

UTAH AND THE MORMONS.

THE

HISTORY, GOVERNMENT, DOCTRINES, CUSTOMS,
AND PROSPECTS OF

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

FROM

PERSONAL OBSERVATION DURING A SIX MONTHS' RESIDENCE
AT GREAT SALT LAKE CITY.

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seems eventually to have become the absorbing and governing passion of his soul, which respected neither the ties of kindred nor friendship; nor do his followers take much pains to conceal this feature of his character. A devout Mormon at Salt Lake informed me that Joseph's wife adopted five orphan girls, brought them up with great care, and became much attached to them; and that two of them, as they grew up to womanhood at Nauvoo, became the victims of his improper solicitations, and were turned away by the indignant wife. His unfortunate proclivity in this direction is spoken of as a failing which was intended as a trial of their faith, rather than as a vice to be condemned. It is a remarkable fact, that he was in the habit of having revelations accusing himself of falling away, and threatening punishment, which were succeeded by other revelations that he had repented and was forgiven; and in this the pious Saint sees strong confirmation of the truth of his pretensions, reasoning that such denunciatory oracles would not have been invented by himself. The prophet's habits did not mend with increasing years and prosperity; and these threatening and whitewashing revelations, to satisfy the scruples of the over-prudish, became irksome. The celestial powers were again invoked, and on the 12th of July, 1843, responded by granting to, and rather enjoining upon, the Saints the practice of polygamy.

The prophet was aware that he was entering upon a ticklish experiment even with his own disciples, to say nothing of the Gentiles; and he prefaced its reception by pretending to be in great trouble. He told some of his most influential followers that if they knew

what a hard and unpalatable revelation he had had, they would drive him from the city. The heavenly powers, however, were not to be trifled with, and a day was appointed when the important mandate was to be submitted to a convocation of the authorities of the Church. The time arrived; the priests and elders convened; but Joseph, in virtuous desperation, concluded rather to flee the city than be the medium of communicating a matter so repugnant to his mind. He mounted his horse and galloped from the town, but was met by an angel with a drawn sword, and threatened with instant destruction unless he immediately returned and fulfilled his mission. He returned, accordingly, in submissive despair, and made the important communication to the assembled notables. Such is substantially the account of the matter given by simple-minded believers at Salt Lake.

A revelation promulgated with such awful sanctions could not but make a deep impression upon credulous and superstitious minds. A copy is given, by way of appendix, from the "*Deseret News Extra*" of September 14, 1852. From its commencement, it would appear that the prophet, in the first instance, inquired how Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and Solomon were justified in having "many wives and concubines;" and that the Mormon divinity takes the interrogatory as a sort of text, and branches out into a new set of definitions in regard to adultery, and establishes a new order in the Church, prefacing the whole with dire threats of damnation against all who should refuse to obey. Whether the main subject would ever have been entertained by the heavenly