

whatever of sitting by quietly while the temporal authority of the Church, so lenient and easy-going in its exercise, so prosperous in its results, is usurped by a minority of "outsiders," who, as they allege, have already planned among themselves a distribution of the Territorial patronage and the Territorial treasury; arranged for mutual accommodation as to real contracts and toll contracts and contracts for new official buildings; settled for each other's convenience various new departments of public emolument and inutility, and installed their friends in imagination in the offices now filled by Mormons. Tax-collecting by authority will become then a duty of the military. For the men who now struggle in pretty much as they choose with their tithings and pay up lumps of "conscience money" now and again as good seasons permit or a sense of duty suggests, will not—I mean that they will not—pay heavy taxes for the salaries of men and the profits of contractors who do no more for the Territory than the Church now does at a nominal charge. It is no use mining words about it. The Mormons of the settlements do not intend to be fleeced or "squeezed," as they call it, for the benefit of a self-seeking political clique. It may be that they are too ignorant or too "priest-ridden" or too degraded by polygamy, but whatever the reason, this is absolutely certain, that any attempt to govern these hundred and fifty thousand Mormons by the nominees of some fifteen thousand Gentile "transients" will be a signal failure.

While traveling in America I have seen so much "independence" that, if it were judiciously distributed over Europe, there would not be a monarch left. But here in rural Utah, in addition to this independence in a general way, there is a perfectly unique fidelity to a particular theory of liberty. And this inner coil of independence, so to speak, is as dangerous as dynamite. Put a match to it without shutting it up and it will fizzle and sparkle and sputter out. But shut it up, confine it, and then use violence to it! It explodes. Gun-cotton in itself is a soft, harmless substance. You could quilt a baby's cradle with it. But that man is not suited for a statesman or lexicographer who goes jamming his gun cotton up in a corner and then putting a match to it. The fowls of the air might find an afternoon's diversion in picking up his fragments that remained, but they would be inconsiderable. No. There is an explosive principle in this Mormonism which, if analyzed, would, I think, prove to be simply American Independence crystallized. It is a grand kind of quartz, this same independence, take it where you will all over the continent, but in this one particular depression in the rock called Utah a number of atoms have got together and, by a process of natural chemistry that eliminates the prevailing ingredients of the rest of the rock, have solidified the remainder (see Webster Unabridged) "by an inherent power of cohesive attraction."

But, dropping this metaphor, the rural population of this Territory is far too prosperous and too contented under the present kindly, unceasing regime of the Church to see without alarm any signs of coming innovations. "With fear of change perplexing Mormons" the rumor has gone out through the pasture lands of the northern valleys, away up into Shoshone-roubled Idaho and down through the orchards and corn-fields of the South, across the pine-clad canyons of the Virgin into Arizona, has traveled from the Snake River to the Colorado, from Richmond to St. George, that a cormorant flight of greedy, needy men is flapping its way towards Utah to feed on its treasury under the pretense of moral reform and to substitute a Gentile oligarchy for self-government and republican obliquities for patriarchal good faith. The idea is abroad; it *Fama per partas* * * * *et crescit eundo*, and not all the protestations of all America will reassure the Mormons, unless the Church; the President of the Church, John Taylor, supports the protestations with his voice. They are very material men, these Latter-day Saints of the Church of Jesus Christ. They believe in cheap victuals, no taxes, large families and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and it is no use trying to disentangle such a creed. I remember in India listening to the Pandits teaching their small brown

scholars the rudiments of a Hindoo education and wondering whether in after life those unfortunate children would ever unmix the rules of addition from the reverence that should be paid to a cow or go on all their lives carrying one to the next column whenever they pronounced the ineffable name of the Deity. Much in the same vein, thinking over these people, it interests me to surmise whether the present is only a tentative and preliminary phase of Mormon existence, or whether they have made up their minds definitely that true religion is incompatible with the purchase of Gentile dry goods, that the principles of co-operation are necessary unto salvation and that Z. C. M. I. is inscribed on the gates of heaven! At present it really seems as if it was so, for while traveling through the Territory (and I have been over a thousand miles of it) I was perpetually struck by the indiscriminating fidelity with which these Mormon peasantry cling to the whole of their tenets in a lump. There is no picking and choosing with them. They are "Mormons" or they are not. And when they are, I find that they have an unbounded disbelief in political honesty and a bottomless confidence in themselves and their leaders "to come out top."

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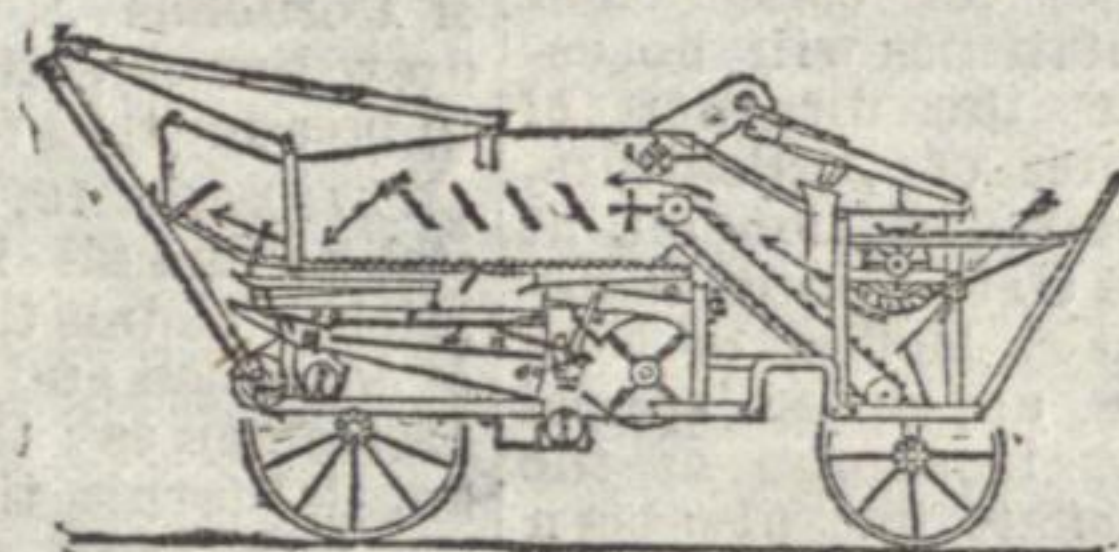
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