

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE PROPHET AT HOME.—HOW HE LOOKS,
LIVES, AND ACTS.—MORMON PHILANTHROPY
AND EDUCATION.

Brigham at Forty-five and at Seventy-five.—Slipping the Yoke.—The Salt Lake Tribune.—Books on Mormonism.—Prophetic Philanthropy.—The New Temple.—Paying the Workmen.—The Tabernacle.—Advantages of the Presidency.—Free Schools and Liberal Education.—Sharp Practice.—The Rich and the Poor.—Unconscious Sarcasm.—Looking into the Future.—The Spectacles of Ignorance.—Personal Habits.—The Prophet's Barber.—Dinner at the Lion House.—The Good Provider.—Helping herself.—Prophetic Cunning.—Evening Devotions.—A Gift in Prayer.—Advice to the Deity.—Fatherless Children.—The Bee Hive.—Monogamist vs. Polygamist.

UNLESS I pause and look back almost to my very babyhood, and contrast Brigham Young as he then was with the Brigham Young of today, I can

scarcely realize the change that has taken place in this man. As I recollect him first, he was a man in the prime of life, with rather a genial face, and a manner which, though abrupt at times, had nothing of the assumption and intolerance which characterize it now. In deed there was, at that



time, a semblance of humility, which served his purpose well, by strengthening the confidence of the people in him.

518 THE MORMON MESSIAH.

Had he claimed, at that auspicious point in his career, when accident placed him at the head of this peculiar sect, that he was the peer of Joseph Smith, upon whom had descended the mantle of that martyred saint, his preten-

sions would have been treated as contemptuously as were Sidney Rigdon's. his shrewdness plainly showed him that, and his cunning and tact pointed out to him the surest way of gaining an ascendancy over his followers.

He taught them that Joseph was their Messiah; that he was only acting in his place until he should be restored to them in person; which, strange as it may seem, many still believe will occur, and actually watch for his visible presence among them again. Still, that belief does not obtain so generally as it did during first years after Joseph's death. The gradual change in the President has not been without its effects, and there is now very much more of the material than of the spiritual in the Mormon belief.

Nearly everything that was done by him in those earlier days was done in the name of the Lord and Joseph, and he was constantly in the habit of expressing his intentions of carrying out "brother Joseph's" plans. Gradually, as he could without its being too closely observed and commented on, he dropped "brother Joseph," and made his own desires the law by which the people were to be ruled. Yet so quietly and subtly was this done, that the Saints never knew when they passed from the role of Joseph Smith and superstition, to the absolute despotism of Brigham Young, which has been indeed a "reign of terror."

The absolute belief which he used to express in Joseph, and his unquestioning faith in his works and mission, he expected everyone to yield to him in turn; and he and his immediate followers and associates have taught and insisted upon this blind subjection so long, that the Mormon people have neglected to use their own reasoning powers, until they have become so blunted, that the majority of them are incapable of arriving at any conclusions by their own unaided effort, or of forming any independent opinions.

519 DISCUSSING BRIGHAM'S MERITS.

In the early days, in his intercourse with the people, he was one of them—a sharer in their adversity, a companion, and a friend. Now, he holds himself apart from them, looks upon himself as above and beyond them, as something better than they, and they partake of his own delusion, and assist him in his self-deception.

Now and then one keener than the rest sees the change, and deplors it. Rough old Herber C. Kimball could never become reconciled to it, and, more honest and more daring than the others, used to express himself very freely.

"Brigham's God is gold," he said one day to the apostle Orson Hyde; "he is changed much since he and I stood by each other, in the old days, defending the faith. He has become a selfish, cold-hearted tyrant, and he doesn't care at all for old friends who have stood by him and loved him. What do you think of that, Brother Orson?"

“That sort of talk may do for Brother Herber,” was the reply, “but it would not do for Brother Orson. He could not express himself in that manner with impunity, so he will say nothing.”

At forty-five Brigham Young was a common looking, very ordinary appearing man, in no way the superior of the majority of the church, and decidedly the inferior of some of the members. He was homely in speech, neither easy nor graceful in manner, and dressed very plainly in homespun.

Brigham Young, at seventy-five, has the appearance of a well-preserved Englishman, of the yeoman class. There is less bluster in him manner than formerly, but more insolent assumption. He is still the mental inferior of some of the officers of his church, but in crafty cunning and malicious shrewdness he is far in advance of any of his associates. He is not more finished and elegant in his mode of speech, but he says less, and consequently has won the opinion of having grown more pleasing in his address. He is arrogant to his inferiors, and unpleasantly familiar to

520 APING THE GENTILES.

the very few whom he desires for any reason the conciliate. He dresses in the finest of broadcloth, fashionably cut, is more finical than an old beau, concerning his *personnel*. He says that this change in his mode of dress has been brought about by his wives. I have no doubt that Amelia may have had some influence in that direction; still his own inclinations probably had just as much to do with it.

Since he has allowed himself to see and be seen by more of the outside world than he formerly did, he has grown to appear more like the Gentiles, concerning whom he sneers so loudly, even while aping their manners and customs. He is impatient of criticism, and as sensitive to public opinion as though he were not constantly defying it. He is at once ambitious and vain, and, like all persons who turn to others to ridicule, is very sensitive to anything approaching it when it is directed towards himself. He reads everything that is written against him. I think no book has ever been published, exposing him and his religious system, which he has not perused, from the title page to the conclusion. He loses his temper every morning over the Salt Lake Tribune—the leading Gentile paper of Utah—and longs for a return of the days when one word of his would have put a summary and permanent end to the existence of this sheet, by the utter annihilation of everything and everybody connected with it. But the time is forever past when the “un-sheathing of his bowie-knife,” or the “crooking of his little finger,” pronounced sentence upon offenders, and the Gentile paper and its supports flourish in spite of him.

I remember once going into his office, and finding him examining the advertising circular of a book on Mor-

monism, written by a lady who had for a time been a resident of Utah. He commenced reading it aloud to me in a whining voice, imitating the tone of a crying woman. Yet, notwithstanding this attempt to make a jest of it, I knew that the publication of this book annoyed him exces-

521 PROPHETIC BEGGING.

sively, and that he was both curious and anxious concerning the contents, and the effect they would produce; for, with all his professes contempt for Babylon and its Gentile inhabitants, he is very sensitive concerning the opinions which are held concerning him by these unregenerate souls.

Unscrupulous and avaricious, he has made even disasters profitable to himself. After the tragic hand-cart expedition, he sold the hand-carts that remained when the emigrants had all got in for fifteen dollars apiece. This was to go to the “church fund,” which virtually means “Brigham’s private purse.” It has been already related how he made his “improved carriage scheme” more than pay for itself several times over, although they did not survive the first trip.

As “Trustee in Trust” of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints, all the money of the church passes through his hands, or, more properly speaking, *into* them, since it is rarely known to leave them again. The tithing fund, and the subscriptions for various church purposes, are all given into his keeping; and although the sums of money gathered in this way have been very large, none of it has ever been appropriated to the cause for which it was supposed to be intended by those sacrificing souls who denied themselves that the Lord might be served.

He is as inexorable a beggar today as he was forty years ago, when he was a humble follower of Joseph Smith, preaching the new gospel to whoever would hear him, and being fed and clothed by whoever would supply his wants. He made no hesitation in letting these wants be known, and he would request that they should be relieved in the name of the Lord.

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my little ones, ye have done it unto me,” has been the standard teaching of the Mormon missionaries from the very earliest days; and no one could enlarge on this passage more eloquently than Brother Brigham when he was in

522 RAISING THE WIND.

need of a new coat, or a small sum of money, or even a supper and a night’s lodging.

He is as eloquent now, when talking on the subject of giving, with this exception in his style of address, that he now demands instead of asks, and it is disastrous to refuse



BRIGHAM YOUNG

him. He begs for the missionaries, and the poor men never get a cent of the thousands of dollars that are raised for them. He begs for the Temple, which is his pet subject, whenever there is nothing else to beg for, and the amount of money which he has raised for the building ought to have erected several very imposing edifices.

Many years ago he levied contributions upon the English Saints for the purchase of glass for the Temple windows. The sum desired must be collected at once. The Lord was soon coming to enter upon his earthly kingdom, and the place must be prepared for him. Missionaries preached, and laymen exhorted; they astonished even themselves by their eloquence, as they dwelt upon the beauty of Zion, the city of the Lord, and the glory that was to descend upon his chosen people. Those who were not moved by their oratory were impelled by their command; but, for the most part, the money was given voluntarily. Working men and women took a few pennies from their scant wages, and gave them wonderful readiness, and then suffered from cold and absolute hunger for days after. But they suffered with painful joyousness and devotion, since they were giving it to the Lord, who had chosen them out of all the world for his very own people, and who would make their self-denials here redound to their glory and grace when at last they should arrive in his presence.

At that time, the foundation walls of the Temple were barely above ground, and the work has progressed very slowly since. At any rate, the glass has not been bought, and there seems very little probability of window material being needed at present; and if the Lord is not to visit the Saints until his home is completed, even the younger

523 ARCHITECTURAL INSPIRATIONS.

members of the present generation will not be likely to see Him.

The "Tabernacle," where the Saints worship at present, is as great a success as are most of his inspired ideas. It is an ugly-looking building, oval in shape, with a sort of arched roof, which shuts down over it, like the lid of a wicker-work basket. It is very commodious, which is its chief recommendation, holding comfortably twelve thousand persons. In this "inspired" edifice, every law of acoustics is outraged, and only a small portion of the congregation can hear what the speaker is saying. It is two hundred and fifty feet long, one hundred and fifty feet wide, and eighty feet high, while there is not a column in it to obstruct the view, and the interior view is flat and expansive.

The organ claims to have been built by a good Mormon brother, assisted by a large number of mechanics; and is said to be the largest ever built in the United States. It is placed at the end of the Tabernacle, directly back of the speaker's stand, and the seats for the choir are arranged on

each side of it.

This building, in which the Saints are to worship until the more pretentious Temple is finished, is ugly in the

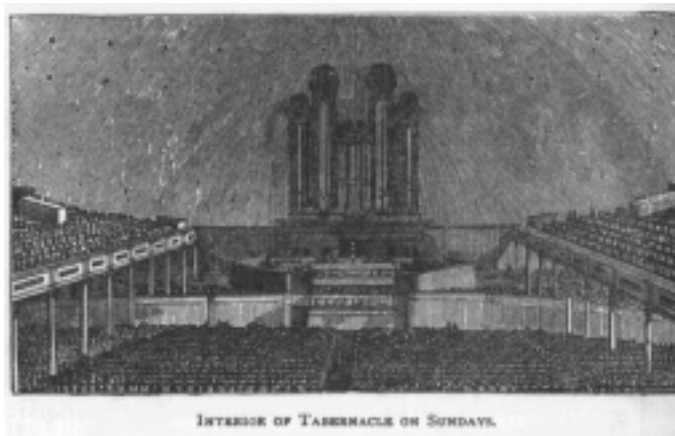


MORMON TEMPLE NOW BUILDING.

outward appearance, cheerless in the interior, very inconvenient in its arrangements, and practically useless unless the walls are draped so as to render the voices of the speakers

524 BALANCING ACCOUNTS.

audible, but when the new building—which is said by



INTERIOR OF TABERNACLE ON SUNDAYS.

Brigham to be of Divine architecture—shall be completed it is probable that these things will be vastly improved.

In the mean time the begging goes on, but the work moves slowly. Large contributions come flowing in, but the Temple does not advance visible; while Brigham adds house to house, field to field, increases his bank deposits, and lives very well as any man in his position would wish to live.

The people will take no bonds from him; and as it would seem like questioning the Lord's anointed, he is supposed to administer the financial affairs under the direction

of the Lord, no statements are ever required of him. Once in a while, however, he goes through the form of a settlement of accounts, which he simplifies immensely, by system all of his own. It is said that at one time he balanced his account with the church by ordering the clerk to place two hundred thousand dollars to his account for services rendered, which was exactly the sum of his indebtedness to the church. This was in 1852; and in 1867 he repeated this peculiar financial operation; this time making his ser-

525 A LIBERAL SALARY.

vices liquidate for nine hundred and sixty-seven thousand dollars.

It is worth while to be President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints at a salary like that, and it is no wonder that he desires to keep it in the family, and is so anxious to appoint a successor.

But on the other side, see at what terrible rates the poor people must have been taxed to have paid for the support of this one man and his family, between the years of 1847 and 1867—a period of just twenty years—one million one hundred and sixty-seven thousand dollars, nearly sixty thousand dollars a year. This does not include many grants of land and other property, made to him by the territorial legislature, nor his compensation by the United States government as governor and Indian agent. Although a very ignorant man himself, able neither to read nor write the English language correctly, he has always been a bitter opponent of free schools and liberal education.

“I will not give a dollar,” he says, “to educate another man’s child. If you school your children, there is great danger of their becoming blacklegs and horse thieves,” he announced on one occasion, yet he seems quite willing that his own should take the risk. All of them have received a certain amount of education, enough to make them presentable in society, and some have had quite superior advantages. One son has just graduated at West Point, another is a student at the Michigan University Law School, and a third had just entered Cornell University.

Every attempt that has been made for the establishment of free schools he has fiercely battled against, and the other officers of the church have invariably followed his lead. He assures his people that education is the bitterest foe to labor. If they allow their children to be taught anything they will no longer be of any service to their parents. He dilates largely upon this subject in the Tabernacle.

526 BRIGHAM ON EDUCATION.

“I am utterly opposed to the schools,” he said, in one address. “They have been introduced into the States in consequence of the tyranny of the rich over the poor. But

instead of keeping the people poor, and than providing free schools for them, I would have the rich put out their money to usury by giving the poor employment, that they may be able to sustain themselves and school their own children. It is the duty of the rich to use their means, as I have done myself, In building factories, railroads, and other branches of industry, in order that the laboring people may have a chance to work together, and improve their condition; the rich taking their portion, and all growing wealthy together.”

There is an unconscious sarcasm in this last sentence that is positively sublime. That one expression, “as I have done myself,” is the supreme satire. I do not believe there is anywhere a man so suspicious of his workmen, so penurious in his dealings with them, so anxious to cut their wages down to the very lowest penny, as is Brigham Young. I know men who have been in his employ for years, and have never received the least remuneration. They have worked on and on, and when at last they have brought a bill against him for their labor, they have been met with one equally as large on his side for house rent, or goods from the co-operative store, or are told the their labor is to go toward paying their tithing.

If all the rich men use their means, “as I have done mine,” therefore there will be very little chance of the poor man being able to educate their children at all: which is exactly what Brigham Young wants. Had he spoken the truth he would have said, “I am opposed to free schools. They will rend this dark veil of superstition which envelops you, and let in the light of reason, and this will loosen my hold on you. If you educate your children you make better men and women of them, but they will not be such blind slaves to me as you have been. The day that sees

527 THE FAMILY DINNER.

knowledge generally disseminated throughout this community sees my power broken, my ‘opportunities’ gone, and therefore, with my consent, we will have no free schools.”

Unlettered and uncultured as he is, he recognizes the power of education, and that is why he is such a bitter opponent to general culture, and why, at the same time, he takes special care that his own children shall lack no advantages.

His personal habits are quite simple, and he is very regular in his mode of living. He rises usually about seven o’clock, dresses and breakfasts very leisurely, and appears at his private office about nine. He examines his letters, dictates replies to his secretary, reads the morning papers, or has them read to him, and attends to some of his official business. His barber comes to him at ten o’clock, and for the time he is engaged exclusively at his toilet. The presence of visitors never interrupts this important event of the day. The rest of the morning he devotes to callers, and to

such business as requires his own personal attention. At three he dines, and it is then that he meets his family for the first time in the day. Dinner is served at the Lion House, and the appearance of Brigham Young's family at dinner is very similar to that at a country boarding-house, when the gentlemen are away at business in town, and the wives and children are left together. At a short table, running across the head of the long dining-room, Brigham sits with his favorite wife by his side. In the days when I first used to be at the Lion House, as a partial guest and partial resident, Emmeline Free occupied this place of honor; but after Amelia's advent, poor, loving Emmeline was thrust aside. When Brigham brings guests to dine with him, they have seats at this table also. At a long table, running lengthwise of the room, all the other wives are seated, each with her children about her. At the sound of the large dinner bell, they all file in, seat themselves quietly, grace is said by the "pre-

528 HELP YOURSELF, LADIES.

siding patriarch" from his table, and the meal goes on. The family table is plainly spread, and supplied with the very simplest fare, while the smaller one is laden with every delicacy that the markets will afford. These, however, are only for the President and his favorite wife, and the rest of the family must be satisfied merely to look at them, and enjoy the dainties by proxy.

A very amusing incident took place once at this family dinner. One of the wives,—not usually considered among the most spirited ones,—who like the rest, had submissively taken the food which had been set before her for years, was one day seized by the spirit of discontent. She had taken a fancy that she should like some of a particular dish which graced her husband's table. She did not express her wish, but quietly rising from her place, went straight to the other table, helped herself to the coveted article, and returning as quietly as she came, took her seat, and resumed her meal, amidst looks of consternation from the other wives, and of indignant amazement from her husband. Surprise made him absolutely speechless for the moment; but I fancy she was properly reprov'd in due time, for she never attempted a repetition of the act.

When strangers are invited to dine, the tables are more uniform in their appointments. The usual contrast between the one at which the Prophet and his favorite sit, and that around which the other wives and their families are gathered, is not nearly so marked. There is an air of abundance, and even of luxury, on these occasions, which gives the Prophet the reputation, among his guests, of being, what is called in New England parlance, "a good provider."

If only some of these deluded visitors could accidentally happen into the same room at a similar meal, they

would see the true state of affairs; but Brigham's family are never visited accidentally. Indeed, it is but a short time since visitors have been allowed in the Lion House at all, for the

529 A STRANGE FAMILY GATHERING.

Prophet has always maintained the strictest privacy regarding his family.

After dinner they see no more of him until "family



prayers." At seven o'clock the bell is rung, and the wives and children gather in the large Lion House parlor. Not only are the wives who live in the house expected to be present, but those who have homes outside are also supposed to attend evening worship. Not all of them avail themselves of this privilege, and the outside attendance is somewhat irregular. I used to go whenever I felt inclined, which was very seldom; and the longer I was a member of the family, the more infrequent became my attendance.

Brigham sits in the center of the room, at a large table, on which is an ornamental "astral" lamp. The wives and their respective families are ranged around the room, in the order in which they appear at the table. When all are seated, Brigham reads a few passages of Scripture, all kneel down, and he makes a long prayer.

530 THE PROPHET'S PRAYERS.

He was formerly said to have a special "gift" for prayer, and he has not lost it; but somehow his prayers never inspired me with veneration. He prays with some unction, and, I suppose, unconsciously to himself, some of his patronizing manner slips into his appeals to the throne of Divine Grace, until his petition always seemed to me to be

very much like advice to the Deity rather than entreaties for the Divine blessing. If he chances to be in a good humor, he chats a little while before leaving the room; but if not, he goes away directly after prayers are over, and that is the last that is seen of him by the household until the next day at dinner.

Some of his children are almost strangers to him. They know nothing of fatherly affection, and while they feel that they have, socially, a sort of prestige, by being so closely related to him, they feel, personally, only a dread and fear of him. He never invites their confidences, nor shows himself interested in their affairs; all this would be quite incompatible with his ideas of prophetic dignity.

The Lion House, where most of the wives live, is a long, three-storied house, at the very left of what is known as the Prophet's Block. It receives its name from the stone figure of a lion crouching over the front portico. There is a stone basement; then the main building, of wood, with peaked gable, narrow pointed Gothic windows, and steep roof. In the basement are the dining room, kitchen, laundry, and cellar. The parlor is on the principal floor, and the rest of the house is taken up by the apartments of the wives, each wife having a greater or less number of rooms according to the size of her special family.

Next to the Lion House is a low building, which is used as the "Tithing Office." Here all the clerks have their desks, and receive visits from the Saints who come on church or personal business. Adjoining that is Brigham's private office, where he receives his own visitors. At the extreme right is the Bee-Hive House, a large building,

531 CHANGING VIEWS.

which has always been used as Governor Young's official residence.

Lucy Decker has always had the care of it, and has lived there with her children. No wife was ever permitted to share her husband's apartments there, until the reign of Amelia was opened. She has lived there since her marriage, and has been virtually the recognized "head of the harem." It is extremely probable that when her new house is fully finished, the Bee-Hive House will be the official residence only in name, and the household there will see less of him than ever.

Polygamist, as he professes to be, he is, under the influence of Amelia, rapidly becoming a monogamist, in all except the name.