

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOW BRIGHAM YOUNG FORCED ME TO MARRY HIM.

Brigham's Offer of Marriage.—I Think the Prophet Too Old.—My Parents are Delighted with the Honor.—They Try to Persuade Me.—I am Very Obstinate.—Arguing the Matter.—How Brigham Found Means to Influence Me.—My Brothers get into Trouble.—The Prophet and the Telegraph-Poles.—He Takes a Nice Little Contract.—Then Sells it to His Son. —Bishop Sharp Makes a *Few* Dollars Out of It.—My Brother Engages in the Work.—He Becomes Involved in Debts and Difficulties.—Brigham Threatens to Cut Him Off for Dishonesty.—My Mother Tries to Excuse Him.—Hemmed In on All Sides, I Determine to Make One Last Appeal.—I Fail, and Consent to Marry Him.

I ROSE to my feet shocked beyond expression. I looked from my father to my mother, hoping that they were



A CRUSHING BLOW.—BRIGHAM WISHES TO MARRY ME.

merely jesting with me; for I had no idea that what they told me could be true; it was too monstrous an absurdity. But the expression of their faces did not reassure me. I saw that they were in earnest; that it was true; and I burst out into a passionate fit of weeping.

My mother came to me, and took my hand and caressed it in her own, and my father tried to reassure me.

441 BRIGHAM CONFIDENT OF SUCCESS.

“Why, my dear, what is the matter? Are you crying because the Head of our Church—the most powerful and influential man among us—has made you an offer of marriage? Why, it is nothing to cry about, surely.”

But I felt that it *was* something to cry over—some-

thing, indeed, over which to shed the bitterest tears that could be wrung from my heart's deepest anguish. I felt outraged, betrayed; to think, after our conversation that very day—but a very few hours before—when I had told him frankly my reluctance and abhorrence at the very idea of marrying again, that he should go deliberately and propose for me, showed a lack of delicacy and consideration which greatly surprised me. It was quite evident that he looked upon my assertions as girlish affectation that a good offer would speedily overcome. He was so confident of his success with the women he chose to woo, that he had no idea of meeting any settled opposition. He had, as I afterwards learned, no conception of feminine delicacy or sensitiveness; laughed at it as ridiculous, and called the women who exhibited it “sentimental fools.” I had nothing to hope from his mercy, but I did not know it then. When my first passion of grief had spent itself, I turned to my father, still holding my mother's hand, and said—

“What answer did you make him?”

“I told him that I would lay the proposition before you, and tell him what your decision was. He said that he had talked with you on the subject of marriage, and that you told him no one had proposed for you whom you fancied; that he was glad you were not easily pleased and suited with every new-comer, for he intended to place you in a position where you would be vastly the social superior of all your present lovers.”

“Didn't he tell you that I said I never should marry again? That my life was to be devoted to my children?”

“Yes; he said you mentioned something of that sort, but

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that he didn't take any stock in it; all girls talked so; it was their way of playing coquette; he understood it, and he liked you better for your coyness.”

“I told him decidedly,” I replied, “that I was a girl no longer, but a woman who knew her own mind, who had arrived at the ability to make her own decisions through terrible suffering; that the thought of marriage was distasteful to me. I wonder if he needs to be told more plainly? If so, you may go to him, since you told him you should leave the decision with me, and tell him that I say to him, No, as I have said it to all my other suitors, and that I do not even thank him for the position he intended to confer upon me, for he knew I did not want it. Does he think I have escaped one misery to wish to enter another? ‘Position!’ I wonder what he thinks there is particularly fine about being a plural wife even to Brigham Young? I have not seen so much happiness in the system, even among his wives, that I care to enter it. And I never, never can.”

My father interrupted me. “You are now excited,

now, my daughter. Be calm, and think the matter over reasonably. Don't decide in this hasty manner."

"I might think it over, reasonably, as you call it, for the rest of my life, and the conclusion I should arrive at would be the same. I never will, of my own free will and accord, marry Brigham Young; and you might as well tell him so at once, and have the matter settled."

"But, my dear child," said my mother, stroking my hair fondly, and looking at me with anxious eyes, "suppose it was your duty?"

"O, mother, mother! Have you turned against me, too? Am I to fight you all, single-handed, alone? Won't you at least, stand by me?"

"I would, gladly, my only, my darling daughter, if I was sure that it would be right."

"Do you doubt the right of it? Can you doubt it? Or do you think it would not be wrong to stifle all natural

443 MY PARENTS AGAINST ME.

feelings, all aversion to another union, above all, to him? Would it be right, do you think, to give myself to a man older than my father, from whom I shrink with aversion when I think of him as my husband, who is already the husband of many wives, the father of children older, by many years, than myself?"

"But he is your spiritual leader."

"That is no reason why he should be my earthly husband. I cannot see what claim that gives him to my affection."

"The doctrines of our church teach you to marry."

"Do you want to get rid of me?" I asked, suddenly, raising my head and looking her full in the face. I dared not enter into religious discussion with her, for I felt so bitterly that I should be sure to say something to shock her; and then I knew that, in argument, I should be fairly worsted; so I made my appeal on personal grounds, and touched her heart, as I was sure I should. She threw both arms about me, and sobbed as violently as I had done.

"You know I do not. How can you say that? I was only saying what I did, because I thought it was for your good here and hereafter. Did I consult my own feelings, no one should have you except myself; but I think of you welfare before my selfish desires."

"O, mother, I can't, I can't," I cried in a sudden agony, as the thought of all such a marriage involved, rushed across me.

"Don't fret so child," said my father, speaking for the first time since my mother had joined in the conversation. "I will tell Brother Brigham how you feel, and perhaps he will give up the idea. But he seemed to have set his heart on it, and I don't know how he'll take it."

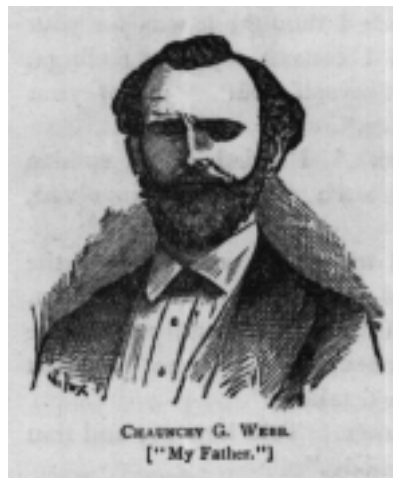
"Why, I belong to you, father. Tell him so, and that

you can't give me away to anybody."

My father smiled a little at me, grew grave again, and went away.

444 A YEAR OF ANGUISH AND TORTURE.

He told Brigham how adverse I was; and he only laughed, and said I should get over it, if I only had time. He would not give me up, but he would not hasten matters; he would leave me in my parents' hands, and he hoped they would induce me to listen favorably to his proposals. The last remark was made with a peculiar emphasis and a sinister smile, which every Saint who had



had dealings with him knew very well, and whose meaning they also knew. It meant, "Do as I command you, or suffer the weight of my displeasure." He sent a message to me, which, though seemingly kind, contained a covert threat; and I began to feel the chains tightening around me already. I felt sure that I could not free myself, but I would struggle to the end.

Thus began a year of anguish and torture. I fought against my fate in every possible way. Brigham was equally persistent, and he tried in every way to win me, a willing bride, before he attempted to coerce me. He told my parents, and myself, too, that he had always had great interest in me, and had intended to propose for me so soon as I was old enough; that when he sent for me to the theater, and proposed my being at the Lion House, it was that I might become familiar with the place and its inmates, and so not feel strange when he should bring me there as a wife. It had been his intention to have proposed for me then; but he had just married Amelia, and it had made such a hue-and-cry among the Gentiles, especially as he had taken her directly in the face of the late congressional law against polygamy, that he did not think it

445 MORE INFLUENCES BROUGHT TO BEAR.

wise to add another to the list just then; so he said nothing of his intentions, and before he knew anything of my engagement, I was ready to be married. It was a great shock to him; but as matters had gone so far, and as he was in

such a questionable position before the government, he thought it best not to interfere, as he most assuredly would, had he known my intentions earlier. Now I was free, and he was at liberty to tell me, what he had wanted to tell me long before, that he loved me.



Finding that this declaration of affection failed to move me, he tried another tack. He asked my father if a house and a thousand dollars a year would make me comfortable, as he wished to settle something on me when I married him, taking for granted that I should do so.

My mother and father both favored his suit, and labored with me to induce me to view it in the same light. Brigham was our spiritual guide; it might be that in refusing him I should lose all hopes of future salvation. That was my mother's plea. My father's was, that Brigham was able to hurt him pecuniary. And then came my oldest brother, who added his influence in Brigham's favor by telling me that Brigham had it in his power to ruin him, and was very angry with him, and had threatened to "cut him off from the church," which was, to a person in his position, the very worst thing that could happen.

The trouble between them was of Brigham's own making, and I will give it, as briefly as I can, to show how Brigham managed to get everything out of his people

446 THE PROPHET'S LITTLE CONTRACT.

without paying for it, and, at the same time, show the amount of honor which he has in business matters.

In 1860 the first telegraph line was extended from the Atlantic States to the Pacific, passing through Salt Lake City. Feramorz Little, a nephew of the President, took a contract to furnish about one hundred and fifty miles of poles, at three dollars each. According to Brigham's statement, Little was unable to fill the contract until the Prophet came to the rescue, and secured three dollars and a quarter each, by furnishing one hundred miles of sawed poles, although, in truth, the sawed timber was not so good as common round poles.

Six years later, a rival company commenced putting up a new line. Brigham negotiated for a contract, and succeeded in securing nearly eight hundred miles—extending from Denver City westward—at the very gratifying price

of eight dollars a pole. It is very generally believed that Brigham and one of the new company had a previous understanding to divide the profits on this magnificent job.

He then sub-let the whole contract to Bishop John Sharp and Joseph A. Young—his eldest son, who has recently died—at three dollars a pole; and my brother Gilbert took about four hundred and fifty miles—from Green River to Denver—at the very reasonable price of two dollars and a half a pole. He was then the owner of ten freight wagons, with six mules to each wagon; but in order to fill his contract, he found himself compelled to purchase six additional teams, at a cost of seven thousand dollars, which, with tools, provisions, and general outfit, increased the sum to nearly eleven thousand dollars, which he was obliged to borrow, paying a very heavy interest—five percent a month; but that, of course, was his own fault, not the Prophet's.

Brigham was anxious to have the work done immediately—which is not at all strange when one remembers that he would make five dollars on each pole—and he

447 HIS ARRANGEMENT WITH MY BROTHER.

had sent for my brother, and urged him to take the job, telling him that he knew of no one so suitable, for Gilbert had such a fine business reputation; adding that he was certain that the blessing of God would rest upon him, for it was His will that all the Saints should accumulate riches. After all this, and very much more talk of the same kind, Gilbert was induced to take the contract, my father giving security for the borrowed money.

My brother left Salt Lake City with his outfits as early as the snow would permit him to cross the mountains. When he had got his wagons loaded with poles for the first time, Brigham telegraphed for him to stop work and return to the city. He immediately complied with the order, and found, on his arrival, that there was a prospect of the new company compromising with the old, and putting up no line. They now desired to buy off all contracts. Brigham would clear on the contract one hundred thousand dollars, if the line was put up, and of course could compromise for no less. Sharp and Joseph A. wanted forty thousand dollars, and my brother ten thousand, if they gave up the contract. Brigham said that in justice, Gilbert ought to have twenty thousand dollars, to pay the expenses of the delay, etc.

Of course it was cheaper to put up the line than to compromise at this cost, and he returned to his work, having lost twelve days. His expenses at this time were about one hundred dollars a day. He had thirty men employed, at sixty dollars a month and their board, and he also had grain to furnish for one hundred mules. Brigham promised to pay for all this delay, but as usual he failed to do so.

My brother than began to furnish the poles, and

succeeded in delivering about twenty-five miles a week. For two months he received his pay quite regularly, and everything went on swimmingly. When he was about one hundred miles from Denver, having completed about three

448 A SHARP PIECE OF BUSINESS.

hundred and fifty miles, he was sent for to give up his contract of the eastern line, and take a contract on the northern line instead. That was between Utah and Montana. Gilbert was much averse to the change, as he had finished the most difficult portion of his work, and passed through where the timber is least accessible. But Brigham insisted, and wrote, promising to make it all right with him if he would come back, and go up north, and furnish one hundred miles or more of poles. Finally he sent Joseph A. down to my brother, who succeeded in persuading him to return.

While on his way back, he met Mr. E. Creighton, the superintendent of the line, with a company of men, setting the poles which he had furnished. Being desirous of giving thorough satisfaction, he sent Mr. Lorenzo Ensign, with three teams, loaded with good poles, to exchange for any poor timber, which did not satisfy. Those teams continued with the pole-setters until Mr. Creighton sent them back, remarking that he did not find it necessary to change one pole a day, and that he was entirely satisfied with the timber. I mention this because Brigham afterwards said that the contract was not well filled, and made this an excuse for not paying my brother. Those three teams remained with the pole-setters about four weeks, and, as I before said, were dismissed by one of the owners of the line.

Gilbert returned home in August, and, on starting for the North, Joseph A. asked him to set the poles that he should furnish on the Montana line, at the same time agreeing to pay him a dollar apiece for setting, and three dollars for the poles. That was fifty cents more than he received on the eastern line, but it would scarcely pay him for a move of six hundred miles, to a country where timber was in very high mountains and rough canyons.

Removing from the east of course broke the original contract; but as Gilbert had all the confidence in the world in the word of Brigham and Joseph A., he neglected to

449 "HUNT UP SHARP AND JOSEPH A."

make a new written agreement. After he had furnished the poles for about one hundred miles, my younger brother—who was farming at the time—took his team, and, after hiring six men, went to set the poles, paying his men two dollars a day and their board. They worked four weeks, for which they never received one dollar.

When my youngest brother was about leaving for home, Gilbert gave him an order on Sharp and Young for one thousand dollars. While Gilbert was in the East he had sent orders for money every month for my youngest brother to collect and disburse. Those orders were promptly paid, and he had no thought that this one would not be paid as promptly. He called at Brigham's office, and presented the order, and was curtly informed by Brigham that he must "hunt up Sharp and Joseph A."

On inquiring for their office, it could not be found. The day following he chanced to meet Bishop Sharp, who referred him to Joseph A. He called at the latter's residence three times without seeing him; finally, four days after, my brother succeeded in meeting him in his father's office. He was told to sit down in the outer room, where he was left alone for two hours; then he was called into the private office, and told that there was no money for him.

"But," said he to Brigham and Joseph A., "I must have the money; I have ten men who have already been waiting five days for their pay, and I am still paying them, or am under obligation to do so, and their board in the city also; and none of this can be done without money."

After a little more consultation Brigham said, "We can give you a draft on New York, which you can cash with some of the bankers or merchants in the city."

My brother then asked for time to inquire on what terms he could cash the draft; but was told that merchants would often pay a percentage on such paper, and that it was always as good as money. He then asked, if he was obliged to have it discounted, if Sharp and Young would lose the

450 MY BROTHER RUINED BY BRIGHAM.

amount, but was told that he need not be so particular, for he must take the draft or nothing, since they had no money. He took it then, as he saw very plainly that they did not intend to give him anything else, and presented it to every banker and merchant in Salt Lake City, but could find no one who would take it. On a second call at Walker Brothers', he succeeded in cashing it at three percent discount. Meeting Joseph A. afterwards, he told him he should charge him with the thirty dollars. Joe replied, "All right;" yet neither he nor Gilbert ever received another dollar from them, though they were in the boys' debt two thousand dollars.

When Gilbert returned from the North he found it difficult to pay his men, and also to meet his other expenses. He spent winter trying to get his pay, during which my younger brother, Edward, took the teams and went to California for freight, hoping by that means to save Gilbert from bankruptcy. The trip not proving successful, the spring of '67 opened very dark for us financially. Gilbert saw no way but to sell his teams. I remember his coming home

one night, feeling extremely dejected, and telling us he had sold sixteen of his best mules for less than half the amount he had paid for them, and expected the remainder to go at a still lower price.

In the spring of 1868, he was forced into bankruptcy by Captain Hooper, one of his principal creditors. This same Captain William H. Hooper had the good fortune to be one of the Prophet's favorites, although he was by no means a Mormon at heart, and Brigham knew it; still, as he liked to him, and as Hooper made sufficient pretense to pass for one, it was all right.

When Gilbert delivered up his papers to the assignees, they readily discovered a large indebtedness on the part of Sharp and Young. At the meeting of creditors, Brigham, who took the responsibility of the whole affair, undertook to have everything his own way, and, as my younger

451 IN A FEARFUL RAGE.

brother remarked, "literally rode over the whole company rough-shod." Among other statements, he said, —

"Gilbert Webb's poles were many of them condemned," which was utterly false. He then said he had never written to Gilbert while he was East. In face of this the letter was produced and read before the company. He then said he was sure he had no recollection of it, and asked George Q. Cannon—who was his clerk at this time—if he remembered it. Cannon replied that he believed he did. Previous to this, when Gilbert saw that he must lose everything, he considered it his duty to pay off his men, also to pay the notes which my father had signed, and to save him from utter ruin. At this Brigham's rage knew no bounds; he wanted Hooper to have his pay first. One of Gilbert's creditors was a Mr. Kerr, a Gentile banker, whom he paid without consulting the Prophet, which greatly enraged him. In speaking of it to my mother, he manifested all the growling propensities of an old "cur;" saying that Gilbert had paid all the notes due to Gentiles, and left his friend Hooper to take his chance with the rest of the creditors, and he intended to disfellowship him for it.

This was when he was "counseling" my parents to use their influence with me in his behalf.

"If you do that, Brother Young," said my mother, "I shall find it very hard to forgive you; although Gilbert may have erred in judgment, he designed to do right. Would you, President Young, like to have his father ruined in the crash? The notes held by Mr. Kerr were signed by him." He said, "If his father signed the notes, he ought to pay them."

"Well," replied my mother, with considerable spirit, "if Gilbert had been paid for his work, he would have been able to have paid all his debts."

He was very angry at this, and said, "What do you

know about business, I'd like to know?"

"I know enough to know when my children are ill-used

452 A SPIRITED CONTEST.

and cheated, Brigham Young," said she, quickly. "I wonder how you would like to have one of your sons cut off from the church, and treated in the manner in which you have treated Gilbert."

"I should think it perfectly right if one of my boys had done wrong and needed punishment." Yet this is well known that there are no more unprincipled men in the Territory than his eldest sons; but there never have been the slightest signs of their being disfellowshipped.

After a still more spirited contest with my mother, the Prophet took his departure in a great rage, saying he should see if "Gilbert would pay his Gentile debts if preference to paying the brethren."

All this was for the purpose of influencing me, and I saw that I must yield. There was nothing but ruin in store for us if I persisted in my refusal. The loss of property was by no means so dreadful a thing to my brother—brought up to believe that here was no salvation outside of Mormonism—

453 ONE LAST APPEAL.

as being cut off from the church and receiving the Prophet's cruse, and he was heart-broken at the prospect.

I made up my mind to make one last appeal myself to Brigham Young, and see if I could not touch his heart and induce him to resign his claims to me, and not to punish my family because I could not bring myself to become his wife. I was sure that I could move him. I would make myself so humble, so pathetic, before him. I would do all I could to serve him. I would never forget his kindness to me; but I could not marry him without bringing great unhappiness upon myself. I should also fail to bring happiness or comfort to him. I would be so eloquent that he could not refuse to listen to me.

I went up the city to visit a friend, quite determined to make this appeal to him, but my courage failed me. Two or three times I started to call to see him, but I would only get in sight of his office, and turn back faint and trembling. One day I saw him coming toward me in the street, and I determined to screw up my courage and speak to him. But when I reached him my tongue refused to speak the words, and I only faltered out a common-place greeting. All my eloquence was frozen under the chilling glance of the steely-blue eyes, which had not a ray of sympathetic warmth in them. No one who has ever been under his peculiar influ-

ence but will understand me when I say that in his presence I was powerless. My will refused to act, and I went away from him, knowing that I never could say to him what I felt.

I returned home, feeling, more than ever, that my doom was fixed. My religion, my parents—everything was urging me on to my unhappy fate, and I had grown so tired with struggling that I felt it was easier to succumb at once than to fight any longer. I began, too, to be superstitious about it; I did not know but that I was fighting the will of the Lord as well as the will of the Prophet, and that nothing but disaster would come as long as I was so rebel-

454 NO ALTERNATIVE—I MUST YEILD.

lious. The thought struck me, in a sudden terror, “What if God should take my children, to punish my rebellious spirit?” It was agony. “Not my will, but thine,” was my heart-broken cry—more desperate than resigned, however—and I went to my mother and told her that I had decided. I would become the wife of Brigham Young!