LYDIA KNIGHT'S
HISTORY.

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE
NOBLE WOMEN'S LIVES SERIES.

BY "HOMESPUN."

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CHAPTER IV.

LYDIA remained here until the Summer of ’34, and then, on seeing a chance to return within about eighty miles of her home in western New York, she did so. At a town called St. Catherine she remained some two months, and then went by stage to her father’s house.

So beautiful was this gospel in the eyes of the ardent girl, that she felt that all that was needful for her parents to share in her joy, was simply to tell them the story. But as is often the case, the father and mother, although so good and kind, could not comprehend the truth.

“Lydia,” said the mother, “you don’t mean to tell me you have united yourself with those disgraceful Mormons. To think that my daughter should dishonor herself by being cheated and deluded by those imposters!”

“Oh, mother,” the tearful Lydia replied, “don’t call those great and good men imposters, whom I have had the honor to see and know. Indeed they are true gentlemen and earnest Christians. If you would only let me tell you of these great truths that have been revealed from heaven.”

But arguments and tears were of no avail. Nothing could induce the indignant mother who was a strict Presbyterian, or the quiet father, who, although professing no religion, was conscientious and moral, to accept her views for one moment.

On the other hand, the principles Lydia had embraced were too precious to be given up for father or mother, tenderly loved as they were.

“It’s no use,” at last said the mother, “you know Lydia never would leave the sheep-skin till the last lock was pulled.”

The girl grew restless and unhappy under the constant railery and derision showered upon the despised religion by her parents, while, at the same time they gave much pity and sympathy to their poor deluded daughter.

At last she decided upon going out to Kirtland which was then the gathering place of the Saints. Seeing her so determined Mr. and Mrs. Goldthwait gave Lydia ample means to go to her destination, and be comfortable and respectable. In the Spring of ’35, once more this lone woman started out on a journey.

On reaching Kirtland, the family with whom Lydia had traveled, set at once to make arrangements to settle down. Leaving his wife and Lydia at the hotel, Mr. Knight, for that was the gentleman’s name, went out, soon returning with his brother Vincent, who was a resident of Kirtland. On being introduced to Lydia, Vincent Knight said: “Sister, the Prophet is in bondage and has been brought into distress by the persecutions of the wicked, and if you have any means to give, it will be a benefit to him.” “Oh yes, sir,” she replied, “here is all I have. I only wish it was more,” emptying her purse, containing, perhaps fifty dollars, in his hand as she spoke.
He looked at it and counted it and fervently exclaimed: "Thank God, this will release and set the Prophet free!"

The young girl was without means now, even to procure a meal or a night’s lodging. Still the sweet spirit that rested upon her whispered “all will be well.”

As evening drew on, Vincent Knight returned and brought the welcome news that Joseph was at liberty, and Lydia’s joy to think that she had been the humble means of helping the Prophet was unbounded.

After talking some time Vincent remarked to her: “Now sister, if you think you can be comfortable and happy with my family, you are welcome to a home there. You shall be as a sister to my wife and myself.”

Was not here the promise of the spirit beautifully verified?

For six or eight months Lydia lived a pleasant life beneath this good man’s roof.

In the Fall of ’35, the Prophet’s brother Hyrum requested Lydia to come to his home and assist his wife. He promised her she should receive all the care and thought that could be given to her if she really were at home. She complied with the request, and while living there became acquainted with one of the brethren who boarded at the place while working on the Kirtland Temple. His name was Newel Knight, although not related in any way with the Knight family spoken of in the beginning of this chapter. The young man was tall, had light brown hair, a keen blue eye and a very energetic and determined manner.

“Brother Knight is a widower,” remarked Sister Smith one day when she and Lydia were busily at work.

“Oh indeed,” laconically replied the girl.

“Yes, poor fellow. He lost his wife last Fall. She was a delicate woman, and the many trials and persecutions she suffered were too much for her frail body, and she died when her baby was but two days old. The little one lived but a few hours. Poor Brother Knight! His heart was almost broken. He has a little boy three years old living with his aunt, Newel’s sister. Poor fellow, he is very lonely.”

Lydia went on with her work making no reply, although her heart ached with sympathy for the desolate young man; for was she not well acquainted with sorrow? did not she know the anguish of being alone?

But well she knew that friendly interest was all she could give to this noble man who had so plainly shown his interest in her.

One day as they sat alone together in the family room, Newel said to her kindly, very gently:

“My child, you seem very lonely as well as myself. Why can we not comfort each other?”

“Sir,” she replied indignantly, “I know my condition is lonely and not a desirable one, but I do not wish you to insult me. I have not the slightest knowledge where my husband is, or whether he is alive or dead. But I do not wish to take any step to make my condition worse or bring shame
upon my family and deprive me of the salvation
I am seeking to obtain."

With these words she immediately left the
room giving him no opportunity to make a reply.

Several days passed without giving Newel
the chance he wished for to apologize and explain
to the offended girl.

Meeting her at last he told her he was sorry to
have incurred her displeasure, and endeavored to
show her that according to the law she was a free
woman, having been deserted for three years with
nothing provided for her support. But all that he
said had no influence on Lydia who replied calmly
that she was of the same mind she had been a
week previous. But love is not killed so easily.
Newel continued to make every endeavor to per-
suade Lydia to relinquish her own feelings, and
accept the freedom that the law offered; but Lydia
remained firm.

The young man was finally so convinced that
she could not be persuaded, and so full was he of
the desire to have the woman he felt God had
designed to be his wife, that he fasted and prayed
three days and nights, and then sought the Pro-
phet and presented the case to him, that he might
get the word of the Lord. Accordingly, Joseph
presented his petition to the Lord, and the reply
came that Lydia was free from that man. God
did not wish any good woman to live a life of lon-
liness, and she was free to marry. Also that the
union of Newel and Lydia would be pleasing in
His sight.

Full of joy Newel sought Lydia and commun-
icated the word he had received. No longer need
the lovely girl fight this love that had grown up
in both hearts. Throwing herself on her knees
she poured out her soul in thanksgiving to God
for His precious blessings. How unworthy she felt!
What a thrill of joy went through her when she
was told God had spoken to His servant Joseph
concerning her, His humble handmaiden. There-
after she gave her consent to marry Newel, and
in a few days the news came to her of her hus-
band’s death. Was not this a convincing testi-
mony of the truth of Joseph’s word?

CHAPTER V.

It was the advice of both Brother Hyrum and
his wife, Jerusha, that the marriage should take
place at once, and, as Lydia’s objections were all
overruled, preparations were made immediately.

On the 23rd of November, 1835, was the day
chosen. Brother and Sister Smith decided to have
a wedding-supper and invite some guests. Accord-
ingly, in the afternoon of the 22nd he set out to
invite the friends of the family.

Going to father Smith’s, he asked them all to be
present. Hastening on to Joseph’s house he
acquainted him with what was to take place the
following day, and then requested him to be
present. As Hyrum was hurrying away, Joseph
called out:
“Stop, Brother Hyrum, don’t be in such a hurry. Where are you going now?

“Oh, I can’t stay, I must make haste, as I have to go down and ask Seymour Brunson to come up and marry them.”

“Stop, Hyrum! I tell you to wait a moment. You need not go down and ask Brother Brunson, for I mean to marry that couple myself.”

Hyrum looked at his brother in astonishment at this announcement, for heretofore those who wished to be married were obliged to employ either a justice of the peace or a licensed minister. The law of Ohio did not recognize the “Mormon” Elders as ministers, and it was a punishable offense for a lay man to officiate in that capacity. In fact, several Elders had been arrested and fined for the performance of this act. Seymour Brunson had been down in the southern part of the State where prejudice did not run so high and had obtained a license to perform the ceremony. Consequently the Saints employed him whenever there was a couple to be married.

“Very well,” replied Hyrum, “you know best. We will be very glad to have you do so.”

The evening of the 23rd, about a dozen people gathered in Brother Hyrum’s parlor, all of them intimate friends of the Patriarch and his family.

The young couple stood up, and the Prophet arose and commenced the ceremony. At its close he pronounced them husband and wife by the authority of the Priesthood which he held.

Thus was the first marriage ceremony ever performed by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Here was laid the foundation stone of the grand structure of our marriage ceremony. The revelation of sealing was not given, but after he had united the two he blessed them with fervor. Then turning to the company he exclaimed:

“Our Elders have been wronged and prosecuted for marrying without a license. The Lord God of Israel has given me authority to unite the people in the holy bonds of matrimony. And from this time forth I shall use that privilege and marry whomsoever I see fit. And the enemies of the Church shall never have power to use the law against me.”

And so it was. The following Sunday he married four couple in public meeting, and continued to do so until his martyrdom without being molested.

After Joseph had thus spoken, some of the company asked some questions and he continued to speak and instruct them on the principle of marriage. Much that was entirely new to the Saints was revealed in his conversation, and again Lydia saw that strange, brilliant light shine through his features, like the mellow radience of an astral lamp, only purer and brighter.

The guests parted that evening with many good wishes for the two, who had suffered so much and were now about to commence the ascent of life’s steep hill together. But few misgivings were felt, however, as all knew how genuinely good both were.

The Patriarch gave Brother and Sister Knight a hearty invitation to remain with his family dur-
ing the Winter, and not attempt to set up house-
keeping until they removed to their western home.
They gladly accepted his offer, and spent several
busy, happy months in this pleasant home.

Newel continued his labors on the temple, and
in the evenings attended the schools for the Elders,
organized that they might receive instructions
preparatory to their endowments. Occasionally
a lecture would be given, and at it always would
be found Brother and Sister Knight.

How glorious it was to live during those brief
Winter months receiving light upon light, revela-
tion upon revelation as it flowed from the pro-
phetic lips of Joseph!

When the lower room of the temple was com-
pleted an invitation was issued to all the Saints
to assemble on the 27th of March, 1836, to witness
the dedication of the first temple that had been
built to the name of the Lord in these days. On
the appointed day a large congregation was gath-
ered inside and outside the building.

At nine o'clock, services were commenced by
Sidney Rigdon reading the ninety-sixth and twenty-
fourth Psalms. Singing and prayer were then
offered, after which a discourse was delivered by
Elder Rigdon.

An intermission of twenty minutes was made
between the morning and afternoon services; the
people, however did not leave their seats. In the
afternoon, after the usual preliminary exercises,
Joseph made a short address, and called upon the
various quorums to sustain the presidency of the
Church and all those who were called to preside.

After singing, Joseph offered the dedicatory prayer,
which will be found in the Doctrine and Cove-
nants, Sec. 109 of the new edition.

At the close of this sublime prayer the congre-
gation shouted as with one voice, "Hosanna!
hosanna! hosanna to God and the Lamb! amen!
amen and amen!" The sacrament was then
administered. F. G. Williams arose and testified
that while the prayer was being offered, a person-
age came in and sat down between Father Smith
and himself, and remained there during the
prayer. He described his clothing and appearance.

Joseph said that the personage was Jesus, as the
dress described was that of our Savior, it being in
some respects different to the clothing of the
angels.

David Whitmer testified to seeing angels pre-
sent.

The services were closed by singing and prayer.
The Saints enjoyed a glorious day, and the temple
was filled, as Lydia says, with the glory of God.

Cannot we, who are of the later generation, picture
to ourselves this grand meeting, when Jesus and His angels were present and the glory
of God was felt like a burning fire? What privi-
leges our fathers and mothers enjoyed! How
blest were they! And as we look back, it seems
to us that we could gladly partake of their many
and severe trials if we might enjoy their glorious
blessings.

After the dedication, partial endowments were
given to the Elders, Newel receiving his with the
rest of his quorum.