

# CHAPTER XXIV.

## MY FIRST MARRIAGE—A LIFE'S MISTAKE.

My first Marriage.—Wedded to James Dee.—Marriage Rites in the Endowment-House.—The way in which Plural Wives are Taken.—Brigham sends for Me to help in the Theater.—Repenting of Matrimony.—I get tired of it in a Month.—Cruel Conduct of my Husband.—He flirts considerable with the Young Girls.—I am greatly Disgusted and furiously Jealous.—He threatens to take another Wife.—The Ownership of Women in Utah.—How Newspaper Reporters are humbugged by Brigham.—How Visitors to Salt Lake are Watched.—The Prophet's Spies.—How People are misled about Utah affairs.—The Miseries of the Women Overlooked.

**I** WAS married in the Endowment-House, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April, 1863.

As persons are not allowed to enter the inner rooms of that mysterious place for the purpose of going through any of the rites or ordinances of the church in their custom-



ary dress, we, of course, wore our Temple-ropes during the ceremony. We carried our robes with us, and dressed there, not appearing outside in our sacred clothing.

I must confess I no longer regarded the Endowment-

House with the awe which I had felt previous to my first

### 388 MY WEDDING DAY.— A MORMON MARRIAGE.

visit there, and the whole manner in which everything was done was so very stogy, that I failed to be impressed at all on this my second visit, although the object of my present

visit naturally made me feel more solemn than I otherwise should.

The marriage service, which is not long, was performed by Brigham Young. We first gave our names, ages, native town, county, state, and country, to the elder John Lyon, who acts as scribe in the Endowment-House, and he carefully recorded them, as he does those of every couple who come to be sealed. We then went before Brigham Young, who was waiting for us, and the following ceremony made us man and wife:—

“Do you, Brother James Dee, take Sister Ann-Eliza Webb by the right hand, to receive her unto yourself, to be your lawful and wedded wife, and you to be her lawful and wedded husband, for time and for all eternity, with a covenant and promise on your part that you will fulfill all the laws, rites, and ordinances pertaining to this holy matrimony, in the new and everlasting covenant, doing this in the presence of God, angels, and these witnesses, of your own free will and accord?”

“Yes.”

“Do you, Sister Ann-Eliza Webb, take Brother James Dee by the right hand, and give yourself to him to be his lawful and wedded wife, for time and for all eternity, with a covenant and promise on your part that you will fulfill all the laws, rites, and ordinances pertaining to this holy matrimony in the new and everlasting covenant, doing this in the presence of God, angels, and these witnesses, of your own free will and accord?”

“Yes.”

“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the authority of the holy priesthood, I pronounce you legally and lawfully husband and wife, for time and for all eternity. And I seal upon you the blessings of resurrection,

### 389 HOW THE CEREMONY IS PREFORMED.

with power to come forth in the morning of the first resurrection, clothed with glory, immortality, and everlasting lives; and I seal upon you the blessings of thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers, and exaltations, together with the blessing of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And I say unto you, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, that you may have joy and rejoicing in your prosperity in the day of the Lord Jesus. All these blessings, together with all other blessings pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, I seal upon your heads, through your faithfulness unto the end, by the authority of the holy priesthood, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

The scribe then entered the date of the marriage, together with the names of my mother and the one or two friends who accompanied us.

When the marriage is a polygamous one, the above

service is prefaced in the following manner. The wife stands on the left of her husband, the bride at her left hand. The President then puts this question to the wife: —

“Are you willing to give this woman to your husband, to be his lawful and wedded wife for time and for all eternity? If you are, you will manifest it by placing her right hand within the right hand of your husband.” The right hands of the bridegroom and bride being thus joined, the wife takes her husband by the left arm, as if in the attitude for walking, and the ceremony then proceeds in the manner which I have quoted.

Mine was not a polygamous marriage. I had married a man with no wife, and who assured me that I should be the only one, and I was correspondingly happy. I had seen so much wretchedness about me, and so much unhappiness in my father’s family, where polygamy showed only its best side, that I was glad to escape it. To be the only one who had the right to my husband’s care seemed so blissful! And I was sure that very many women were envying me

### 390 MY HONEYMOON.—FIRST REGRETS!

because I was so fortunate. I acted the evening of my marriage, and the news of it having got out, I was greeted, when I made my appearance, with the most tumultuous applause. Cheer after cheer arose, and it was some minutes before I could speak my lines. Every time I appeared, there was a repetition of this scene, and I was fairly embarrassed, so persistent was the applause. There was the more excitement, probably, because I had kept my approaching marriage a secret, and but very few, even of my personal friends, knew anything about it. I had stolen a march on the public, and not having the opportunity for congratulating me on my engagement, they made up for it by congratulations on my marriage. For once I was the central figure on the stage, and all my superiors gave way to me with a graceful good nature.

I remained in the theater a month after my marriage, during which time I learned that I had made a fatal mistake in my marriage. I was forced to see, what my friends had tried to show me before, and the honeymoon was not over before I bitterly regretted my headstrong willfulness. I loved my husband, but he made me terrible unhappy. He was accustomed to indulge in furious fits of anger, which fairly frightened me, during which he would talk shamefully to me, and threaten me with all kinds of ill treatment. I learned too, that although I was bound to him, he still considered himself, and was considered, an unmarried man, as far as his right to marry again was concerned; and he soon became quite a noted gallant among the young girls, bestowing on them the attentions that he had give me in our unmarried days, and treating me in the indifferent, matter-of-fact manner, tinged with a “help-it-if-you-can”

air, which most Mormon men assume towards their helpless wives. Whenever he wished particularly to torture me, he would threaten to take another wife, and name over the girls whom he said he particularly fancied.

I had one friend, of whom I was very fond. He became

### 391 BEARING THE CROSS— I BECOME JEALOUS.

jealous of my affection for her, and in order to win me from her, and to break up our friendship, he pretended very great interest in her. He would leave me to go home by myself from the theater, and would go off with her and remain a long time; then, on his return, would tell me what he said was the conversation between them, in which he would represent her as making the most ardent love to him, until, at last, I fairly come to hate her. I would not see her if I possible could help it, and I was anything but cordial to her when we did meet. I believe now that my husband lied to me wickedly and deliberately; and yet, such was the effect of all his influence on me, that to this day I cannot see my old friend that a feeling of the most intense bitterness does not rise up in my heart against her. I never could get back the old feeling of affection for her, even though I felt that I was wronging her by my unjust treatment; but polygamy does not tend to make one woman just towards another. Suspicion, jealousies, heart-burning, strife of all kinds are engendered by this system, and it serves to lower the moral tone of women as well as of men. Both are sufferers alike in this respect, although possibly in a different degree. The women have all through the more conscience in the matter, though they grow bitter, and spiteful, and revengeful, while “bearing the cross.”

I know I did, although I was only threatened by my husband; and I presume I annoyed him greatly by me tears and reproaches. A woman in Mormonism has need enough for tears, but it is little use for her to shed them; they only bring upon her the ridicule of all the Mormon men, from her husband at home to Brigham in the Tabernacle. This is the sympathy the “Head of the Church” gives her in public. Said he, in one of his most famous sermons:

“It is said that women are tied down and abused; that they are misused, and have not the liberty they ought to have; that many of them are wading through a perfect flood of tears, because of the conduct of some men, together with their own folly.”

### 392 HOW BRIGHAM “LIBERATED” THE WOMEN.

“I wish my own women to understand that what I am going

to say is for them as well as for others, and I want those who are here to tell their sisters—yes, all the women of this community—and write it back to the States, and do as you please with it. I am going to give you from this time to the sixth day of October next for reflection, that you may determine whether you wish to stay with your husbands or not; and then I am going to set every woman at liberty, and say to them, ‘Now, go your way—my women with the rest—go your way.’ And my wives have got to do one to two things: either round up their shoulders to endure the afflictions of this world, and live their religion, or they may leave, for I will not have them about me. I will go into heaven alone, rather than have scratching and fighting around me. I will set all at liberty. ‘What! Your first wife too?’ Yes, I will liberate you all. I know what my women will say. They will say, ‘You can have as many women as you please, Brigham.’ But I want to go somewhere, and do something, to get rid of the whiners.”

Following his Prophet’s lead comes Jedediah Grant, in this fashion:

“We have women here who like anything but the Celestial Law of God; and if they could break asunder the cable of the Church of Christ, there is scarcely a mother in Israel but would do it this day.”

This in a tone of the sternest reproof, as though to hate a system which makes them the most abject slaves, under a most terrible master, was a crime. When women go to Brigham Young (as now and then one is foolish enough to do, before she gets thoroughly to know her Prophet and his peculiarities of temper and manner), and tells him of their unhappiness, and asks his advice, he whines, and pretends to cry, and mimics them, until they are fairly outraged by his heartless treatment, and their indignation or grief gets the supremacy over their other trouble. Then he tells

### 393 “MINE, BODY AND SOUL!”

them to go home, and make the best of things, and not make everlasting fools of themselves; or something else equally refined and consoling. They may consider themselves fortunate, indeed, if he does not refer to the interview in his next Sunday’s sermon, and tell the names of the unhappy women, who coarse jests and unfeeling comments, which render them double wretched, since their husbands, incensed at them for complaining, and knowing that they are perfectly safe from priestly indignation or rebuke, make them feel the weight of their displeasure by grosser neglect or more brutal treatment.

The entire ownership of women is nowhere more fully assumed by their husbands than it is in Utah. A woman is obliged to submit to every exaction from him, to grant every request, obey every demand. In return, she need ex-

pect nothing, not even support. “You are mine, body and soul, but you have no right to claim anything from me more than what I choose to give you,” is the attitude of every man in polygamy towards his wives. A “blessed” system, surely! It is no wonder that Brigham talks about the woman’s “rounding up their shoulders” to bear it, and one certainly fails to feel the surprise which “Jeddy” probably imagined he would arouse when he announced that the “mothers in Israel,” unhappy and desolate, would break “the cable of the church” asunder if they could. This fanatical follower of Brigham Young never spoke a truer word in his life, whether he spoke by inspiration or not. There was not a woman, then, who would not have broken her chains if she could, let the whole Mormon Church call these fetters what they might, and there is not a woman among them today who would not slip her fetters if she knew how. It is all very well for the Mormon leaders and their sympathizers in the Gentile world to say that the women are contented, and even happy, in polygamy; the one knows he speaks what is not true; the other tells the tale as it is told to him, refusing to use his eyes, his ears, or his common sense.

### 394 “WHY NEED WE METTLE?”

Newspaper correspondents visit Salt Lake City, and when they arrive they are brimming over with disgust and indignation towards this system and the people who follow it; but, by-and-by, a change comes over them; their readers are informed that the Mormons are a thriving, industrious people, their men brave, hospitable, shrewd, and hard-working; the women quiet and peaceful, evidently well reconciled to their peculiar marital relations; that Brigham Young is not such a bad fellow, after all, and his sons are jolly, free-handed, generous men, with plenty of keenness, and a great deal of knowledge of the world; and then the people who read their letters wonder at the changed tone, and find themselves thinking more leniently of this people and its peculiar social system than ever before, and they say, “If all this is true, why need we meddle?” But it is not true, not one word of it, and these same men who are writing these letters know it; but, in some way, they get to working in the Prophet’s interests before they leave the Territory. He manages to get hold of them if they are of any ability, and able to influence the public, and if they are easily influenced themselves they soon see things as he intends they shall see them. I suppose his manner of influencing them differs, but I think it will be readily understood.

The truth is simply this: the Mormon people are absolutely afraid to have the outside world come too close to them; they let them see just so much, but not one bit more. The leaders act as showmen, also as mouthpieces, and the mass of the people are but a cunningly manipulated lot of marionettes, who perform certain antics for a curious

public, while the shrewd wire-puller sits behind, and orders every movement, and makes every speech. There has been, until very recently, no such thing as getting at the absolute truth concerning these people; but lately, since the Gentile element has been so largely increased in Utah, and in Salt Lake City especially, it has been useless for the Saints to attempt to hide their real condition.

### 395 ARE MORMON WOMEN UGLY?

A Mormon wife-beater is as mercilessly exposed through the columns of the Gentile papers as the Gentile offender of the same class, and the nefarious dealings of Mormon officials are publicly reprov'd in a manner that does not tend to make them comfortable in the least. The miseries caused by this cursed system are fully ventilated, and the true condition of things revealed. When flippant newspaper correspondents, after a visit to the valley of the Saints, go away and write in terms of ridicule of the Mormon women, calling them fearfully ugly in looks, they little know what bitter, hard, cruel experiences have carved the deep lines round the eyes and mouths, and made the faces grow repulsive and grim, and taken from them all the softness, and tenderness, and grace which glorify a happy women's face, even if she be ever so plain of feature. If these men, who write so carelessly, could only see the interior of the lives that they are touching with such a rough, rude hand, they might be, perhaps, a little more sympathetic in tone. It is no wonder that the women of Utah are not beautiful; there is nothing in all their lives to glorify or beautify their faces, to add at all to their mental or physical charm or grace. They are pretty enough as children; as young girls they can compare favorably with any girls I have seen in the East; but just so soon as they reach womanhood the curse of polygamy is forced upon them, and from that moment their lives are changed, and they grow hard or die—one of the two—in their struggles to become inured to this unnatural life. This system either kills its victims outright, or crushes out every bit of hope and ambition from them, leaving them aimless and apathetic, dragging out existence without the least ray of present happiness or future anticipation to lighten it.

I was taught from my earliest childhood that there was nothing good outside of the Mormon Church; that the Gentile men were bad to the core, possessing neither honor nor manly virtues of any kind, and that every Gentile

### 396 "IF HE DOES, I'LL KILL HIM!"

women was so vile as to be utterly unworthy of mention; that goodness was unknown among them, and that certain destruction awaited them and those who associated with

them. My mother mourned over her friends and relatives outside of Mormonism as lost souls, and she prayed almost literally "without ceasing" that they might be shown the true way before it was too late. She could not govern her natural affection. She must love them; they were her very own, and were very dear to her; but I really think, especially in the days of the intense religious excitement, that she almost hated herself for loving them so truly and so well. She wrote them the most pathetic letters of entreaty, filled with alternate pleadings and arguments, begging them to come to Zion, and "make sure of their souls' salvation." They, in turn, pitied her delusion, but had no hope that she would ever escape from it; they little knew that the child, whose future they were deploring, would one day be the means of leading that mother out of the bondage in which she was held, through many tears and much tribulation, to the light of a brighter, more comforting faith.

Conscience and an almost superstitious belief in her religious leaders made her cling to her religion long after reason taught her that it was a delusion, and made her accept as a sole means of salvation a practice which her whole soul revolted against. It is well that the Mormon leaders call it a "cross." It is simply that, and the hopelessness of it renders it the more difficult to bear. There is no prospect of laying it down, and, unlike the cross of the old legend, it never becomes flower-wreathed. It grows heavier as the days go on, until it bows its bearer down to the very ground.

I learned the misery of even a monogamous marriage under polygamic laws; and, though I never expressed myself so openly on the subject, I yet felt an intense sympathy with a friend of mine, who, when told that her husband thought of taking another wife, replied, with the fire flashing from her black eyes, "If he does, I'll kill him!" it is not at all

### 397 BEING "SCHOOLED" FOR THE FUTURE.

likely she would have kept her word; she would probably have settled down, as so many women like her have done, into a sullen sort of rebellion, which is not easy to subdue; but she has never been tried; her husband seems as indifferent to the charms of the marriageable young ladies about her as she could desire: yet she never feels entirely safe. How can she, when she knows her husband is constantly admonished that he is not "living up to his privileges." The sword above her head is suspended by a hair; it is a miracle if it does not fall at last. I know every pang of anxiety, every heart-throb of sick expectation, for I had that selfsame torture for two years, without a moment's cessation. I do not know how I bore it; but I suppose I was only being schooled for what came afterwards.