LIFE AMONG

THE MORMONS,

AND

A MARCH TO THEIR ZION:

TO WHICH IS ADDITED A CHAPTER ON THE INDIANS OF THE PLAINS AND MOUNTAINS OF THE WEST.

BY AN OFFICER OF THE U. S. ARMY.

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baser motives, which I leave to the imagination of the reader, to discharge what he believes a religious duty, without a thought of the holy and intimate relationship which should exist between husband and wife.

The woman is taken that she may become the mother of his children, and the church benefited by her progeny, and she, from the fact of being a wife, is to have her eternal glory increased. Thus the husband’s discharge of duty is also a great act of magnanimity, which is to redound to his future happiness. This is the most favorable construction that can be put on the motives of a Mormon polygamist.

That woman is degraded by polygamy, is a fact of which I have had the most unquestionable evidence, in my own observation, and from the reliable testimony of others, who have had better opportunities of witnessing the practical workings of their iniquitous system.

The polygamous wife of a Mormon is rendered unhappy by all manner of jealousies incident to her life. The piety and affection of a Sarah could not restrain her feelings under such circumstances, and the Mormon wife, with Hagar, and Ishmaels, and Isaacs, often multiplied, could hardly be expected to. But in addition to these natural causes of discontent, arise the unavoidable trials that grow out of her debased situation, in being regarded and treated as the inferior of man—the “weaker vessel” in everything. Abraham loved Sarah, whatever may have been his feelings toward Hagar, but where is the Mormon who really loves his wife?

There is a class of “celestial wives,” consisting of women who are sealed as spiritual wives for eternity only. They are not supposed to be regarded or treated as wives in this life, but are married to secure to themselves greater happiness in heaven. Brigham Young has a number of this class, in addition to his eighteen or twenty terrestrial wives. The “sealed wives” are to have the same privileges in heaven as if they had been bona fide wives on earth. Indeed, unless a wife is sealed to her husband for
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eternity, she loses all claim to exaltation in glory. Then there is marrying for time, and sealing for eternity, and either may exist without the other. A woman may have a pretty good fellow for a husband, so far as his social relations with her here are concerned; but she may be a little dubious about his standing in the celestial world, hence she becomes "sealed" to Brigham Young or Heber C. Kimball, or to the late Joseph the Prophet, by getting some one to act as his proxy. Such a course I should think would excite jealousy on the part of the earthly husband, if the man's esteem for his wife (for I cannot admit the existence of a stronger feeling) is sufficient to render him capable of feeling jealous. Only those who are "sealed," I suppose, know all the privileges connected with the relation here, and Mr. Hyde seems to doubt the chastity of such, as he says in his work, "when a woman sinks low enough to prefer another man for her pseudo-eternal husband, she is certainly sunk low enough to sin in deed as well as in thought."

Marriage to a first wife is comparatively a very trifling affair, and the ceremony may be performed by an Elder, Deacon, Priest, Bishop, or any other church official—and their name is legion—after a mutual agreement between the interested parties, as in Christian communities. But this is only marrying. If the parties wish to be "sealed," another, and what is regarded as a more sacred and spiritual service, is required. Formerly this was performed only by the President, and must take place before the altar in the Endowment House. A press of business in that line caused Brigham to delegate to Heber C., his first colleague, this duty.

It is not quite so simple for a saint to become a polygamist as the terrestrial husband of a first wife. The second, and all subsequent marriages, must be performed by the President before the altar. The several necessary preliminary steps are as follows:

The man must make known to the President his desire to marry a particular lady. Then the President pretends to