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THE OFFSPRING OF THE MORMON PEOPLE

J. E. HICKMAN

Logan City, Utah

Note:—This investigation has an interest quite apart from any idea of defending the system of "Plural Marriages." The wish to avoid or remove any implication of the inferiority of such families is natural, and we are glad to give Prof. Hickman the opportunity to state his results. The religious question involved is, however, quite beyond the province of this Journal, and we have shortened the paper to the extent of omitting discussion of that phase of the matter. We have also presented only part of Prof. Hickman's statistical data. The details only bear out what appears in the tables, and we would be glad to furnish the complete tables to any one interested in a more refined analysis.

The fact that plural families were restricted by church authority to a select class of the population would explain the general average superiority of the polygenous families, and those classified by Prof. Hickman as of "indirectly polygenous" origin. The monogamous population would, of course, be weighted with all the cases of recognized inferiority. Brigham Young is said to have told an unpromising applicant for the plural family status: "No, we don't want to raise any more of your kind."

That the differences are so pronounced after so short a period of selection is of great interest and leads to the hope that other methods of encouraging the mating of the hereditarily well endowed would produce striking results in few generations. Prof. Hickman's data are unusually pertinent, because the effects that may be expected from selection can seldom be investigated so directly in the human species.—*Editor.*

ANY startling innovation in the social fabric of a nation is fraught with disturbance which often results in bitter strife. When the principle of plural marriage was announced as a tenet and practice of the Mormon religion it agitated the public mind from center to circumference. Severe arraignments were made against that people. They were attacked from pulpit to senate hall until the prejudice against them amounted almost to a national hatred. The direst results were prophesied against such a system of marriage. Claims were made that it produced dwarfed, ill shapen and demented offspring, fostered ignorance, crime and squalor. So thoroughly have these ideas redintegrated into the mind of the public that they pass in certain circles as unquestioned facts. In view of these claims the writer has made a critical study of the mental and physical traits of the offspring of the Mormon people.

It is not necessary here to review the various arguments for and against this principle of marriage; but in pass-

ing it may be well to note that it was legislated against in 1882, the act being known as the Edmunds Law. Prosecution under this law began about 1882 and did not cease until 1893. The people fought their case through the Supreme Court of the United States. When this body declared that the law against polygeny was constitutional the people, in open assembly in 1890, decreed to abandon its practice. This act is in accord with one of their principles which says that they are willing to be subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates and in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

But before the hour of relinquishment came they suffered long years of bitter prosecution. The people felt that it degenerated into persecution, so relentlessly were they hunted down.

During that period over two thousand five hundred men were imprisoned. At one time the penitentiaries in Arizona, Utah, and Idaho were filled with "co-habs" as they were called. In that emergency the govern-