felt with a new indignation flashing through all my veins, and a new sorrow tugging at my heart, the curse that polygamy was to the young men, as well as to the young girls, who are growing up under the teachings of that baneful system. It is horrible! It fouls and poisons the stream at its very source (and it adds mud and filth as it crawls along its slimy way), sending up its noxious vapors, until it has bred a most pestilent moral malaria, which nothing but the cool, clear air of religious liberty and education shall ever dispel and purify.

Why cannot men and women, outside of this terrible system, see the horrors of it, and work for its overthrow? My soul cries out in very agony sometimes, 'Is there no help for this great evil?' Everywhere the world seems so dead to it! The enormity does not seem to manifest itself unto them. They speak lightly of Mormonism, as of something to ridicule or laugh at, rather than to condemn. God knows there is nothing laughable or ridiculous in it to its victims. It is the most pathetic, tragic earnestness and reality.

I am not imagining situations, and growing pathetic over creations of my own fancy. I know what I say, for I have suffered it. There is not a pang, not a throb of anguish which I have depicted that I have not felt myself.

My health, which was never very good, gave way under the terrible mental and physical strain to which I was

subjected, and I was in danger of becoming a confirmed invalid. My physical condition did not make my husband more tender or thoughtful, but he seemed to consider it a wrong towards himself, and took an aggrieved tone because of it. He had worthy examples, to be sure; for Brigham himself grumbles loudly when one of his wives falls ill, even if it is from overwork for his welfare, and com-

#### 402 MATRIMONIAL FIGHTING.—BLOWS!

plains that "he never marries a woman that she doesn't get sick to shirk work." Herber C. Kimball, on being called once to see one of his wives who had broken her arm, accosted her, on his entrance to her room, with, "Why didn't you break your neck at once, and done with it?" And it is a notorious fact that two of Orson Pratt's wives have died of neglect during illness. Since the men high in authority set the example, what could you expect of the followers?

Although my husband had often threatened me with personal violence, in addition to the insults and persecution he was constantly subjecting me to, he never offered any until about a month before my baby was born. He made some request of me which I was totally unable to grant, and in his fury at what he termed my stubbornness and rebellion, he struck me violently, and I fell insensible before him.

Then he was frightened for once; he raised me up, carried me to my bed, and used every exertion to bring me to myself. He was afraid the blow was fatal, and he was remorseful enough. When, at last, I regained my senses, he begged my forgiveness, poured out a torrent of self-reproaches, and for a little while was more like my old lover, the man whom I had cared for so tenderly, than he had been since our marriage. I very quickly forgave him: it was so sweet to feel the old tenderness again, that I could in a moment forget all that had passed between, and I readily agreed not to let my family know of this last outrage. He knew, as well as I, that my father and brothers would take me from him, and he really did not wish to lose me; and as for me, he was my husband, and the father of my unborn child, and for the sake of the little life which I held in trust, I could not bear to go away from him. I had hoped, O, so fondly! That the child would bring us nearer, and I could not give up the hope; and when he stood before me so penitent, and so tender, I was ready to feel that he had always been the same.

#### 403 THE "LITTLE FELLOW" ON MY HANDS!

But I was doomed to disappointment; after the birth of my child, it seemed as though the fits of passion were more frequent and of longer duration. He neglected me,

and was scarcely at home at all. He did not care for my baby, seeming to consider it a rival, and my love for it seemed to anger him. But what a comfort the baby was to me! How I loved it! All the tide of my affection, that had been so rudely repelled, turned towards it, and I felt that all



the interest of my life was centered therein. Like all Mormon women, robbed of a husband's love and care, I should live in and for my child. I knew very well that as far as regaining my husband's real affection was concerned—if, indeed, I had ever possessed it,—the future was hopeless; so I expected nothing from it further, and resigned myself to the inevitable more quietly than I could have believed I ever should have done; but my child made resignation more easy.

The little fellow was very bright and winning, and I used to imagine that he understood my feelings, and sympathized with me in his baby way. The little hands stray-

#### 404 CROSS ABOUT A BABY!

ing over my face and neck were full of sweet comfort; the blue eyes raised to mine in baby confidence were full of love; the little mouth which I covered with kisses never failed to smile back at me, and I even forgot to cry under the sweet, restful influence which the dimpled, rosy little bit of humanity brought into my heart.

But this exquisite happiness was of short duration; for, after a few months, my baby grew very ill; and God only knows how I suffered then. I watched over him day and night, and my devotion to him angered my husband beyond measure. He had no sympathy with or for me in those days of trial; and in addition to seeing my baby pining away, until it seemed that it must some day drift out of my clinging arms into the great unknown, unexplored sea beyond, I had to endure the constant abuse from the man who should at that time have been my stay and my comfort. But what Mormon mother ever gets the tender care

from her baby's father that other happier mothers get? No time or place is so sacred that polygamy does not obtrude its ugly presence. A mother may not mourn for her child without feeling the heartless intrusion, as the following little instance will show.

A man named Thomas Williams emigrated from England with his wife and children, all eager to reach "Zion," the promised land of the Saint's inheritance. He was a very devout Mormon, and was easily induced to accept polygamy. He took for his second wife Zina Young, a daughter of Brigham and Zina Huntington, an enthusiastic, conscientious believer in polygamy, and a genuinely good, generous girl, of the most kindly impulses, but, unfortunately, wrongly trained, as all girls are under this system.

His first wife never had believed in the plural-wife system, and was never reconciled to her husband's second marriage. She mourned bitterly about it; and, very naturally, her feelings towards her rival were not kindly or pleasant. The husband knew this perfectly well; and yet,

#### 405 MY BOYS!

when her little baby died, and she was almost mad with grief, he insisted of bringing the second wife to the funeral as one of the family. The mother was almost beside herself at what she considered this insult to her dead child, and she declared that Zina should not come. Her husband, of course, overruled her; for when, in polygamy, does a wife ever have her own way? But Mrs. Williams refused to recognize her, and would not allow her to sit in the room with her and the child.

I was spared this torture, for there was no second wife to measure my misery, and God was good, and spared my child. He repaid all my anxious care, and put the child into my arms well and comparatively strong, at the same time that he intrusted another helpless one to my care. I had lost, at that time, much of my faith in my religion. I think I should have lost my belief in God Himself, had my baby been taken from me. But He knew how much I could bear, and he spared me this last bitter sorrow.

I had been at first jealous of the little new-comer for the other baby's sake, who was only a little over a year old when the second one came; but I soon found that I had love enough in my heart for the two. My boys! How fond, and proud, and even happy I was with them.

The measure of my love seemed to be by the measure of their father's indifference, and even hate. He used to either take no notice of them at all, which I infinitely preferred, or he would handle them so roughly that the little things would shriek with pain and terror, and I would be almost frantic with fear lest he should kill them in his mad frolics, which usually ended in a fit of temper because they cried at his rude treatment.

As I was on my way East, I witnessed a little scene that called up painfully the contrast between this father's indifference and another father's care. In one car was a lady with two children; one a little girl about eight years old, and a cunning baby boy, who was just beginning to lisp in

#### 406 THE BULL AND THE CALVES!

that wonderful baby prattle that is so sweet to hear. As we stopped at a station, a gentleman came in, his face beaming with pleasure and expectation. The moment the children saw him, the little girl cried out with joy, "O, my dear papa has come!" and simultaneously mother and child clasped their arms about his neck and kissed him. The baby threw up his arms, and crowed out, "Papa, papa!" and as he took the little fellow in his arms, and fairly rained kisses over the rosy, delighted little face, the tears sprang to my eyes, and I had fairly to hide my face, for my cheeks were moist, and my mouth would quiver, as I thought of the father's love, of which my children were robbed—of which all children in Utah are robbed—by a fiendish system, given by a corrupt priesthood under the guise of a "Revelation" from God.

What a sarcasm on the infinite, tender, all-pervading love of the Divine Father!

Such a scene as this would be simply impossible in Utah, among that community whose religious leader says, in his peculiarly refined style and expression, when his lack of fatherly attention to his children is noticed and commented upon, "Well, the bull never takes any care of his calves," and whose chief apostles allow their children to grow up without support or training from them, since they are too busy in extolling the beauties of polygamy to the new converts, to give even decent attention to the children whom they have summoned into the world under this "glorious institution."

Two weeks before baby was born, I was sitting one morning with the elder boy on my lap, my husband being in the room, when one of my father's wives' children, a little fellow about three years old, came toddling in. Mr. Dee, happening to want something, asked the child to get it for him. The article in question was on a shelf, out of the child's reach, and to get it he would have to stand on a chair, and even then his tiny fingers could but just touch it.

#### 407 A LITTLE FAMILY LOVE-SCENE.

There was a heavy jar on the shelf, which I feared he might pull down upon himself, and I remonstrated against his trying to get it. I offered to reach it myself, but my husband instantly turned and forbade my leaving my chair, saying

that the child should bring him what he desired.

"But he must not," I cried, in an agony of terror.

"I tell you he shall," was my husband's answer.

The child stood looking from one to the other, half



crying with fear, and yet scarcely daring to disobey the command that had been given to him.

"Louis, fetch it to me instantly," commanded he again.

"Louis, you shall not," said I, half rising from my chair.

In an instant, my husband, maddened with fury that I should dare to contradict him, seized me by the throat, and threw me back into the chair. The screams of the terrified child brought my mother into the room at once. She snatched the baby from my arms, which I still held clasped

#### 408 NEARLY STRANGLER BY MY HUSBAND.

convulsively, while my husband's fingers were tightening about my throat. I was dizzy with pain, and almost suffocated from the grip; but my maternal instinct was stronger than the pain, and I never relaxed my hold on my child.

My mother called my father, and he came and rescued me from the infuriated man who held me, and carried me into my mother's room. Until that time they had known nothing of the treatment which I received from my husband. They knew that I was unhappy, but so was every woman; so I was by no means isolated in my misery. But I had managed to keep from them all knowledge of the violent treatment I had received at his hands. Their indignation at finding it out was beyond all bounds; for when once it was known, my tongue was loosened, and I poured into the sympathizing ears of mother and father the whole story

of my wrongs. I left nothing untold, and it was such a relief to let loose the torrent of misery that had been so long pent up in my heart!

My parents and brothers decided at once that I must leave him; and indeed, I was afraid, both for myself and for my children, to return to him again. He tried to see me in every possible way, but was refused admittance to my mother's rooms. The door of communication that led between her rooms and those I had previously occupied was securely locked, and he was bidden by my father to vacate the rooms as speedily as possible. He then demanded to see me; he tried threats, entreaties, every means that he could devise, but I was carefully guarded, and he could gain access neither to me nor the children.

He was loud in his threats to take the children from me, and I was in terrible fear lest he should in some way gain possession of them. I knew that it would not be love for them which would impel him, but a desire to strike me where it would wound me most; and he knew that he could reach me in no other way so surely as through my children. Since he had become convinced that I would

#### 409 I WAS DIVORCED!

never return to him, that of my own free will I gave him up forever, he seemed possessed by a spirit of fury, and vowed all manner of vengeance on me.

In order to get me out of his power, my parents determined that I should be divorced from him without delay, and, like conscientious church people, they consulted President Young. He and George Q. Cannon, who was also in our confidence, both took active measures in my behalf. There were two ways in which I could procure a divorce—one from Brigham, which was considered valid in the church, but I suppose would not stand the test of law; the other form Probate Court. Brigham strongly advised the latter, as, in the case my husband should ever apostatize, he could not take my children from me. He behaved, all through the affair, in such a kind, friendly manner that my confidence in him was fully secured. I had at that time no thought of what the future would bring, and certainly never dreamed of any closer relationship with him. My whole thought was to get free from my husband, and to have my children so securely that he could not take them from me. They were my only thought, my only care.

I say this because, since I have renounced Mormonism, Brigham Young and his followers have said that I left my first husband on purpose to become his wife—a statement which no one better knows to be false, than Brigham himself. He it was who counseled me to go to the regular courts, rather than depend on his divorcement, which he knew would not stand out of Mormondom, and he and his apostle Cannon rendered me the most valuable and un-

tiring assistance, which I accepted gladly, as I would have accepted aid from any quarter in this extremity.

I was divorced in 1865, and the decree stand today in the Court Records of Utah. Since the memory of my Mormon friends seems so treacherous, I will copy the records here as they stand. They may also convince some doubt-

#### 410 WHAT THE COURT DECREED.

ers who seem to place Brigham Young's denial before my complaint, and pin their faith to him, while regarding me doubtfully as a possible adventurer.

“PROBATE COUNTY DOCKET. [Page 5.]

“Great Salt Lake County.—Ann Eliza Dee vs. James L. Dee.

“In Divorce.

“1865. December 9<sup>th</sup>.—Petition filed; summons and notices issued, returnable on 23<sup>rd</sup> inst., at 10 P.M.

“December 23<sup>rd</sup>.—Case called; returns made ad decree made dissolving bonds of matrimony, and giving to plaintiff the custody and control of her children. Costs taxed to defendant.

“1866. March 3<sup>rd</sup>.—Court ordered execution against defendant for cost of suit.

“March 8<sup>th</sup>.—Execution issued for \$20.50, returnable in 20 days.

“March 28<sup>th</sup>.—Execution returned; no property found; clerk's fees paid by C. G. Webb, in meat.

[Page 516.]

“RECORDS OF PROBATE COURT, GREAT SALT LAKE COUNTY.

“1865. Dec 23<sup>rd</sup>.—Ten o'clock, A.M. Court opened. Records of 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> insts. Read and signed.

“The case of Ann Eliza Dee vs. James L. Dee, in divorce, was called up. This case came up for hearing upon the petition of Ann Eliza Dee, formerly Ann Eliza Webb, and upon the investigation thereof *ex parte*, the defendant, James L. Dee, failing to appear, C. G. Webb and Ann Vine being sworn and examined, the allegations in the plaintiff's petition were taken as confessed, and thereupon, after hearing the evidence and being fully advised in the premises, it was ordered and decreed by the court that the bonds of matrimony heretofore existing between the said parties be, and the same are hereby, for ever dissolved. This said Ann Eliza shall have and retain the custody and control of her tow infant children, James Edward and Lorenzo Dee, during their minority, and that defendant pay costs of suit.

(Signed,)

“E. Smith,

“*Judge of Probate Court.*”

411 ONLY BABY ARMS!

If anyone doubts my copy, they can examine the records for themselves.

My Christmas that year was a merrier one that I had seen for several years. My children were mine—my very, very own; and no one could take them from me. I clasps them in my arms. I kissed them again and again in an ecstasy of affection. Henceforth I was father, mother, all to them; no one would dispute with me for their affection, no one claim their love. I was supremely, selfishly happy. True, my romance had died; my idol, with its feet of clay, was broken; but maternal love took the place of the girl’s romance, and the little souls which had been given into my charge were more beautiful than any idol which I had been able to build for myself. I was saddened by all my disappointments, quieted my all my trials, subdued in spirit by the constant exercise of patience. I had lost my girlish gaiety and vivacity, but I had gained the poise and assurance of womanhood, and was, I hoped, better fitted to be a good mother to my children, which, at that time, was the only ambition I had, and my only interest for the entire future was in them. I dreamed for them, I planned for them, lived in them; and I am only regretful that anything ever divided my interest with them.

But after the one shadow was lifted, before the other fell, I was royally happy—happier that I ever was in my life before, circled about as I was by clinging baby arms, and held by tiny baby hands.