AN AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT
OF THE
MASSACRE OF JOSEPH SMITH,
THE MORMON PROPHET,
AND
HYRUM SMITH, HIS BROTHER,
TOGETHER
WITH A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RISE
AND PROGRESS
OF
MORMONISM,
AND ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED
TO THEIR DEATH,
BY
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Of Alton, Ills.

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spoken of his conduct in Missouri, and of his standing indicted, in that State, for the crimes of theft, arson, burglary, murder and treason. These facts must satisfy any reflecting mind, why he has, for the last twenty years, been unable to reside long in any one place, at peace with the residue of the community: Since their residence in Illinois, and the disgraceful, humiliating conduct of politicians towards them, they have grown still more overbearing in their conduct towards those not of their sect, and far more unblushing in their depredations upon society. It is a fact as notorious as that Joe Smith once lived, that many of the most hardened felons, desperate horse thieves, and dangerous men, known in this State, have fled to Nauvoo, become members of the sect of Mormons, and been received in full fellowship, with a church professing to be christian. It is also known that fugitives from justice from other portions of the Union, have fled to Nauvoo, been received by Joe into the church, and screened from arrest, when the officers of the law sought them. Witness the case of Jeremiah Smith, indicted in the District of Columbia, for swindling the Government out of three thousand dollars, who, after diligent search, was traced to Nauvoo, and when arrested by the Deputy Marshal of this District, was taken from him by Joe, and discharged. Innumerable other instances might be named, were it deemed necessary. All that is designed by me, is, to show the public the character of the leaders, as well as many of the members of the church of 'Latter Day Saints,' that they may form their own opinion what security an honest community has, when surrounded by a sect of the description of Joe Smith. This of itself, ought to satisfy an unprejudiced mind, that the situation of the old citizens of Hancock is everything else but desirable, or even to be tolerated. It is no part of my design to charge the whole community of Mormons, with possessing hearts as vicious and depraved, as those the two Smiths are shown to have had. From personal observation, I am convinced that there are many poor, unfortunate, deluded beings there, who are naturally honest, and who, under the influence of good example and upright leaders, would act well their part in society. That class, however, are generally speaking, of weak intellect, to a great extent uneducated, and easily made the dupes of the vicious. Their implicit obedience to Joe, in all the requisitions he makes of them, whether legal or illegal, honest or dishonest, exemplifies, in a striking manner, the truth of the axiom, that "evil communication corrupts good manners." On the other hand, there are a large number of the most hardened and abandoned men in the community, who have gone there, assumed the garb of religion, become the confidential friends of the Prophet, and all for the purpose of acquiring an easy livelihood by dishonest means. Is it not a self-evident proposition, that any sect, or body of men, confiding in such leaders, and following implicitly their directions, cannot be otherwise than a scourge to any community, whose daily walk in life is honest and upright?

I have shown, in a previous portion of this work, the character of the ordinances passed by the City Council of Nauvoo, in which they assumed to themselves legislative, as well as judicial powers,
and Taylor to be killed, and they were determined to kill him, (Ford.) That these things took place in places where there was no inhabitants, and further this deponent saith not.

WILLIAM WADDLE.

Sworn to and subscribed before me, this 29th day of June, A. D. 1844. O. C. SKINNER, Master in Chancery.

Such is a faint history of the character and designs of the Mormon leaders.

There is one other reason assigned by the press, as well as the public, for stigmatising the death of the Smiths as a "cowardly, cold blooded murder," that deserves a passing notice. It is that the deceased could have been reached and punished by law. Were this supposition correct, the conclusion to be drawn from it would be self-evident. But it is unfortunately not the case. Every branch of the civil government of Hancock county was under the control of the Mormons, and a conviction rendered impossible. The only way that indictments were found against Joe Smith at the last term of the Hancock Circuit Court, for perjury, adultery and fornication, was this: The County Commissioner's Court, which selects the grand and petit jury, and which is composed of three members, consisted of one Mormon, a Jack Mormon, and an anti-Mormon, or old citizen. The Jack Mormon growing alarmed at the increasing outrages committed by the Mormons against all the laws of society, at the term of the County Commissioner's Court immediately preceding the term of the Circuit Court at which the indictments were found, joined the County Commissioner who was one of the old citizens, and selected a grand and petit jury, the majority of whom were from the body of the old citizens. The result was, that the grand jury, according to the testimony before them, found the bills of indictment against "Joe." Under the practice of the State of Illinois, process would issue during vacation, returnable to the next term of the Court, or if there was any danger of escape, a capias would issue instantaneously. But the defendant would have a right, unless confined in jail, to continue his case until the next term of the Court. This secured Smith against a trial until this fall. In the meantime the August election comes off, at which there is to be elected a County Commissioner for Hancock, in the place of the member of the court who is an anti-Mormon. The Mormons hold a large majority in that county, and the result would be the selection of another strong Mormon, which would make the Court stand two Mormon and one Jack Mormon. At the September term of the County Commissioner's Court, the panel of grand and petit jurors would be selected to serve at the fall term of the Circuit Court. And the result would show, that both the grand and petit jurors would be nine-tenths Mormons. Before this grand jury of Mormons, the complaints against the two Smiths, for riot in the destruction of the press, treason, &c., would go. And no man in his senses can shut his eyes to the fact, that no bill of indictment would be found against them upon any charge. In this way they were placed entirely beyond the reach of law, as they must be indicted in the county where the offence was committed, or not at all. This
the counsel of the Smiths, as well as the prisoners themselves, well knew, and it accounts satisfactorily for the readiness with which they waived the examination, and entered into recognizance for their appearance at court. The whole of them knew it was the last of it, and that by Joe having his minions in office as County Commissioners, Sheriff, Clerk of the Circuit Court, &e. &c., they could and would successfully defeat the ends of justice. The advantage which all his principal men had, in this respect, will appear most manifest from the following fact: An individual owed a large amount in the city of St. Louis and failed. Previous to his failing he transferred a large amount of property to his father, or some other near connexion, and then turned Mormon. The fraud was so palpable, that the creditors filed a bill in chancery to set aside the conveyances. Testimony was taken in the cause, and on its hearing, the fraud was made to appear so manifest, that the counsel of the defendants refused to address the jury. One of the defendants, nothing daunted at the course of his counsel, remarked to him, "you need have no fears, the jury will stand ten for me, to two against me." The jury retired and after a long absence came into court and stated their inability to agree, when they were discharged, and upon inquiry, as the defendant had anticipated, they stood ten for finding a verdict for the defendants, and two for the complainants. This was stated to me by one of the most prominent members of the bar in the city of Quincy, who was engaged in the cause. The reason why the defendants were able to judge so accurately of what would be their decision, even before retiring from the jury box, was, that ten of the jury were Mormons and two of them old citizens. With a state of things like this, every reasonable man must see and acknowledge, that there was no such thing in Hancock county as legal redress for any citizen of that county when his opponent was a Mormon. The records of the court of Hancock show that in any contested case between a Mormon and an anti-Mormon, there is scarcely a solitary exception, but what the Mormon succeeded. O. C. Skinner, Esq., of Carthage, who has done a great deal of business for the Mormons, asserts publiclly, that it was only necessary to inform a Mormon what he must prove, to succeed, and the testimony was always forthcoming.

The idea of such a state of things existing in any country, is revolting in the extreme; much more so, however, when a portion of our own Republican Government is shown to be the theatre of so unjust and oppressive a state of society. That it does exist, admits of no more doubt than that there is a sect called Mormons. And that the old citizens of Hancock have, for months and months, been the victims of such oppression, is equally true. Yet, I repeat, even under such a state of things, it was no justification for the killing of the Smiths; although I do insist, it goes far in mitigation, and removes a great deal of the odium which, under a different state of things, would have attached to it.

The public are now in possession of all the material facts leading to, and surrounding the unlawful killing of two as wickedly depraved men, as ever disgraced the human family, I have endeavored to do justice to all parties, and to place their situations fairly
before the public. The task has been an unpleasant one, assumed with reluctance, and from the pressure of other engagements having paramount claims upon my time, but imperfectly, and to myself unsatisfactorily discharged. Knowing, however, the deep solicitude that would be felt on all hands, to obtain the facts in the case, and judging from the experience of the past, that greatly exaggerated accounts would go forth as to the unfortunate affair, I felt a disposition to contribute my feeble aid in correcting the errors into which many had, and still more would fall, by placing, in as succinct a form as possible, all the facts before the people. This I have done honestly and fearlessly.

Illinois, it is true, has had another foul stain indelibly fastened upon her escutcheon, by this second outbreak of popular violence. But knowing the facts as I do, of the causes that led to the murder of Lovejoy, as well as that of the Smiths, candor constrains me to say, that the former was as far more atrocious than the latter, as it is possible for one species of crime to be greater than another. Would to God, for the honor, the credit, the prosperity of the State, neither had disgraced its annals.

By some, it may be considered, that I have spoken unnecessarily harsh of the two Smiths, and especially of Joe. I do not think that I have. The most obnoxious and licentious traits in his character, I have studiously refrained from alluding to, with a view of excluding from these pages every thing like obscenity; but which, if I had attempted to speak of, in candor, I should have been compelled to have introduced. My only regret is, that duty has driven me to speak as plainly as I have. A desire to avoid wounding the feelings of his wife, if no other consideration, has had its influence upon me in letting him off as easy as possible. Though he has outraged every feeling of decency and humanity, in the gratification of his beastly propensities, which has caused his wife three different times to separate from him, (as I am informed;) yet, from a forgiving disposition and the hope of reformation, she was induced to return to his polluted embrace, and remain steadfast to him unto the end; verilying, by so doing, the truth of the beautiful expression of the poet, that—

"Like ivy, woman's love will cling,
Too often, too a worthless thing."

His sins, however, should not be visited upon her. She is a female of intelligence, and can do much towards dispelling the delusion that heretofore has so densely belogged the minds of the Mormons. In accomplishing this, she will confer an inestimable blessing upon the community in which she lives, and may prove the means of preventing an immense deal of bloodshed, and destruction of property. A different course, will attach much of the odium of her late husband's character to her own.

In conclusion, I have only to add, that every sentence I have penned, has been under a deep sense of the responsibility, I have assumed to the public. And that whatever may be the judgment they shall pass upon these pages, there is upon them

"No line which dying, I would wish to blot."