MORMON POLYGAMY AND GOVERNMENT.

It will doubtless surprise many of my readers to learn that polygamy has no foundation either in the principal of faith promulgated by Joseph Smith and the founders of the Mormon gospel. Polygamy not only fails to receive their sanction but the "Book of Mormon" and the "Book of Doctrine and Covenants" condemn the practice in the most emphatic language.

The sentiment of the Book of Mormon upon the subject of polygamy can be understood from the following quotation, page 116:

"Behold David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord, wherefore I have led this people forth out of the land of Jerusalem by the power of mine arm, that I might raise up unto me a righteous branch from the fruit of the loins of Joseph. Wherefore I, the Lord, will not suffer that this people shall do like unto them of old; wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken unto the word of the Lord. For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife, and concubines he shall have none."

We see from this quotation that polygamy is not only prohibited, but the example of the old patriarchs, which the polygamist sets so much store by, flinging it in the face of the decent people of this land as an excuse for his crime against the laws of God and man, is here declared to have been an abomination.

How, then, asks the reader, did polygamy originate? I answer,
it was born in the foul and lustful brain of Brigham Young and was grafted on the faith to gratify his sensual bestiality.

In August, 1852, Brigham Young produced a document before a conference of the Utah church, which he claimed was a revelation given to Joseph Smith in July, 1843, commanding the church to enter into polygamy. No explanation was given for keeping it concealed for nine years except that it was nobody's business. This paper was not in the handwriting of Joseph Smith as all similar ones received by the church had been. To account for this fatal defect Brigham stated that "Sister Emma," the wife of Joseph Smith, had thrown the original in the fire.

This story was pronounced a fabrication by Emma Smith, who testified just before her death that she had never seen or heard of any such revelation until Brigham Young brought it forward in 1852. But there are other evidences going to show that this precious document is a forgery. This pretended revelation is dated July 12, 1843. In it polygamy is commanded under pain of eternal damnation, but on Feb. 1, 1844, we have a notice published in the "Times and Seasons" that one "Hiram Brown had been cut off from the church for teaching polygamy and other false and corrupt doctrines."

This is signed by Joseph and Hiram Smith; that is to say, the man who, according to Brigham Young, commanded his followers to embrace polygamy as a portion of their creed, a year after the promulgation of this command punished one of his followers for doing what it commanded.

Brigham Young was no fanatic in religion. Like the great Napoleon he was ambitious of creating an empire of which he should be the head. To gain such power as he desired and to gather adherents around him he offered men such inducements as have not been within their legitimate grasp since the old Biblical days, that is, among Europeans. How greedily the bait was swallowed is now matter of history. Having once founded his dynasty he knew how to render it solid. He never allowed laboring men to be idle. If there was no work to do he would create it. I have known him to set men digging a canal in order to keep them employed, and when it was dug he would order them to fill it.

Brig., as he came familiarly to be called by the faithful, was as wise as ever Napoleon was. He believed that wealth, even more than
knowledge, was power and he allowed no man to become too rich and thus threaten his place. As soon as a man began to be wealthy, it was cunningly suggested to him that he ought to take another wife, and another, and another, so as to keep his means down to a certain point, and no one could rise to any exalted position in the church unless he was a polygamist; for there are numbers of Mormons who are no polygamists.

Thus, then, polygamy was invented by Brigham Young. Partially to gratify his own lustful instincts and partly to prevent any of his followers from becoming opulent enough to be independent of him and his commands.

In the Mormon church there are almost as great a variety and number of officials as it takes to run a political party. But for all this it is a greater despotism than the government of Russia.

The head of the church is imperial master over all Mormonism and all Mormons. The lives and property of his followers are at his command and they bow in slavery submission before him. Although they profess to pray to God they really pray to him as the purest of beings alive, next to God himself in virtue and beneficence.

Still he is nominally only one of several chieftains, as the following explanation of the government of the Mormon church will explain. The chief offices of the church are:

The Presidency. This consists of three individuals, the third president being also Mayor of Salt Lake City, Secretary of State of the State of Deseret, and Lieutenant-General of the militia of the Territory. They are known respectively as the 1st, 2d and 3d presidents and constitute the supreme power among the Mormons in all matters. Brigham Young was the great power that controlled the presidency in the recent past. The presidents are elected by the people, the masses of whom regard the first president as unsurpassed in wisdom save by God himself. A simple expression of his wishes is undisputed authority and is obeyed implicitly.

The Patriarch. This official's duties consist in bestowing patriarchal blessings upon the faithful who desire them and are willing to pay for them. He will lay his reverend hands upon the head of a saint and bless him with houses and lands and wives (number specified) and children and Priestship to eternal glory, if faithful. These blessings are written out and signed by the patriarch and are highly prized by the ignorant.

The Twelve Apostles. Of as they style themselves, "Special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world." This body ranks next after the presidency. The apostles ordain subordinate clerical officials, baptize, administer the sacrament, superintend missionary labor and are the chief preachers and exponents of the faith.

The Seventy. Are the missionaries out of the first seventy appointed. Seven were elected presidents, and these appointed other seventies, who also had presidents and appointed others, so that by a species of exaggerated compound interest the number of missionaries keeps constantly increasing. The missionaries are supposed to pay all their own expenses, but they don't.

The High Priest. These are church officials, elected principally to do the first president's dirty work, as they can officiate in any office he chooses to appoint them to when he wants his will carried out.

The Bishops. Although they bear an ecclesiastical title, they are really rather temporal officials. There is one appointed to every Mormon settlement, and one to every ward in Salt Lake City. They are collectors of tithes, keep the census of their several districts, and settle difficulties existing among the saints, when they can do so, subject to appeal to higher authority. They are supposed to administer to the spiritual wants of the people of their charge, and visit their homes for this purpose. In Salt Lake City there is a chief Bishop, and he is the channel through which any matter of business the Ward Bishop may be unable to settle to the satisfaction of the parties, or any grievance, must be communicated to higher authority, that is to say, the First President.

The High Council. This consists of twelve High Priests, with the President of the Church at its head. It is the highest authority to which parties may appeal when they feel aggrieved by the decision of their Bishop or other local authority. The President is required to give the decision in all cases brought before the Council when the others vote upon it.

The reader may imagine how far the opinion of one who is thought incapable to err has to do with the vote of the Council. Its jurisdiction is confined to temporal matters.

Besides the officials of the church here enumerated there are
and thither the Ohio colony went to consolidate with the resident one, and he lost no time in obeying it.

The Missourians, however, were tireless in their attacks on the colonists. The truth was there were a good many hard cases among the Mormons, and these committed depredations on the property of the Gentile farmers which afforded the latter excellent excuse for retaliation. The result was that a sort of guerrilla warfare was kept up that began in time to assume the proportions of a veritable civil war.

In the course of these troubles Joe Smith was arrested by the State authorities, along with Sidney Rigdon, and locked up. He secured his release in 1838, and immediately had another "revelation." Thanks to this he moved all his followers, to the number of 15,000, across the river to Illinois, where at a spot some 230 miles above St. Louis, on a grant of land which they had obtained in the vicinity of the town of Commerce, they founded a city which a "revelation" told Smith to name Nauvoo, or the city of beauty.

The legislature of Illinois granted a charter to Nauvoo; a body of militia was formed under the name of the Nauvoo Legion, of which the prophet was named commander. He was also made mayor of the city and thus became actual as well as spiritual "boss."

When the Mormons settled at Nauvoo the land was a wilderness, but they soon had it blooming like a rose. A future of prosperity seemed before them, when trouble rose in a new quarter, or rather from a new cause.

This was a rumor that the Mormons, in addition to their queer doctrines of faith, were also practicing polygamy.

This was not really the fact. Rigdon had a theory about "spiritual wives" which Smith denounced for a long time, but ended by acceptance. According to this theory women could only be saved through their husbands, and unmarried females must be ever debarr'd from the pleasures of the blest. Consequently every woman had to be provided with a spiritual husband, and as there were more women than men among the Mormons Rigdon and those who believed in him undertook to make the odd ones sure of heaven by marrying them himself. Smith was compelled to fall in with this idea in practice and the business of "sealing" extra wives was commenced.

Polygamy was not openly advocated, however. The spiritual wife was said to be united to her husband by a purely spiritual tie,
independent of all sensual relations and was not supposed to have any carnal affinity with him whatever.

The unbelievers in Mormonism would not believe this, however, and serious disturbances broke out again.

In consequence of these Joe Smith, his brother Hiram and some of his chief supporters were arrested and thrown into prison at Carthage to await trial.

After a short time a rumor began to circulate to the effect that the Governor of the State desired to permit the two Smiths to escape. This news, true or false, was received with a veritable howl of fury. A mob of 200 men collected, armed to the teeth, on June 27, 1844. They marched to the prison, forced an entrance and swarmed in upon the prophet in his cell. The father of Mormonism fell, riddled with balls, and his brother was promptly sent to join him.

Thus, after 14 years of troubous existence, was Mormonism left without a head, in a world filled with furious and implacable enemies.

Thus did Joe Smith, sheep-stealer, treasure-hunter, wizard of the divining rod, having gulled and swindled his way to notoriety and power, go down the dark road by the same violence which, in the end, must sweep the loathsome faith he founded from the earth it soils.

CHAPTER VII.

BRIGHAM YOUNG STEPS IN.

We have already introduced the man who was destined to raise Mormonism to really rigorous power. Let us inquire a little more closely into his history. Brigham Young, however ignoble and deplorable his work, was undoubtedly one of the most remarkable men in American history and deserves more than the brief notice we have given him in a book devoted to the cause whose most potent and passionate champion he was.

Brigham Young was born at Whittingham, Vt., on June 1, 1801. He was the son of a man who owned and cultivated a little farm which afforded his family the barest and most miserable of livings.

After a youth of poverty, in the course of which he managed to secure an apology for an education, which his quick wit and active intelligence rapidly improved upon, he began life as clerk in a country store, where he served out sanded sugar and watered rum as persistently as any country boy who ever aspired to the Presidency.

But his spirit was restless and he did not long remain behind the counter. As a peddler he roamed around the country vending articles of jewelry, lottery tickets and similar articles, the whole and sole end of his endeavors being, as he expressed it, to "take care of number ones." At last he became a devotee of the Methodist persuasion; exulted the sinners, led in the class meetings and shouted, sung and hollered with the most orthodox. From Methodism to Mormonism the conversion was an easy one for him. He saw a great future in the new faith and in 1832 embraced it.

He was made an elder of the church and began to preach at the settlement at Kirtland. In 1835, as we have described, he was made an apostle and sent to do missionary work in New England. The death of Joe Smith called him from the East and he found the settlers at Nauvoo in the greatest agitation and confusion, without a leader and, in doubt as to where to get one.

Not that there were no aspirants to the place, for Joe Smith had left a son who bore his name and of whom Joe Smith's wife, Emma, swore his father had had a revelation that he should be his successor. Sidney Rigdon, too, had stepped in and actually assumed the Presidency. But a stronger than either he or the dead prophet's son was destined for the place.

Young contrived to get the right side of his eleven brother apostles, however, and they elected him. Events proved the wisdom of their choice.

Joe Smith died in 1844. In 1845 the Legislature of Illinois revoked the charter of Nauvoo and the Mormons were ordered to move out. The hostile Gentiles then laid siege to the place and after a cannonade of three days Brigham and his followers struck their colors. All they asked was time enough to get somewhere where they could molest no one and where no one would molest them.

The Rocky Mountains were in those days almost the western boundary of the continent and beyond them the persecuted Mormons resolved to seek a home. Explorers were sent out at once to look for a suitable spot to locate, and brought back favorable reports of the valley of the Great Salt Lake, which had first been explored by Gen. Fremont in 1843.