

CHAPTER XXVII.

A WALK WITH THE PROPHET.
—HE MAKES LOVE TO ME.

How Brigham Travels Through the Territory.—Triumphant Receptions Everywhere.—Trying to Establish the “Order of Enoch.”—How the Prophet Insulted his Faithful Followers.—“Rheumatism” in the Temper.—Grand Doings in the Settlements.—We Go to Meet the Prophet.—How the Saints were Lectured in the Bowery.—How Brigham gave Howard a Piece of Land.—Howard Insulted by the Prophet.—Overlooking the Prophet’s Lies.—Van Etten Becomes Brigham’s “Friend.”— He Helps Him to Steal a Hundred Sheep.—He makes a Big Haul, and Escapes to Canada.—The Prophet Ogles Me during Service-Time.— We Take a Walk Home Together.—He Compliments My Good Looks.—Makes Love to Me.—Matrimonial Advice.—Brigham Wishes Me to Become His Wife.

ON Brigham Young’s arrival at South Cottonwood, he was very warmly welcomed, all the people turning out to join in the demonstrations.

This is the usual custom; consequently his travels through the Territory are a perfect ovation. He is generally accompanied by some members of his family; perhaps one or more of his wives, and one of his sons. It has lately always been Brigham, Jr., his intended successor, who is taken along, to



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be initiated into the proper method of doing things; one or more of his counselors; some of the apostles, and whoever else he may choose to invite to join his party. They go in carriages, and form in themselves quite a procession.

He is met outside of every settlement which he visits by a company of cavalry; and a little farther on, just outside the entrance of town, he is met by another procession—sometimes of the children alone, but oftener, in the large settlements, where they are ambitious to “do the thing up in shape,” of the entire population who are able to turn out, men, women, and children, headed by a brass band, all ranged along to give greeting to the Prophet. They are arranged in different sections, each section having its appropriate banner. The elder and middle-aged men are all together under the banner “Fathers in Israel.” The women of the same ages are ranged under their banner, “Mothers in Israel.” The young men are proud enough of the inscription which theirs carries, “Defenders of Zion;” and the young girls are fresh and lovely under their banner, “The Daughters of Zion—Virtue;” while the little wee bits, that are placed last of all, are “The Hope of Israel.” Other banners bear the inscriptions, “Hail to the Prophet;” “Welcomes to our President;” “God bless Brigham Young;” “The Lion of the Lord;” and others of a similar nature are seen along the line of the procession.

As the President and his escort pass down the long line, and band plays, the people cheer, men wave their hats, women their handkerchiefs, and the young girls and children toss bunches of flowers; and their Prophet—if he chances to be in good humor—bows and smiles to them as he passes; and everything is gay, and bright, and merry, and the people are very happy because of the success of their Prophet’s reception.

Now and then their gaiety has a dash of cold water from the object of all the display, and they see all their preparations go for nothing, and are made to feel that all their labor

428 THE PROPHET OUT OF TEMPER.

has been in vain, as happened not long ago in Salt Lake City. Brigham had been on a long trip through Southern Utah, endeavoring to establish the “United Order of Enoch,” with but indifferent success, it must be confessed, in consequence of which he was anything but good humor with his “rebellious people.”

On his return he was met at the station by thousands of his people, who had gathered in unusual numbers, and with unusual display, to meet him. As he stepped from the car, cheers arose from the mass of people, the band played, and all eyes were turned on him, anxiously watching for a recognition. What was their surprise and chagrin to see him step from the car to his carriage, enter it, close the door, and drive away without the slightest notice of their presence, seemingly oblivious to everything around him!

The Saints returned to their homes feeling exceedingly hurt and grieved, but the next Sabbath their Prophet

endeavored to soothe their outraged feelings and smooth matters over them, in the following “explanation:” —

“Brethren and sisters, you may have felt hurt at my not recognizing your greeting on my arrival. If so, I am sorry; but I had just had an attack of rheumatiz in my left foot.”

The apology was accepted; there was nothing else to be done. The Prophet had made what he considered the proper *amende*, though some of the brethren were so irreverent as to remark afterwards that they “guessed the ‘rheumatiz’ was in his temper,” on account of his failure to gull the people with his last “effort for their spiritual”—and his temporal—“advancement.”

Usually he is in high good humor, and beams on his followers with the most patronizing and reassuring of smiles, accepting all the homage as though it were his by “divine right.” Royalty itself could assume no more the manner of receiving only what it is entitled to, than this ex-glazier, who used to work for “six bits” a day, and who begged

429 OFF FOR A GOOD TIME.

the farmer for whom he had done two half days’ work to give him a new coat, since his old one was too “rusty” to go on a preaching tour in, and the “spirit” had suddenly called him from the haying field to a Methodist meeting in the neighboring town.

While on his journeys, he is always taken to the best house in the place, and everything is done for his comfort; his followers are taken by other residents of the town, a dance is given in the evening, which takes the place of the usual “reception” elsewhere; he is serenaded by the bands and parties of singers, and all night the militia keep sentry about his headquarters. Altogether it is quite a gay thing to go visiting the settlements, and no one likes it better than the Prophet himself. It is the grand event of the year to the Saints, and they make such extensive preparations for the occasion, that many have to “live very close,” as they express it, for months afterwards.

As a matter of course, I helped “welcome the President” to Cottonwood; so did all the family; and, as we were all old friends, we were glad to see him personally, as well as spiritually, my mother especially being overjoyed, for there was always the warmest friendship between them; indeed, their friendship dated back to the days before they went to Kirtland. At Nauvoo they had been next door neighbors, and he used to be very fond of playing with the “baby.” Since then he had helped the “baby” to escape from a domestic thralldom which was harder than she could endure, and she was grateful to him accordingly. I think neither mother nor daughter would have joined so heartily in the welcome, had they known what misery the visit was to

bring.

The Sunday services are always largely attended, and as no house is sufficiently capacious to hold all who assemble to listen to the Prophet, the meetings are held in the “Bowery,” which is a sort of improvised tabernacle, with open sides, and roofed over with branches of trees. He

430 OVERHAULING THE SAINTS.

usually makes this the occasion for reprimanding the people for their sins, dwelling particularly on the extravagance of



women in dress, and the habit, among some of the men, of whiskey-drinking. He came out very strong this time, and the poor Cottonwood Saints were exposed to a merciless fusillade from the Prophet’s tongue. He was more than usually denunciatory and scathing, and he made this the occasion for abusing Mr. Howard, the owner of the distillery. After he had got well warmed up, he said Howard had not a cent in the world which he had not given him, and added, “I even gave the poor, mean scapegrace the vary land he lives on.”

This was more than Howard could bear, even from his Prophet, and he jumped to his feet, excitedly shouting,—

“It isn’t so, and you know it isn’t. I brought the land of you, and gave you twelve hundred dollars for it.”

“You lie!” roared Brigham; “I gave it to you.”

“Yes, for twelve hundred dollars,” was Howard’s reply.

“I never got a cent for it,” screamed Brigham.

“You’re a liar, and you know it,” retorted Howard.

I don’t know how long this Sabbath-day quarrel would

431 THE PROPHET’S BAD MEMORY.

have lasted, had not Brigham happened to think it was a

little out of order, and also to discover that Howard, who was in a little great rage by this time, was bound to have the last word. He stopped the dispute, and, turning to the congregation, said,—

“Is there no one who will remove that man from this place?”

Instantly ten or fifteen men started to their feet, and rushed towards the offender; but a man named Van Etten, being much nearer to him than any other of the others, reached him first, and led him out of meeting; so there was no opportunity for any of the others to exercise their zeal in the Prophet’s behalf. At the close of the services, Brigham publicly thanked Brother Van Etten, and called him “the only friend in the congregation.”

The following Sabbath, the party were at Willow Creek holding meeting, and as what he was pleased to term “Howard’s insult” was rankling in his memory, he could not refrain from referring to it in his sermon, which he did in the following *truthful* manner:

“I was never so insulted in my life as I was at Cottonwood last Sabbath. I called seven or eight times for some of the brethren to lead Howard out, and not a man responded but Brother Van Etten. I know how it is; you and they are all brought with Howard’s whiskey.”

Now, the news of the encounter had reached Willow Creek before the Prophet and his party, and nearly every one present knew that Brigham had only called once for his opponent to be taken away, and that his call had been promptly responded to. But they attributed his misstatement to the Prophet’s bad memory. They knew, too, that none of them were bought with Howard’s whiskey; but perhaps Brigham thought they were, and it was only “one of his slight mistakes;” so they let it go for what it was worth, and the Prophet felt better after venting his ill-temper.

It was soon after this that Howard was sent on the mis-

432 BRIGHAM’S THIEVING FRIEND.

sion that has been referred to in a previous chapter. Van Etten’s fortune was made from that moment. The Prophet’s heart was full of blessings for him, and found vent in the following benediction:

“The Lord will bless you, Brother Van Etten, for so nobly coming forward in my defense. You are the only man out of several thousand that paid any attention to the insults I received. I want you to understand that from this time I am your friend.”

The Cottonwood Saints were very much surprised at Brigham’s warmth, for Van Etten was well known as a worthless, dissipated character, and if Brother Brigham found any good in him, it was more than anyone else had

succeeded in doing.

The Prophet and Van Etten were ever after bosom friends; let the latter do what he would, Brigham would shield him from all difficulty. One instance of this protection of his *protégé* came directly under my notice. Van Etten stole a hundred sheep from my brother, who prosecuted him for it. When the trial came on, the evidence was as clear as possible against him; yet Brigham controlled the whole affair, and his “friend” was released. All who knew the facts concerning the case were astonished that even Brigham should do such a very unjust thing as to clear him; but at that time the Saints did not dare to criticize the Prophet’s actions as they do now, and all they said was, “There probably is something good about Van Etten that Brigham has discovered which we were unable to see.”

Finally, the Prophet’s intimate friend took several thousand head of sheep to herd for different parties, and a short time after, the owners heard that he had left the country; they went instantly to look after their sheep, but not a trace of them could they find. Van Etten sheep and all, were gone, and they never returned again to the “Valley of Ephraim.” It was afterwards found that he was in

433 UNDER FIRE OF BRIGHAM’S EYES.

Canada; he also was in debt nine thousand dollars at the co-operative store—Brigham’s pet institution. I never heard Brigham say whether he missed his friend or not; in fact, he never mentioned him after this last escapade.

I had noticed, during the morning service, that memorable Sunday at Cottonwood, that Brigham looked often at me; but I thought nothing more of it than that mine was a very familiar face, and consequently he was drawn towards it for that reason. Still there were others in the congregation that he knew; so mine was not the only face he looked at for recognition. I began to be a little uneasy under his scrutiny. I thought that possibly there was something about my appearance that displeased him. Possible he did not approve of my dress. I knew he considered himself perfectly at liberty to criticize any sister’s dress when he felt so inclined, and I did not know but I was to be the subject of his next outbreak. That he was not looking at me indifferently or carelessly I knew very well, that the bent brown and keen gaze that I felt was making the most complete scrutiny, and I wished he would look somewhere else. I fidgeted about in my seat, I looked at my little boy who was sitting beside me, and pretended to arrange some article of his clothing. I did everything but jump up and run away, and I even wanted to do that, to get out of the reach of those sharp eyes, and that steady, unflinching gaze. I am sure he saw my discomfort; but he was pitiless, and all the while the speaking was going on he scarcely turned his eyes from me a moment. I tried to be unconscious, to look in

every direction except his, but the steady eyes would always bring mine back again in spite of myself. I felt his power than as I never had felt it before, and I began to understand a little how it was that he compelled so many people to do his will, against their own inclinations. I learned the lesson better still subsequently.

After the services he came up to me and greeted me very cordially. I was surprised, for he had been so ruffled over

434 "MAY I WALK HOME WITH YOU?"

the Howard matter that I did not expect he would regain his spirits so easily.

"Are you well?" said he.

"As you see," I replied, laughing, and looking up at him.

"May I walk home with you?"

"If you wish; I should be much pleased," said I. I was pleased, too, for I knew that in bringing him home with me I should be conferring the greatest happiness on my mother. He took my little boy's hand, and led him along, and as he looked down at him, he said—

"A pretty child. What are you going to do with him?"

"Make a good man of him, if possible," was my reply.

"A better one than his father proved to be, I trust."

"God grant it, else he will not be much of a comfort to me," said I, the tears starting to my eyes.

"You are very much improved since you left Mr. Dee," said he; "do you know it? You are a very pretty woman."

"Thank you," said I, laughing, yet embarrassed at this wholesale fashion of complimenting; "if you can only tell me that I am a good woman, I should like that, too."

"Yes, you are that, I believe, and a good mother; and you were a good wife, only that foolish fellow didn't have the sense to half appreciate you."

"Thank you again. I don't know that I can take all you tell me, since I am not sure that I deserve such high praise."

"You are your mother's girl; there can be but one conclusion to draw from that. But tell me about yourself; are you happy?"

"Very," said I, earnestly. "I never was happier in my life."

"What makes you specially happy just now?"

"O, my children, my mother, my quiet life, after all the trial and weary struggling to make the best out of the very worst."

"Then you don't regret your divorce?"

"Indeed I do not; and now, Brother Young, let me thank you for your kindness in helping me to regain my freedom, and above all to keep my children. You must be content with gratitude, for I can repay you in no other way."

He looked at me a moment; a peculiar smile flitted across his face; he opened his lips as to say something; closed them again; looked at me more scrutinizingly than ever; turned away, and was silent for a moment. Then he asked me, quite abruptly, —

"I suppose you have had offers of marriage since your separation from Mr. Dee."

"Yes, many," I replied, answering his question very frankly, as I did not suspect that he had any motive in questioning me, except a friendly interest; and I was as honest in my confidences to him as I should have been with my father.

"Do you feel inclined to accept any of them?" was his next question.

"No, not in the slightest degree; none of them move me in the least."

"And you haven't a preference for any of the suitors?"

"I assure you, no."

"Never had the slightest inclination to say 'yes' to any offer that has been made?"

"Not a bit of inclination; all my lovers have had a rival affection to contend with."

"For whom?" was the question, quick and sudden, as if intending to take me by surprise by its abruptness.

I laid my hand on my boy's head. "For him, and for the other dear child that God gave me; I can have no room for other love while I have them to care for. They fill my heart exclusively, and I am so glad and happy because of it, that I should be jealous if I saw the least hint of regard for anyone creeping in. I couldn't love anybody else; I wouldn't."

436 BRIGHAM GIVES ME SOME ADVICE.

"Then you think you will never be induced to marry?"

"Never in my life," I said, vehemently.

Brigham laughed a little, and replied, "I have heard a very great many girls talk that was before."

"Yes, but I am not a girl; I am a woman; a woman, too, with hard, bitter experiences; a woman who has lost faith in mankind, and hasn't much faith in matrimony; a mother, too, who will not give her children a rival."

"No, but you might give them a protector."

"They don't need it; my love is sufficient protec-

tion. Besides, they are boys, and will by my protectors in a few years. So, you see, I do not need to marry for protection for myself or them.”

“But supposing it were shown to be a duty.”

“It can’t be. I should not recognize a duty of that kind. I consider myself old enough, and sufficiently experienced, to judge of my duties without assistance.”

He bent his eyes on me again with a keen, questioning look, and said, very kindly, “Child, child, I fear you are very headstrong. Don’t let your will run away with you.”

“No danger,” I replied; “it is not crossed often enough to make it very assertive.”

“A spoiled child, eh?”

“Possibly. My will seems to be everybody’s way at home.

“Well, my child, I want to give you a little advice. I have known you all your life, and have had an interest in you from your birth. Indeed, you seem like one of my own family, you were always in and out so much with my children; and I am going to speak to you as I would to one of my girls. You will probably marry again, some time, though you say now you won’t.”

“No,” I interrupted; “I shall not marry. I mean what I say when I tell you so.”

“Yes, I know it; but you will; now mark my words, and see if you don’t.”

437 A QUEER WAY OF LOVE-MAKING.

“Well, don’t feel so sure that you send somebody after me,” said I, slyly hitting him for his known propensity for “counseling” the brethren to take certain sisters as plural wives.

“You needn’t be afraid of my sending anybody. I promise you I won’t do that,” was his answer.

“Good; then I shall not be obliged to say ‘no’ to them, and so, perhaps, hurt your feelings as well as mortify them,” said I.

“Still, I believe that you will marry again some time. It is in the nature of things that you should. Women of your age, and your looks, don’t stay single all their lives; not a bit of it. Now, my advice it this: when you do marry, select some man older than yourself. It doesn’t make so much difference whether you’re in love with him, if you can respect him and look up to him for counsel. Respect is better than romance, any day. You’ve tried the one, now give the other a chance. You didn’t succeed so well with the other experiment that you care to try that over again, I know. You had your own way, too, if I remember rightly. It wasn’t such a smooth one as you thought it was going to be. I knew you was doing the wrong thing when I saw the man. I could have told you so, but you didn’t ask my advice.

Now I’m giving it to you without asking, for I don’t want you to make another mistake. So, when you choose again, remember what I say, and get a husband whom you can look to for good advice.”

We had reached home by that time, and I thanked him for his interest, and promised to heed his advice if I found it necessary; but I was sure I should not, for I was firm in my determination not to marry.

I had no idea at all of Brigham’s real object in thus sounding me, and drawing me out. It never occurred to me that he could want me for himself. I should just as soon have thought of receiving an offer of marriage from my own father, or to have heard that he (Brigham) was going

438 THE PROPHET ON HIS GOOD BEHAVIOR.

to marry one of his own daughters. Then I knew, too, that there had been a great deal said in the outside world respecting the practice of polygamy among the Saints, and I thought, from conversations I had heard, that the United States Congress had taken some action in the matter, and that he, being the Head of the Church, was watched pretty closely by government officials. Then he was so old—much older than my father—that the thought, had it presented itself, would have been scouted as absurd. I repeated the conversation to my mother, who seemed amused by it, but did not give any more serious thought to it than I had done.

Brigham was uncommonly jovial that day, and made himself particularly agreeable. He was unusually gracious to my father, revived old memories, and joked with my mother; petted and praised the children, and was very paternal in his manner to me. He showed himself, altogether, in his very best light, and made his visit very pleasant.

During the afternoon service he studied me in the same way that he had in the morning; and several times, when I caught his eye, he looked quite amused. I supposed he was thinking of our conversation at noon, and was much more at my ease than I had been in the early part of the day during the first service.

After service in the afternoon, Brigham told my father that he wished to see him on important business. They were closeted together for two hours, talking very earnestly. I supposed it had to do with church matters, as my father was one of the leading men in South Cottonwood, and had been so long a prominent member of the Mormon Church that it was by no means strange that Brigham had so much to say to him. I thought, possibly, they might be discussing the Howard affair; but beyond that I thought nothing. I certainly had no idea that I was the subject under discussion; that my future was being planned for me without any regard to my will in the matter. Had I known it, I should

by no means have gone about my duties with such a light heart, nor frolicked so gaily with my children.

At the end of the two hours my mother was called into the room, and the discussion was resumed. After a short time all came out. Brigham went away, bidding us all goodbye with much cordiality, and with an added impressiveness in his manner towards me.

When he had gone, my father told me the subject of their long conversation.

Brigham Young had proposed to him for me as a wife.