

CHAPTER XXIX.

MY MARRIAGE WITH BRIGHAM YOUNG.—HOW THE OTHER WIVES RECEIVED ME.

The Prophet Rejoices at me Yielding.—My Family Restored to Favor.—The Webbs Reconstructed.—My Prophet-Lover Comes to See Me.—He Goes Courting “on the sly,” for Fear of Amelia.—We are Married Secretly in the Endowment-House.—I am Sent Home Again.—Brigham Establishes Me in the City.—Limited Plates and Dishes.—We Want a Little More Food.—The Prophet’s “Ration-Day.”—How the Wives if the Prophet Worry and Scold Him.—The Prophet Breaks His Word.—My Father Remembers the Thousand Dollars.

MY acceptance of his suit was carried to him at once, and he was triumphant, although he did not show it, except by an added suavity of manner, and a disposition to make jokes, which everyone was expected to laugh at as heartily as he did himself.



AMELIA TRIES TO KEEP ME OUT.

My family were restored to favor, although my brother did not receive his money; and everything “went merry as a marriage-bell” for everybody, except myself. I had promised to marry him, but I was not resigned. I still fought against it, but the conflict was all internal. I did not dare admit anyone to me con-

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fidence, not even my mother. So I had to struggle alone with my impending fate, all the time suffering the stings of conscience as well; for I thought I must be terribly wicked to fight so hard against what was represented to me as the direct will of God; and, what was worse, I could not pray

for forgiveness, for I could not give up my feeling of desperate rebellion.

I had an early visit from my affianced husband, and during that visit he told me his plans. We were to be married very secretly, as, he said, he wished to keep the matter quiet for awhile, for fear of the United States’ officials. I found out afterwards, however, that it was fear of Amelia, for she had raised a furious storm a few months before; when, as I previously said, he married Mary Van Cott, to whom, by the way, he was paying his addresses while he was wooing me, and he did not dare so soon encounter another such domestic tornado.

He was very anxious to have the affair over as soon as possible; so we were married the 7th of April, 1869, at the Endowment-House. Herber C. Kimball performed the ceremony, and I was the wife of the head of the Mormon Church; the turbulent, passionate, shrewd, illiterate, strangely powerful man, who was the object of interest both in America and Europe; who was regarded with a strange, curious interest by outsiders; who was dreaded by his own people, and who ruled them with an absolute sway. I little thought into what publicity this new relationship would bring me.

After the ceremony was over, Brigham took me back to my mother’s house, where I was to remain for the present, until he should deem it prudent to let Amelia and the United States government know that I was his wife. Before our marriage, he had given me sine very pretty dresses, and a small sum of money, as a wedding-gift; but I never got such a present again afterwards. After I had been his wife three weeks, he made me his first call; stayed a few

457 A PROPHETICAL HONEYMOON.

minutes, and then went away. A few days after, he came and asked me to go to drive with him. I went, and he took me round all the by-ways where he would see few or no people, and where he thought there would be no danger that Amelia would hear of it. He did not enjoy the drive one bit, for he was in constant terror lest he should be discovered. He was anxious and *distract*; while I, on the contrary, was in the highest spirits. I laughed and chatted, and made myself as pleasant as possible. I could afford to do it, for he had no idea that I discovered his fears, I did very readily, and was jubilant in proportion to his misery. I didn’t feel specially complimented, to be sure; but, as I did not desire his attentions, and was happier without them, I did not allow my pride to receive a very severe wound, but was exceedingly gracious to him, the more nervous and absorbed he got.

I remained at home about a month, during which time, he said, he was having a house prepared for me in the

city. I saw but little of him during that time, and sometimes I would almost forget that he had any claim upon me. Then I was happy indeed; but the thought would force itself through everything, and I would become saddened again, and I was by no means light-hearted, bright-eyed woman he had looked at so intently that memorable Sunday at Cottonwood. I had grown thin and languid, and had lost all interest in life, except in my children. I should not have thought that I would have proved sufficiently attractive to have made him persevere so in his determination to marry me. But I believe that, at the last, he was influenced entirely by pique and willfulness. He would have his own way, and, after that, it was little matter what came.

At last he came to me, and told me that he was ready for me to move into the city, and invited my mother to come and live with me—an offer which she accepted, because she

458 POOR LIVING AND CHEAP CROCKERY.

did not wish to be separated from me, and not because she had no home of her own, or was at all dependent upon him for support. He had wanted me to go to the Lion House to live; but on that point I was decided. I would stay at my father's house, but I would not go there; so he had made a home for me in the city. Such a home it was! A little house, the rent of which would have been extremely moderate had it been a hired house, furnished plainly, even meanly, when the position of the man whose wife was to occupy it was considered. It was the very cheapest pine furniture which could be bought in the city, and the crockery was dishes that Brigham had left when he sold the Globe bakery. There were very few of these, and they were in various stages of dilapidation. My carpet was an old one, taken from the Lion House parlor, all worn out in the center, and, it being a large room, I took the out edges and pieced out enough to cover two rooms, and the other floors were bare. I had no window curtains of any sort, and there being no blinds to the house, I had to hang up sheets to keep people from looking in.

I told him several times that I was insufficiently supplied; but for a long time he made some excuse or other for not giving me more. At last he sent me a very few additional ones; so that, although there was still a lack of what I actually needed, I managed to get along by a great deal of contriving.

We lived very sparely, even poorly, as did most of the wives except for the favorite, and one or two others, who asserted their rights to things, and got them after a great deal of insisting. I could not insist, and so I got very little. As I made little or no fuss, and rarely complained to him, he took advantage of my quiet tongue, and imposed upon me fearfully. He said, up to the very last of my living

with him, that I was the least troublesome of any wife he had ever had; and he should have added, the least expensive, for he spent but very little money for me.

459 THE PROPHET'S "RATION DAY!"

I began to find out, very soon, what a position a neglected wife has, and my heart ached and longed for freedom. The thralldom was worse than I had fancied, for I supposed that I should, at least, have had the comforts of life, such as I had been accustomed to; but I was disappointed even in that. Then I felt that I was bound to this kind of existence for life. There was no escape from it. I was shut in by every circumstance, as by a wall of adamant [**A stone once believed to be impenetrable in its hardness.**] and the more I struggled to get free, the worse I should be hurt. There was nothing to do but simply to endure; to die if I could, to live if I must. A pleasant state of mind, surely, for a bride of a few months.

The principal meat which he furnished to us was pork; we had it on all occasions. Very rarely, indeed, we had a piece of beef; but months would elapse between his times of sending it, and we got to look upon it as a very great luxury. He had what he called "Ration-Day" once a month, when the different families were given out their allowance for the month. This allowance for each family was five pounds of sugar, a pound of candles, a bar of soap, and a box of matches. I found this entirely inadequate, and so part of the time—unheard-of liberality!—I was allowed to draw sugar twice a month. Our bread we had from the Prophet's bakery. Once in six months his clerk got a few of the commonest necessaries of life, and each of us had a few yards of calico, and a few yards of both bleached and unbleached muslin.

I could not get anything else out of him, except by the hardest labor, and the little that I got was given so grudgingly that I hated myself for accepting it; and many a time I would have thrown the pitiful amount back in his face, but stern necessity would compel me to accept the money and overlook the insult. I can scarcely look back to those times, not that I am so far beyond them, without a lowering of my self-respect; the hot blood tingles to the very ends of my fingers as I recall the insults I received

460 TWO WIVES WHO WOULD NOT SPEAK TO ME.

from that man while I was his wife, and the utter powerlessness of my situation, that would not let me resent them.

When my marriage to him was known by the other wives, as it was on my removal to the city, he took me to the Lion House, to visit the family there. I was very kindly

received by most of them, Emmeline Free and Zina Huntington being especially my friends. Two of them, however—Eliza Burgess and Harriet Cook—would not speak to me.

The latter had been a servant in my mother's family in Nauvoo, and Brigham had, indeed, married her from our house. She used to take care of me when I was a baby, and she was so angry when she heard the Brigham had married me, that she wished with all her heart that she had choked me when she had a good chance; that she certainly would had she known what my future was to be. Eliza Burgess, though not the first, and never a favorite wife, used to be terribly exercised whenever Brigham added another to the family. She would go about, crying bitterly, for days, and would sometimes shut herself up in her room, refusing to see anyone. Her sorrow was the joke of the family, since no member of it could see what reason she had for indulging in it. She had but just got over mourning his alliance with Mary Van Cott, when she was called upon to grieve over his union with me.

She knew me perfectly well, as she had been an inmate of the Lion House for some years, and used to see me constantly the winter I was at the theater, and spent so much of my time there; but on the occasion of my first visit after my marriage, she utterly ignored my presence, and would neither look at me nor speak to me. Of course I had noticed it, and I knew the reason very well. I had no hard feelings towards her, for I knew her suffering was genuine. She got no attention from her husband, and her starved heart cried out for the love that was lavished on others.

461 "THERE, MADAM!"

After I had gone, one of the wives—Aunt Zina, I think it was—asked why she did not speak to Ann-Eliza.

"O" she said, "I will by-and-by, when I feel like it."

I was in and out several times, and yet Eliza preserved the same demeanor towards me, until one morning she astonished my by coming up abruptly and saying, "Good morning."

I answered her greeting, and she went away as suddenly as she came, but evidently quite satisfied with herself. She "felt like it," I presume; had grown more reconciled to my position in the family; and was willing to recognize me as a member of it,

My first encounter with Amelia was somewhat amusing. It happened not long after my marriage. She had not got over her anger at her lord for taking Mary Van Cott—of whom, by the way, she was terribly jealous—when fuel was added to the fire of her fury by my introduction to the world as another Mrs. Young. She was terribly bitter towards us both, though I think she hated Mary

with a more deadly hatred than she felt for me. I think she considered Mary her most dangerous rival, but for all that she was not drawn towards me at all. It was not that she disliked me less, but Mary more.

I was walking one day with a friend, and we were on our way to the gardens which join the Prophet's residence, which are, by the way, the very finest in the city. Amelia was just in front of us, and she evidently judged from our conversation where we were going to. She kept just about so far in front of us, taking no notice of me at all until she reached the garden gate, when she went in, shut it with a slam, and called out—

"There, madam! I'd like to see you get in now."

I made no answer, but reaching through the gate, I managed, with the assistance of my friend, to open the gate and go in. We passed Amelia as she stood examining a plant, and as we passed her we did not discontinue our

462 "WASN'T SHE JUST AWFUL?"

conversation, but kept on laughing merrily over some girlish reminiscences which we had recalled while on the way. In a few minutes more we heard her scolding the head-gardener fearfully. As we returned, I stopped where the old man was, and said—

"What is the matter, Mr. Leggett?"

"O," said he, "it is Mrs. Amelia. Did you hear her scolding my just now? Wasn't she just awful? She's that mad because you came in, that she had to let out on somebody, and I suppose I came the handiest. But ain't she a master hand to scold, though? Why, you'd ought to hear her give it to me sometimes. I'm pretty well used to it, and don't mind very much. It's some consolation to think that Brother Brigham gets it worse than I do, and when he's round, I'm safe.

Just once, after that, Amelia spoke to me. It is customary, on Brother Brigham's birthday, for the wives to have a dinner in his house. It is held at the Lion House, and all the family assemble to do honor to its head. At one of these dinners Amelia sat directly opposite me, and during the dessert she reached the cake-basket to me, and with as freezing a tone and manner as she could assume, asked—

"Will you have some cake?"

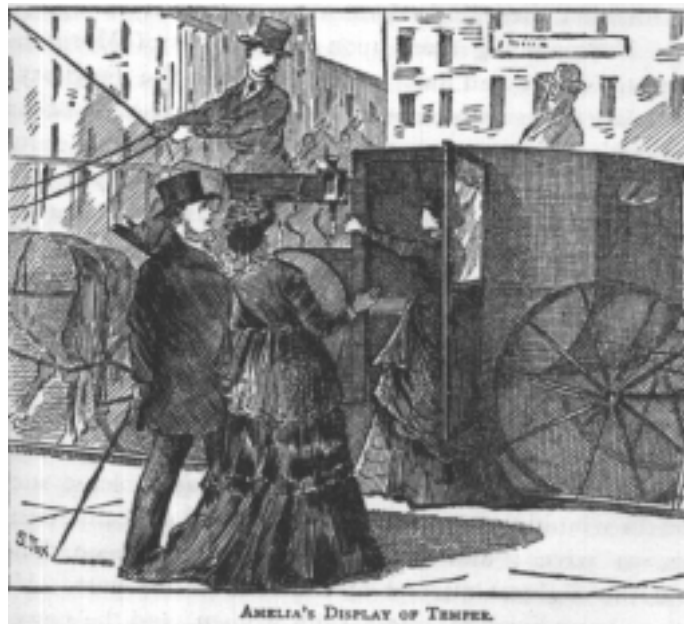
I declined, and that ended our conversation—the last, and indeed the only one I ever had with her, for the first encounter could scarcely be called a "conversation," since the talking was all on one side.

She was even ruder the Mary Van Cott than to me. One day, while Brigham was furnishing Mary's house, he had taken her up to the family store in his carriage, to select some articles which she needed for her housekeeping. They had finished making their selections, and were just preparing to enter the carriage, when Amelia came sailing down

upon them. She took in the position of affairs at once, and stepping directly between the Prophet and

463 HOW MRS. AMELIA RULES HER LORD!

Mary, elbowed them out of the way, got into the carriage, slammed the door, and ordered the driver to carry her home. The coachman hesitated a moment, looked at Brother Brigham, who never said a word; then at Mary, who was



furious at the insult, but showed it only by her flashing eyes and deepening color; then back to Amelia, who scowled at him, and repeated, “Home, I say,” and started off, leaving the two standing together. They walked home, and Brother Brigham had a nice time after it. Amelia treated him to a lecture longer and stronger than usual, not sparing her rival in the least, but calling her every sort of name she could think of that was not complimentary in character and threatening her recreant lord with all sorts of torments if he went out with that “shameless creature” again; while Mary felt so outraged by Amelia’s act, and Brigham’s cowardice in not resenting it, that he was obliged to use all his *finesse* to appease her wrath.

This carriage episode reminds me of something that

464 WHAT THE PROPHET’S WIVES ARE LIKE.

occurred in George Q. Cannon’s family. This family is no more united than many others in Utah, and they have occasional disputes among themselves, which are not always settled in the most amicable manner. At one time, two of his wives wanted the carriage at once. They would not use it together, and neither one would give up to the other. In the struggle to get possession of it, a sort of free fight en-

sued. Blows were exchanged, hair pulled, fingernails used indiscriminately, and one of the women lost her dress in the contest. I think the “apostolic” husband fails to mention these little domestic scenes in Washington, when he is expatiating there upon the beauties of Mormonism, and the peace and unity of the people in the Territory.

I must say that such scenes of violence do not often occur in Brigham’s family, as most of his wives feel the dignity of their position too much to allow the world to see any disagreement between them, even when it exists. There are some very fine women among the Prophet’s wives—women that, outside of Mormonism, would grace any social circle. Educated, cultivated women, who by some strange circumstance have been drawn, first into the church, then into the Prophet’s harem. I think nothing better shown the peculiar power which Brigham Young possesses, than a look at the women who are and who have been his wives. Ignorant as he is, coarse and vulgar as he is, he has at least succeeded in winning women of refinement, of delicate sensibilities, as wives; and in many cases it has been done without the slightest attempt at coercion on his part. He had the shrewdness to select such women, and the power to win them, but he has not the ability to appreciate them; and I have no hesitation in saying, from my own experience with and knowledge of them, that more unhappy and wretched women do not exist in the world, than the more cultured and delicate wives of Brigham Young. These women are rarely his favorites, and it is a mystery why he took them, unless it was that he might “add to his glory,” and swell his kingdom.

465 HOW “OUR HUSBAND” DIVIDED HIMSELF.

I was always treated very kindly by the other wives, with one or two exceptions, and I have the pleasantest and kindest recollection of them all. Most of them I had known from my childhood, and they were old and intimate friends of my mother’s; and I have no doubt, had they dared to have done so, they would have expressed open sympathy for my in my trials, and I am sure in their hearts they respect me for the step I have taken, and would like to find a way of retreat for themselves if it were possible.

My husband called to see me at my new residence whenever he could find opportunity, which was not very often, and he repeated the drive, which was no more comfortable for him than the first one had been. I did not care especially about it, and was glad when I got home. With the exception of those drives, I never went anywhere with him alone; for, with the exception of Amelia, and occasionally Emmeline—which occasions constantly grew rarer—he never went with only one wife, but took two or more.

The first winter that I was married to him, the Fe-

male Relief Society, to which I then belonged, gave a ball, and all the ladies were to invite the gentlemen. I ventured to ask Brother Young. He was my husband, and whom else should I invite? He accepted my invitation, apparently with much pleasure, and arranged to call for me on the appointed evening to take me to the hall. He was punctual to his appointment, but when he arrived he was accompanied by another wife. I supposed he knew the fact of his being at the ball would be reported to Amelia, and that she would be very angry if he went with me alone. I was very much annoyed at the circumstance, and really a little hurt that he could not take me somewhere just once without someone else along. I said nothing, however, and was as cordial to the other wife as I should have been had she accompanied him at my express invitation.

I never learned to hate anything in my life as I did the word "economy," while I was Brigham Young's wife. It

466 "CHILDREN SHOULD GO BAREFOOT."

was thrown at me constantly. I never asked for the smallest necessary of life that I was not accused of extravagance and a desire to ruin my husband, and advised to be more economical. I had a mind to reply, several times, that I did not see how I could be, without denying myself everything, and literally going without anything to eat or to wear. I held my tongue, however, and "possessed my soul in patience." I was, in fact, a perfect Griselda; and my husband had got so used to such unquestioning obedience and submission from me that I think he never was so surprised in his life as he was when I rebelled. I am sure he would have expected rebellion from any or all of his wives sooner than from me. And I am quite sure that he was no more surprised than I was.

Before our marriage he had professed a great interest in my boys, and had promised to do many things for them. I had counted very much on his assistance in training them, but as soon as I was really married to him he seemed to forget all his promises. He looked upon my children as interlopers, and treated them as such. He scolded me for spending so much time and money on them; he would allow them to wear only clothes of home-spun cloth, and gave them each one hat and one coarse, heavy pair of shoes a year. When they needed more I had to contrive some way to get them myself; the first time I ever asked him for shoes, he said, "They didn't need shoes; children ought always to go barefoot; they were healthier for it;" and yet I noticed that none of his children were compelled to do so. I did not allow mine to do so, either, and I am indebted to my father for many things to make me and the children comfortable, and the shoes that Brigham "couldn't afford" to buy were among them. Had I been alone, I probably

should never have told my parents of my position; but my mother was with me, and she saw these little meanness' of the Prophet with surprise; yet, strange to say, they did not shake her faith in her religion. She

467 HE DIDN'T FORGET THE THOUSAND DOLLARS.

admitted that she could not understand his behavior, and yet she counseled patience, thinking that in some way things would come right some time. I had not so much faith about the "coming right," so far as I was concerned, but I had not then begun to doubt my religion. My father had no faith at all; for he remembered the one thousand dollars a year, not a cent of which had been seen at the end of my first year as his wife. Yet no one of us dared at that time to question the Prophet's action, although we were all indignant at his breach of faith.

We found out afterwards that the promise he made my father regarding the "settlement" was the standard promise which he made to all his wives before he married them, and the fulfillment was, in most cases, the same.