

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE PROPHET'S FAVORITE WIFE. — HOW HE CONDUCTED HIS LOVE-AFFAIRS.

The Prophet's Favorite Wife, Amelia.—How Brigham made Love in the Name of the Lord.—How he won an Unwilling Bride.—A Lady with a Sweet Temper.—How she Kicked a Sewing-Machine down the Prophet's stairs.—She has a new House built for Her.—Rather Expensive Habits.—Her Pleasant chances for the Future.—Mary Van Cott Cobb.—A Former Love of the Prophet's.—Miss Eliza-Roxy Snow.—The Mormon Poetess.—Joseph Smith's Poetic Widow.—Versification of the Saints.—Mrs. Augusta Cobb.—Emily Partridge.

THE favorite wife of the Prophet, Amelia Folsom, is a woman about forty years of age, and was a New England girl.

She was born at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and with her parents, who were converts to Mormonism, came to Utah. She is tall, of a good figure, has rather regular features, brown hair, bluish-gray eyes, and a querulous, dis-



contented expression, with a very great deal of decision indicated by the mouth. And indeed, in spite of all that is lavished upon her, she is not happy. She did not wish to marry Brigham, as she had a lover to whom she was fondly attached; but he wished to

498 MAKING LOVE IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.

marry her, and that settled her fate. Her parents favored his suit, and urged it so strongly; but she was bitterly opposed to it, and it was months before she would yield to their united desires.

He was a most arduous and enthusiastic lover, and during all the time that his suit was in progress, his carriage

might be seen standing before the door of her parents' house several hours at a time every day. He evidently did not intend that absence should render her forgetful of him. He promised her anything that she might desire, and also agreed to do everything to advance the family interests. Promises had no weight with her. He then had recourse to "Revelation;" he had been specially told from heaven that she was created especially for him, and if she



AMELIA FOLSON.
[Brigham's Favorite Wife.]

married anyone else she would be forever damned. The poor girl begged, pleaded, protested, and shed most bitter tears, but all to no purpose. His mind was made up, and he would not allow his will to be crossed. She had been converted to believe in special revelation, and to look upon Brigham as the savior of all the Mormon people, and to think that disobedience to him was disobedience to God, since God's commands came through him. In answer to her pleading, he said, "Amelia, you must be my wife; God has revealed it to me. You cannot be saved by anyone else. If you marry me, I will save you, and exalt you to be a queen in the celestial world; but if you refuse, you will be destroyed, both soul and body."

This is the same argument he used to win me, and the one he has always in reserve, as the last resort, when everything else fails to secure his victim.

499 AMELIA DEMOLISHES A SEWING-MACHINE.

Of course she yielded; what else was she to do? It was a foregone conclusion when the courtship commenced. She was married to him the 23rd of January, 1863, more than six months after the anti-polygamy law had been passed by Congress, and the marriage was celebrated openly, and in defiance of the law.

Since the marriage, Amelia has ruled with a hand of iron, and she has her lord in pretty good subjection. She has a terrible temper, and he has the benefit of it. On one occasion he sent her a sewing-machine, thinking to please her; it did not happen to be the kind of a one which she wanted; so she kicked it down stairs, saying, "What did you get this old thing for? You knew I wanted a 'Singer.'"

She had a Singer at once.

I was once present when she wanted her husband to do something for her; he objected, and she repeated her



VIEW IN SALT LAKE CITY—SHOWING AMELIA'S NEW HOUSE

demand, threatening to “thrash him,” if he did not comply. It is, perhaps unnecessary to say that she was not obliged to ask him again. I know he is afraid of her, and that she holds him now through fear, rather than love. She accompanies him to the theater, and occupies the box, while the rest of the wives sit in the parquet. She goes with him on his visits to the settlements, and drives out with him constantly.

She has a beautiful new house, elegantly furnished, and Brigham has very nearly deserted the “Bee-Hive,” except during business hours, and spends most of his time at Amelia’s residence. She dresses elegantly, has jewels and laces, and has saved ten thousand dollars out of her “pin-money,” which she placed in the bank. I am delighted at her success in getting so much; the other wives have succeeded in getting nothing but their living from him, some scarcely that; and I, for my part, congratulate Amelia on her good management. It was a hard struggle for her to marry him, and all she gets will never half repay her for the suffering she has endured in the past, even if she has grown contented now.

500 AMELIA ASSERTS HER “RIGHTS.”

She is rather careless in her treatment of the other wives, but gets along the best with the “proxies.” When she lived at the “Bee-Hive,” she dined at the “Lion House,” with her husband and the other wives. She and Brigham sat at a table by themselves—a small table, standing at the head of the dining-room. The other wives, with their children, sat at a long table, running nearly the entire length of the room. The fare at this table was very plain, while the other was loaded with every delicacy that the season would afford. When strangers dined with Brigham, the difference in the fare was less noticeable, and the long table would be amply provided for, so as to make a good impression upon the visitor. Amelia is not well; indeed, she is at times quite an invalid. She has no children.

About six months before my marriage to the Prophet, he took a pretty young widow, Mary Van Cott, for a wife, much to Amelia’s distress, who had considered herself the last for so long, that she was quite unprepared for the introduction of a rival. She was very bitter in her denunciations both of Brigham and Mary, and commenced at once to make friends with some of the other wives. She said to Aunt Zina, I believe, that she knew now how Emmeline felt when Brigham took her. Emmeline had been the favorite wife for years, and was really fond of her husband, and it was a terrible blow to her when he deserted her for another.

For some time Brigham’s fickle affections hovered about Mary, but Amelia, with a determination which but few Mormon women possess, fought against her rival until

she compelled her lord to withdraw his attentions from the new wife, or to bestow them on the sly. Mary felt very much hurt and aggrieved, but she has managed to hold her own sufficiently to get a very pretty cottage house, which is very daintily furnished, and which she makes very attractive.

She has two children, one by a former husband; the other, a pretty little girl, three or four years old, the youngest of Brigham’s children, and who is always called

501 BRIGHAM’S LAST BABY!

“Baby.” After I left it was said she very nearly decided to take the same step. She was very discontented, and the treatment she received from the Prophet and his family was not such as to encourage her to stay with him. Her own people, who are devout Mormons, became aware of her intention, and finally succeeded, by a great amount of persuasion, in inducing her to try a little longer. Brigham, too, found out what step she was contemplating, and knowing that opinion would set strongly against him if two of his wives should leave him so nearly at the same time, added his arguments to theirs, and also agreed to fix her house, and give her more things, among which was a grand piano, if she would not bring another scandal upon him. For the sake of her child she decided to remain, but she is in a state of mental rebellion, which may break out at any time. She, is since my defection, the last added member of the family.



Miss Eliza R. Snow is the first of Brigham’s “proxy” wives, and is the most noted of all Mormon women. She was one of Joseph Smith’s wives, and, after his death, was sealed to Brigham for time, but is to return to Joseph in eternity. She was the founder of the “Female Relief Society,” is the motive power of the “Women’s Exponent,” although Miss Green acts as editor, personates “Eve” in the “Endowments,” and is a poetess of no inconsiderable merit. She writes hymns for all occasions, and most of her poems are full of a strong religious fervor. She is a thorough Mormon, and believes absolutely every portion of the doctrine, and might con-

tend with Orson Pratt for the title of "Defender of Polygamy."

Brigham regards her very highly, because she is of such inestimable service in the church. She lives at the "Lion House," where she has quite a pleasant room, in which she receives most of her company. She is the most intellectual of all the wives.



ZINA D. HUNTINGTON.
[Wife of Brigham.]

Zina D. Huntington was formerly the wife of a man named Henry Jacobs, who was at one time a Mormon. Brigham was attracted towards the wife, sent the husband off on a mission, and had Zina sealed to him. Dr. Jacobs apostatized, not at all fancying this appropriation of his family. She is a very noble woman, and has spent her life in the service of her ungrateful husband and the Church. She is firm and unyielding in her religious faith, and as devout a believer in Mormonism today as she was at her first conversion. She has been very useful in the family, acting as physician, nurse, and governess, as her services have been required. She is perfectly unselfish, and her whole life is devoted to others.

She is a large, fine-looking woman, with a somewhat weary and sad expression, but her face still shows signs of mental strength and superiority.

She has one daughter, Zina, who was formerly an actress in the theater, and has since married an Englishman of the name of Thomas Williams. She is his second wife, and

503 "HE MUST TAKE THE MOTHER TOO!"

her introduction to the family was strongly resented by the first wife, who would never notice her in any way. They lived apart, and the husband divided his time equally between the two. A few months ago he died very suddenly at Zina's while sitting at the table. When the news was conveyed to the first wife, she had the remains brought to her, arranged for the funeral without consulting Zina, and refused to allow her to ride in the carriage with her to the burial. Poor Zina was almost heart-broken, for she dearly

loved the man whom her father's religion taught her to call husband, and she was ready to do anything to conciliate the first wife. She a noble girl and as conscientious as her



ZINA WILLIAMS.
[Brigham's Daughter.]

mother. Not very long before I left her father, we were talking about the practice of polygamy. I expressed myself strongly and bitterly against it. She, in turn, defended it. She knew, she, said, that it brought unhappiness, but that was because it was not rightly lived. The theory was correct, but people did enter it in the right spirit. She has certainly suffered from it since then, although I believe she tried, to the best of her ability, to "live it right." But she, no more than any one else, could make right out of wrong.

When Mr. Williams asked her in marriage, Brigham said he might have her if he'd "take the mother too." So Zina the mother, went to live with Zina, the daughter. But Brigham grew ashamed of his meanness toward her, and finally gave her a house and lot.

Years ago, when Brigham was on a mission to New England, he met a very charming lady in Boston, Mrs.

504 ASKING TO BE SEALED TO CHRIST.

Augusta Cobb, and at once his elastic fancy was charmed for a while. She was a woman of fine social position, cultured and elegant, the head of a lovely establishment, with a kind husband, and a family of interesting children; but she became enamored of the Prophet, accepted the Mormon religion, and came to Nauvoo with him, where she was sealed as his wife. She is still a very stylish, elegant woman for her age, but for several years past she has been grossly neglected by the Prophet. Her religious enthusiasm has increased until it is almost mania, and finding that her husband was wearying of her, and seeking new faces, she begged to be released from him for eternity, and be sealed to Jesus Christ, who, her church told her, was a polygamist.

Brigham, with all his blasphemous audacity, dared not do that; so he quieted her by telling her that he was not at liberty to do that—his authority did not extend so far; but he would do the next best thing, and seal her to Joseph Smith. She consented, and now belongs to Brigham only for time, "having been transferred to Joseph for eternity."

Her family still remember her fondly, and grieve over her delusion. One of her relatives—a granddaughter,

I think—sent word to me, a short time since, that she wished to see me, to ask about Mrs. Cobb, for it had been a long time since they had heard from her directly, and it would be such a comfort to meet one who had seen her so recently. I have not yet met the lady, but shall take the first opportunity to see her, though I can, I fear, tell her little that will satisfy her.

Another proxy wife, Emily Partridge, was a young, childless widow, very patient and gentle, and very pretty, too. She belonged to Joseph Smith, and was among those whom Brigham took. For some time she lived at the farm, but not understanding dairy work, she did not suit her husband. She is willing to work, and do whatever she can do, but is no more able than the rest of the world to accom-

505 SHE COULD ONLY SUBMIT.

plish impossibilities. He was so angry at her want of success at the farm, that he said, in speaking of her, “When I take another man’s wife *and children* to support, I think the least they could do would be to try and help a little.” To be sure, he is the *earthly* father of those children, but he makes a decided distinction between them and those he calls *his own*. There are five children—Emily, Carlie, Don Carlos, Mary, and Josephine. Emily is plural wife of Hiram B. Clawson, her half-sister Alice’s husband; Carlie and Mary were both married to Mark Croxall, the Western Union telegraph operator. He was very fond of Mary, who has since died. Carlie he treats with utmost indifference, and neglects her openly. A little while ago he became very much enamored of a Danish girl, and would allow Carlie to go home alone from the theater or other place of amusement, while he went off with this girl, who was Carlie’s inferior in every way. The poor girl is heart-broken at this careless treatment, but what can she do? There is nothing for any Mormon woman to do but to submit, and let her heart break in the meanwhile. The sooner it is over, and she is let out of her misery, the better. Very few care how soon they die. Life is not pleasant enough to be clung to very tenaciously.

Emily Partridge lived at the “Lion House” for several years, enduring every indignity at the hands of the family. Now she has a cottage outside, which Brigham gave her, telling her, when she moved into it, that he should in future expect her to support herself and children.

This woman ends the list of Brigham’s living wives, but some that have died have had such a career, and been so well known, that I cannot refrain from mentioning them.